

UAMS News Bureau

Office of Communications & Marketing
4301 West Markham # 890
Little Rock, AR 72205-7199

www.uams.edu/newsbureau/



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES

News Release
Dec. 2, 2008

Media Contacts:

Leslie W. Taylor, 501-686-8998

Wireless phone: 501-951-7260

leslie@uams.edu

Andrea Peel, 501-686-8996

Wireless phone: 501-351-7903

andrea@uams.edu

**UAMS Psychiatric Research Institute Grand Opening
Consolidates Research, Education and Treatment**

LITTLE ROCK – Individuals with psychiatric problems ranging from drug addiction to depression now have an extensive array of inpatient and outpatient services in one location. The Psychiatric Research Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) was built not only to improve treatment but to devise new and innovative methods of overcoming mental health issues.

The Institute, which held a grand-opening ceremony today at its new location on the UAMS campus, was eight years in the making. Arkansas first lady Ginger Beebe helped preside over the opening and cut the ribbon. The \$32 million facility, whose six stories encompass 110,000 square feet, is one of only nine institutions in the country combining research and education with inpatient and outpatient care. It marks the first time in 30 years that UAMS has been able to provide inpatient psychiatric care.

“This is a very important day, not just for our department and UAMS but for the entire state,” said G. Richard Smith, M.D., chairman of the UAMS Department of Psychiatry and Institute director. “We have been very fortunate to have the support of so many people – in state government, in the community and here at UAMS, and we could not have accomplished this monumental task without their help. This new Institute is going to open up a lot of avenues for psychiatric patients across Arkansas.”

Located adjacent to the new UAMS hospital slated to open in January, the Psychiatric Research Institute has 40 beds dedicated to psychiatric patients in need of hospitalization, divided evenly among the children’s unit, the geriatric unit, the acute-care for adults unit and the unit treating patients who also have medical needs. The Institute plans to begin admitting patients Feb. 3.

--more--

UAMS Psychiatric Research Institute celebrates grand opening

Page 2

The inpatient areas are on the fifth and sixth floors and will offer state-of-the-art care in high-quality surroundings, with private rooms, standard-setting safety features and other amenities.

The building's first three floors, home to the building's administration, support staff and research divisions, are linked by a grand staircase that runs adjacent to the building's western face. The tall glass façade and the naturally lit atrium on the first floor symbolize an enlightened approach to mental health, Smith said.

"The surroundings within and the feeling given to visitors can be very important as an addition to the care received," he added.

The Walker Family Clinic, located on the second floor, is the outpatient service area. It will host the Institute's specialty programs, including treatment for addictive, eating, anxiety, depressive and post-traumatic stress disorders. The clinic expects more than 50,000 visitors each year.

The next floor includes the Center for Addiction Research and the Substance Abuse Treatment Clinic.

The recently installed a 3 Tesla magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) system on the lower level will provide an important tool in the research of brain-related activity. Part of the Institute's neuroimaging center, the \$3 million, 10,000-pound device is twice as powerful as standard MRI machines. A tesla is a measure of magnetic field strength. One of only two such systems in Arkansas (a similar unit is used by the UAMS Department of Radiology), the new MRI is capable of capturing detailed images of blood flow and brain activity. It also will process those images faster than standard MRI systems, providing improved diagnostic capabilities.

"The Psychiatric Research Institute is going to go a long way toward changing the way people look at mental disorders," said I. Dodd Wilson, M.D., UAMS chancellor. "Dr. Smith and his staff are a great example of what we are trying to do here at UAMS, to serve this generation and generations to come in all they need."

UAMS is the state's only comprehensive academic health center, with five colleges, a graduate school, a medical center, six centers of excellence and a statewide network of regional centers. UAMS has 2,652 students and 733 medical residents. Its centers of excellence include the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, the Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, the Myeloma Institute for Research and Therapy, the Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, the Psychiatric Research Institute and the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging. It is one of the state's largest public employers with about 10,000 employees, including nearly 1,150 physicians who provide medical care to patients at UAMS, Arkansas Children's Hospital, the VA Medical Center and UAMS' Area Health Education Centers throughout the state. UAMS and its affiliates have an economic impact in Arkansas of \$5 billion a year. Visit www.uams.edu.