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****UTHSCD General Clinical
Research Center starts
Pediatric Subunit

DALLAS--Dr. Charles C.Y. Pak, director of the General Clinical Research Center, and Dr. Charles Ginsburg, interim chairman of pediatrics, have announced a new GCRC subunit for pediatric investigations. The new Pediatrics Subunit, which has been funded for a five-year period, is located in Children's Medical Center where a small number of beds have been made available for special protocols in pediatric research. Funding level for the adult GCRC is currently at \$2 million a year.

Pak, who has been director of the GCRC unit since its inception in 1974, said that at the time the health science center's facility was founded there was no need perceived for highly controlled scientific protocols for children. However, special needs arose, like the case of Stormie Jones whose care demanded the most controlled circumstances for her experimental care that applied the basic science of Drs. Michael Brown and Joseph Goldstein. In those situations, the GCRC began to admit children, he said. Over the years many of the pediatric subspecialty faculty have become interested in doing more controlled studies.

After Dr. Joseph Warshaw became chairman of pediatrics, he met with Pak about the need for more advanced clinical pediatric research. The GCRC director was in agreement, so Warshaw appointed Ginsburg to approach the National Institutes of Health, which oversees GCRCs, about starting a Dallas GCRC program for children. Instead, officials suggested a subunit, rather than beginning a separate pediatrics unit.

Last year a joint grant request for the GCRC to serve adults, and the pediatric subunit was submitted to the NIH. In September a site visit was held and permission granted for the pediatric subunit.

"The NIH had told me to pretty much forget it," said Ginsburg. "But because of the excellence of the adult program, the possibility for shared resources and the opportunity for opening up new areas for children and infants, we were successful." Ginsburg, who is also medical director at CMC, will be in charge of the subunit under Pak and serve as a member of the advisory committee, reviewing all protocols. Assisting him will be Dr. Ricardo Uauy, assistant professor of pediatrics, who will play a major role.

Currently pediatric GCRC studies have begun or are being planned in the areas of cholesterol research, liver transplantation, nephrology, gastroenterology, sleep apnea, neonatology, cardiology and psychiatry. "This unit is not for the Department

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of Pediatrics alone," stressed Pak. "It is for any faculty member who has an interest in subspecialty research in children, and we hope many members of the faculty will join us with their projects."

Ginsburg also pointed out that the new subunit will be far better for children who must go through extended stays in the GCRC than being housed in the adult unit, and also for their families. "Children's is already equipped to deal with situations where children must be hospitalized for long periods of time." It will be much easier on personnel and patients in the adult unit, he said.

Currently nurses who will work with the GCRC subunit in Children's are receiving special training in conducting research procedures.

"We are very happy that the NIH has agreed to let us expand in this direction," said Pak. "The new pediatric subunit will open the doors to many new avenues of research with children that have not been feasible in the past.

"However, this is just the beginning. We need to continue to seek more funds from the NIH as well as find private sources to expand this important work," Ginsburg continued.

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NOTE: The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas comprises Southwestern Medical School, Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and the School of Allied Health Sciences.