Moving Medicine Forward with Three Big Endeavors

UF Health Neurosurgery
University of Florida Health and the UF Department of Neurosurgery are continually seeking ways to improve patient quality and safety as well as access to advanced health care, while maintaining an unwavering pursuit of our three-part mission: dedication to patient care, commitment to education, and exploration of new and better treatments. In an effort to achieve all of these goals, and move neuromedicine forward, we have embarked on three huge endeavors.

**THE FIRST** is the addition of Duane Mitchell MD, PhD, as co-director of the Preston A. Wells, Jr. Center for Brain Tumor Therapy. Dr. Mitchell and his team of 10 researchers bring world-class expertise in the use of immunotherapy to treat malignant brain tumors. Thanks to Dr. Mitchell and his team, UF Health is uniquely positioned to provide their first in human clinical trials for our patients.

**THE SECOND** is a first of its kind partnership that is making advanced neuromedical care accessible to millions of patients over a 20-county region. UF Neurosurgery at Orlando Health brings to central Florida state-of-the-art neurological and neurosurgical care on a 24/7 basis.

**THE THIRD** is a new specialty tower that will house both neuromedicine and cardiovascular hospitals. This technically advanced facility will be designed from the ground floor up to provide the “perfect patient experience.”

The current 31 faculty members of the UF Department of Neurosurgery are nationally and internationally renowned in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the brain and spine, as well as for their work in advancing neurosurgical care through clinical and basic science research. With expertise that encompasses virtually every clinical specialty in neurosurgery, our team is dedicated to delivering technically superb, compassionate and timely medical care to our patients.

Sincerely,

William A. Friedman, MD
Professor and Chairman,
Department of Neurosurgery
UF College of Medicine

“This year has witnessed the convergence of three of the biggest and most exciting endeavors in the history of UF Neuromedicine.”

William A. Friedman, MD
Professor and Chairman
Department of Neurosurgery
UF College of Medicine

The Preston A. Wells, Jr. Center for Brain Tumor Therapy adds to its comprehensive brain tumor program with the recruitment of Duane Mitchell, MD, PhD, and his team of 10 researchers. Made possible by a $10 million gift from the Lillian S. Wells Foundation to the University of Florida Department of Neurosurgery, Dr. Mitchell and his team will expand the Center’s mission to provide effective treatments, improve the quality of life for patients and help medical scientists better understand the causes of brain tumors.

The Wells Foundation gift, combined with matching funds from other university sources, launched a $20 million initiative to bring together a team of scientists and clinicians whose work will lead to substantially better treatments for patients with malignant brain tumors. Dr. Mitchell and his research team will expand upon early successes observed in personalized cancer treatment approaches and offer unique clinical options at UF Health for adult and pediatric patients diagnosed with malignant brain tumors.

Dr. Mitchell, who was associate director of Duke University’s brain tumor immunotherapy program, now serves as an associate professor in the department of neurosurgery, director of the UF Brain Tumor Immunotherapy Program and co-director of the Preston A. Wells, Jr. Center for Brain Tumor Therapy at UF.

Center co-directors, Drs. Mitchell and Friedman, hope to see improvements in patient outcomes by approaching brain tumor treatment in combination and in synchronization with current standard treatments.

The Center uses a collaborative approach for treating and investigating brain disease, uniting key health care professionals and closely linking elements of patient care with research. Each patient is treated by a team that includes neurosurgeons, radiation oncologists, neurologists, psychologists, social workers and therapists working in concert to determine an individualized treatment strategy. This approach means combining various treatment protocols, including the use of conventional therapies with clinical trials, integrating medicines for symptom management, and incorporating rehabilitation, education and other support services.

For some cancers, such as advanced and metastatic melanoma, we are seeing for the first time significant and durable clinical responses in a large proportion of patients through the effective generation of an immunologic attack against their own cancer cells. — Duane Mitchell, MD, PhD

The generosity of the Lillian S. Wells Foundation will do more than simply move medicine forward — it will change lives.
As UF Health continues an unwavering pursuit of its three-part mission, a far-reaching goal of UF Health Neurosurgery is to become the primary hub of a neuromedicine axis, by collaborating with like-minded health systems. The success of UF Health Neurosurgery at Orlando Health, highlights one such relationship.

William A. Friedman, MD, who specializes in trigeminal neuralgia, radiosurgery and surgical neuro-oncology, leads the practice.

“Expanding sub-specialty care to Central Florida is a positive way to share knowledge, to serve education and to make advanced neurosurgical care more accessible to millions of patients over a 20-county region.” William A. Friedman, MD

UF physicians at UF Health Neurosurgery at Orlando Health have joined the hospital’s community physicians in providing neurosurgery trauma services for Orlando Regional Medical Center’s Level One Trauma Center. The UF surgeons also work closely with the neurosurgeons at Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children to collaborate in pediatric neurosurgery.

This alliance has opened additional opportunities for the UF Department of Neurosurgery to collaborate with Orlando Health to implement programs and modify models and structures that positively impact the quality of health care for patients across multiple Florida counties. An example is the recent establishment of a comprehensive stroke center offering state-of-the-art medical and endovascular treatments.

Located on Orlando Health’s downtown campus, the six-member practice includes neurosurgeons and one vascular neurologist with diverse backgrounds and expertise in several subspecialties. One area the UF Health Neurosurgery at Orlando Health team specializes in is the diagnosis and treatment of trigeminal neuralgia, a chronic pain condition that impacts the nerve that carries sensation from the face to the brain. This condition can be difficult to identify and manage.

Specialists at the practice also diagnose and treat conditions, such as stroke and other cerebrovascular diseases, epilepsy, spine and spinal cord conditions, brain tumors, movement disorders, hemifacial spasms, cervical and lumbar herniated disc problems. Advanced surgical options, offered include neurovascular surgery, endovascular surgery, minimally invasive spine surgery and adult spine deformity surgery.

For additional information about the UF Health Neurosurgery at Orlando Health practice, call 321.841.7550.

“The health care needs of patients throughout Central and North Central Florida continue to grow, we will seek ways to collaborate on comprehensive clinical programs for adults and children and fortify our role as educational leaders in delivering the highest quality education for future physicians and other health providers.”

David S. Guzick, MD, PhD
UF Senior Vice President for Health Affairs and UF Health President
To accommodate the growing need for advanced neurosurgical care, UF Health has begun work on a new specialty tower. Located just south of Archer Road, the new 216-bed specialty tower will accommodate neuromedicine and cardiovascular hospitals that will provide state-of-the-art care to patients with neurologic, neurosurgical and heart and vascular conditions and will include approximately 18 state-of-the-art operating rooms as well as intensive care units, along with complementary outpatient facilities.

“Neuromedicine and cardiovascular services are both growing fields with increasingly complex technological needs that the new specialty tower will be able to address,” said David S. Guzick, MD, PhD, UF Senior Vice President for Health Affairs and UF Health President.

Construction on the tower is scheduled to begin in summer 2014 with a tentative completion date in 2018. The estimated cost of $400 million will be funded from UF Health’s reserves, philanthropy and money obtained through investments. The specialty tower project will create approximately 800 new construction jobs, and once the tower is operational, another 700 to 800 staff jobs.

Neurosurgery is currently housed in the north tower of UF Health Shands Hospital, but in a space that has become cramped. Moving to this new specialty tower will allow us to expand our services while creating more space for other departments.

UF Health Neurosurgery attracts patients and faculty from across the country and around the world. Expanding this nationally recognized medical program in a larger and more technically advanced space will empower physicians to offer highly specialized care to more patients.

“The new specialty hospital tower will allow us to better address the needs of patients with cardiovascular and neurosurgical issues, much like we are providing care to cancer patients with great success at the UF Health Shands Cancer Hospital.”

Timothy M. Goldfarb, Chief Executive Officer, UF Health Shands

UF Health will break ground on a Neuromedicine and Cardiovascular Specialty Hospital Tower in 2014.
Our Three-Part Mission

Dedication
to providing technically superb, compassionate and timely medical care to our patients.

Commitment
to the education of resident physicians and continuing medical education to practicing physicians in the art and science of neurosurgery.

Exploring
and developing through clinical and basic research at the University of Florida’s Evelyn F. and William L. McKnight Brain Institute, new and better treatments for neurosurgical disorders.

UF Health Shands Hospital consistently earns top-50 rankings in multiple medical specialties in the annual listing of America’s Best Hospitals, published by U.S. News & World Report. Neurosurgery was ranked #1 in the state of Florida in 2013.