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**EMBARGOED UNTIL 11 A.M. CDT, FRIDAY, OCT 3, 2008**

## **UT Southwestern selected as study center for National Children's Study**

DALLAS – Oct. 3, 2008 – UT Southwestern Medical Center has been chosen as a study center participant in the National Children's Study, which will examine the effects of environmental and genetic factors on child and adult health.

The National Institutes of Health-led study is the largest of its kind to be conducted in the U.S. The national project will ultimately follow 100,000 children from before birth to age 21, tracking information on topical health issues including asthma, birth defects, diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

With today's announcement, there are now 36 study centers in the NIH project. UT Southwestern will receive more than \$15 million over the next five years to spearhead data-gathering and research with efforts focused on Lamar County, which is northeast of Dallas.

Dr. George Lister, principal investigator and chairman of pediatrics at UT Southwestern, and Dr. Debra Cherry, lead investigator and occupational medicine physician at the UT Health Science Center at Tyler, will lead the North Texas Children's Study Coalition. The coalition of Texas institutions also involves researchers from UT Health Science Center at Houston's School of Public Health and the Battelle Memorial Institute.

"The collaboration that has been forged among these institutions and Lamar County civic leaders demonstrates how resources can be used productively to serve and learn from the children in our state, and ultimately the children of our country," said Dr. Lister, who is pediatrician-in-chief at Children's Medical Center Dallas.

"This is a wonderful and exciting opportunity to study in depth the genetic and environmental factors that influence and shape the health of our nation's infants and children," he said.

The North Texas Children's Study Coalition will begin enrolling pregnant women in 2010. Even though the study will span more than 20 years, results will be made public as the research progresses.

"As the children enrolled in the study reach certain developmental milestones, the National Children's Study will release its findings on those milestones," Dr. Lister said. "These results may

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lead to new questions about children's health and the environment that can be answered later in the course of the study.”

Authorized by Congress in the Children's Health Act of 2000, the National Children's Study is being conducted by a consortium of federal agencies. This includes two NIH institutes, the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Other UT Southwestern researchers involved in the study include Dr. Kenneth Leveno and Dr. Rashmin Savani, both professors of pediatrics. Dr. Margaret Caughy from the UT Health Science Center is also involved with the study.

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