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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL SCHOOL AT DALLAS

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DALLAS--The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School will establish a sophisticated disease research center in Parkland Hospital with a grant of \$3,073,791, Dean Charles C. Sprague announced today.

The 13-bed General Clinical Research Center will enable the medical school's scientists to perform delicate and complicated studies of the heart, lungs, bones, kidneys, blood, metabolism and a host of other functions in a strictly-controlled manner.

Patients will be volunteers with disease problems who would stand to benefit from research findings. There will be no hospital bills.

The center will be built in approximately 5,000 square feet on the seventh floor of Parkland attached to the medical school. In return for the space and other utilities, the National Institutes of Health grant will reimburse the hospital district on a patient-day basis.

"This is a very important resource in man's battle against disease," noted Dr. Sprague, "It will provide the most precise control possible in performance of the most complicated research projects."

The dean noted that UTSWMS was one of two schools in the nation awarded the research centers.

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Principal investigator for the center is Dr. Donald W. Seldin, professor and chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine at the school. Director of the facility will be Dr. John M. Dietschy, professor of Internal Medicine, while assistant director will be Dr. Robert N. McClelland, professor of Surgery.

"This will not be a diagnostic center," noted Director Dietschy, adding, "We're talking about patients with diseases already known. We'll have 50 to 70 investigators who may do research on the diseases or other problems in the facility."

For instance, he said, there will be research on atherosclerosis and the control of cholesterol metabolism--a subject vital to the understanding of the nation's No. 1 killer--heart and blood vessel disease.

The various aspects of diabetes will be explored--how various drugs are utilized and why effects like ketoacidosis develop. Congenital defects affecting sex hormones, kidney stones and calcium metabolism, bone disease, and a variety of drug studies are slated.

A major thrust of research here will be in kidney disease and the myriad problems associated with it--vascular clots, abnormal blood cells, calcium balance and depletion of cell types.

Another significant research effort will involve studies aimed at the heart itself: The function of the heart after a myocardial infarction (heart attack), the effects of exercise on heart function, the cause of heart failure, metabolism of the heart muscle, and others.

One investigation will involve hypertension, or high blood pressure and the question of what combinations of drugs are best to treat it. Artificial lungs and the mechanisms of diarrhea will be investigated, along with new forms of treating arthritis.

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Surgical research will involve, among other things, wound healing in relation to agents such as zinc as well as nitrogen metabolism. Hormonal changes in pregnancy, complications of oral contraceptives, development of antibodies to malignant cells, function of the heart after valve replacements, and mechanisms of coma and the normal sleep process will be studied.

Highly trained personnel will be required to perform the patient care and, at the same time, assist in the clinical studies.

"We'll have six people whose function will be to prepare highly specialized diets which, for instance, alter salt or fat content. The nurses will be trained to perform the investigative procedures." Dr. Dietschy said.

The unit will have its own laboratory facilities.

Patients will be admitted to this center only after careful review of the research involved by both center and medical school research committees. Many of the scientists will be carrying out research on separate grants.

"Such facilities exist only at major medical school teaching units," added Dr. Dietschy.

Timetable for construction of the new facility will depend on the progress of Parkland's building program now underway.

The grant--from the General Clinical Research Centers Branch of the Division of Research Resources of NIH--will be funded at the rate of more than a half million dollars a year over a five year period.

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