Exploring New Education and Research Affiliations between The University of Kansas Medical Center, The University of Kansas Hospital, Children's Mercy Hospital and Saint Luke's Hospital.

What prompted the University of Kansas Medical Center to begin discussions on potential collaborations?

A. The Greater Kansas City Community Foundation and the Kauffman Foundation issued a Blue Ribbon Task Force Report on higher education in Kansas City in 2005. It called for greater collaboration to advance the quality and quantity of clinical and translational research among life science facilities in the metropolitan area in order to advance the region's effort to become a national leader in this field.
B. At the request of life sciences leadership in the region, a Steering Committee was formed to include the University of Kansas Medical Center, The University of Kansas Hospital, Children's Mercy Hospital, Saint Luke's Hospital, the Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute, the Stowers Institute for Medical Research (where a large majority of principal investigators hold faculty appointments at the KU Medical Center), and the Hall Family Foundation (whose philanthropic gifts have included major investments in research facilities at the KU Medical Center).
C. Given that the Stowers Institute for Medical Research is focused exclusively on basic research, an opportunity exists to leverage the Stowers investment by significantly growing the region's capacity to conduct translational and clinical research. This type of research transfers discoveries from the laboratory to the patient's bedside more quickly. It also could create good jobs for the region.

What is the purpose of the Steering Committee? Which organizations are involved?

A. The purpose of the Steering Committee is to serve as an advisory board to the respective leadership of the University of Kansas, University of Kansas Hospital, Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, and Saint Luke's Health System as they develop and implement aligned educational and research affiliations with the University of Kansas in support of establishing the region as a leading national/international life sciences center.
B. While the work of the committee involves institutions with a presence in both Kansas and Missouri, it is important to note that Children's Mercy Hospital operates a facility in Overland Park, Kansas, and the Saint Luke's Health System operate facilities in Anderson, Johnson, and Leavenworth counties. Both of these hospital systems enjoy national reputations for excellence.
C. Barbara Atkinson, M.D., Executive Vice Chancellor of the University of Kansas Medical Center and Executive Dean of the KU School of Medicine, was asked by the community leaders to serve as chair of the committee. She has briefed the KU Medical Center faculty on the committee's work and posted information regarding the committee on her website at http://www.kumc.edu/evc/partnerships.html. Irv Hockaday, in light of his role as Chairman of the Kansas City Area Life Science Institute, serves as spokesperson for the committee.

What is the scope of work being evaluated by the committee?

The work of the committee focuses on two significant issues:

a. Can we establish aligned teaching affiliations among the leading institutions of this region in order to both elevate their respective educational missions and capabilities and enhance the area's research platform through the enhancement of faculty recruitment and post-graduate support?
b. Can we establish a rich research environment that harnesses the collective potential of this region's leading scientific and medical institutions in order to powerfully advance discovery, facilitate translation, and accelerate clinical application?

What is the involvement of The University of Kansas Hospital?

A. The University of Kansas Hospital has been aware of the broad community conversations since January and has been involved in the steering committee since its inception.
B. The University of Kansas Hospital supports the growth of life sciences research throughout the metropolitan Kansas City area. It is especially important to the hospital that its partner, the University of Kansas School of Medicine, continues to succeed in the life science movement. While it must be recognized that all the organizations involved in the process will have concerns to address, the hospital is hopeful that the process will work through the concerns of all parties and result in a new stronger foundation for the development of the life sciences throughout the region.

Is it unusual for a School of Medicine to have multiple education and research affiliations?

A. It is very common for medical schools to have a variety of academic and research affiliations. In fact, the KU School of Medicine has existing relationships with Veteran's Administration hospitals in both Kansas and Missouri and with the two largest hospitals in Kansas, Via Christi Regional Medical Center and Wesley Medical Center, located in Wichita.
B. The steering committee has engaged a consultant to look more closely at examples of medical school affiliations that involve multiple institutions.
C. Discussions regarding how best to align the University of Kansas with the University of Kansas Hospital, Children's Mercy Hospital and Clinics, and the Saint Luke's Health System are not new. The KU Medical Center has regularly engaged in discussions to explore how collaborations in education and research might serve to advance their missions. Valuable collaborations already exist among several of these institutions.

What are the challenges and concerns of creating these new relationships?

The steering committee has identified a number of concerns that it plans to address including:

- Brand management issues
- Maintenance of respective clinical bases and projected volume growth
- Maintenance of distinctive practice environments and physician retention
- Maintenance of clinical independence and competition

- Medical staff management through the transition
- Achievement of hospital leadership alignment with each other around these goals
- Securing community and state resource support

The Medical Center and the hospitals have expressed confidence that these issues will be addressed before any plan is formalized.

How would expanded collaborations benefit the State of Kansas and the region as a whole?

The goal of any such affiliations would clearly be to:

- Improve patient outcomes by creating better access to clinical trials and new treatments and cures
- Improve educational opportunities for future doctors, nurses and health care professionals
- Create jobs and economic vitality

How would this benefit the University of Kansas?

A. The basic science departments of the KU School of Medicine already enjoy national stature and are consistently ranked among the top 25 such programs in the nation. In order to excel as a great academic medical center, as confirmed by the Blue Ribbon Report, KU must grow its translational and clinical research programs. The work of the steering committee is intended to consider partnerships to do just that.
B. We expect the result to be increased resources flowing into KU Medical Center to support its mission, including significant additional resources from the philanthropic community, as well as increased support from partner hospitals. This will ensure that KU Medical Center continues to thrive and provide quality education and leading edge knowledge to the health care providers who serve Kansas and the region.

How far along is the work? When will it be completed?

A. The University of Kansas Medical Center has selected Chartis, a national health care consulting firm, to inform the Steering Committee's work. The Steering Committee had its first meeting on June 1, 2006. Currently the consultants are interviewing key constituencies and leaders of each of the institutions and learning of their concerns and perspectives related to teaching affiliations, research alignments, and financial plans. The consultants will also survey the nation to determine what models exist that might guide the formation of any new affiliations in this region. At this point the committee has not considered or approved any plan or recommendations of any kind.
B. Consistent with a model development and implementation process with preliminary work streams and timeframes approved at its first meeting, the Steering Committee plans to review the findings of its consultants during the week of August 15th. This will serve as a platform to continue further discussions. The committee has some very complex issues to consider. The members of the committee are committed to taking their time to come to the appropriate decisions. Many constituencies are being consulted and their concerns considered and addressed in any recommendations.

C. It is important to note that the committee's work is purely advisory. The members of the committee cannot bind the participating institutions to any course of action. Only the governing boards of those institutions have that authority.

Contact Information:

Barbara F. Atkinson, MD
Executive Vice Chancellor
University of Kansas Medical Center
913-588-1440
batkinson@kumc.edu

Irene Cumming
President and CEO
The University of Kansas Hospital
913-588-1441
icumming@kumc.edu