

News

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*****\$1.5 million Meadows Foundation gift
provides shared imaging center
for Zale-Lipshy University Hospital
and Parkland Memorial Hospital

The Meadows Foundation of Dallas has awarded \$1.5 million to The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas to complete funding for the construction of an advanced inpatient imaging center.

The facility, to be called the Algur H. Meadows Diagnostic Imaging Center, will serve patients at both the Zale-Lipshy University Hospital (a 160-bed private teaching and referral hospital opening later this year) and at Parkland Memorial Hospital, where many UT Southwestern academic and research programs are based.

Additional funding or in-kind resources for the center -- estimated to cost \$7.5 million -- will be shared by UT Southwestern, Parkland and University Hospital.

The one-and-a-half story Meadows Center will house three state-of-the-art magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) units for clinical diagnosis, as well as for use in medical education and research. The imaging center will be located adjacent to the Charles C. Sprague Clinical Sciences Building on the UT Southwestern campus, and will be connected via underground corridors to both University Hospital and Parkland.

"The shared Meadows Diagnostic Imaging Center will make the most advanced diagnostic MRI technology available to all patients -- those at Parkland and those

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referred to UT Southwestern from all over the world," said UT Southwestern President Kern Wildenthal, M.D., Ph.D.

"Given the demands on Parkland's tax-supported budget, it is clear that the center's advanced instruments would not otherwise be available for the benefit of Parkland's patients," Wildenthal said. "Moreover, the small size of University Hospital would not justify the purchase of these instruments for those patients alone. Thus, a shared facility is essential to bring the best technology to the benefit of patients from both institutions."

Meadows Foundation executive vice president Sally Lancaster, Ph.D., said, "Our directors expressed high esteem for the institutions which will be using the center, and they are especially pleased that its utilization will not be limited to patients of only one hospital or group of doctors."

Three new high-intensity magnets will be installed at the center, including a fast-speed cardiac MRI unit to image the beating heart in one-twenty-fifth of a second and thus show the heart in motion. This is only the second machine of its kind in the world, according to Robert Parkey, M.D., chairman of the Department of Radiology at UT Southwestern and chief of radiology at both Parkland and University Hospital.

"Existing MRI technology can provide good spatial resolution, but imaging takes up to five minutes to complete," said Parkey. "Rapid cardiac MRI provides temporal resolution as well as spatial -- giving us the capability of imaging moving phenomena, such as blood flow and other body processes that occur briefly and then are gone."

"The unit also will permit imaging of brain blood flow and of the gastrointestinal tract -- a virtual 'blind spot' for MRI technology at present," said Parkey.

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Another state-of-the-art magnet at the Meadows Center will combine imaging functions with those that provide measurement of body cell metabolism. "This second magnet will allow us to start metabolic imaging on a clinical basis," Parkey said. "Now we can start applying our basic research findings to patients suffering from heart disease, cancer and other disorders."

A third bay in the Meadows Center will be built to house a magnet that is twice as powerful as the other two. This magnet is expected to serve as a metabolic imaging unit for basic and clinical research and will provide the high resolution needed to detect minute amounts of metabolic chemicals.

Architectural plans for the center are being coordinated by William DeMuth, Parkland's senior vice president for facilities development. Besides creating a series of shielded bays to house the powerful magnets, the building will be equipped with viewing rooms, classrooms and administrative space, DeMuth said. Special piers will be constructed so that the building can be expanded to four floors in future years.

Working with DeMuth is the architectural firm of Harper Kemp Clutts and Parker Architecture/Planning, which has been responsible for designing several buildings on the UT Southwestern campus.

Whereas the Meadows Center will serve as an inpatient MRI facility, the Mary Nell and Ralph B. Rogers Building for Magnetic Resonance Research, which is under construction on the new North Campus, will be an outpatient and basic research facility.

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