

Editor's note: View or download high-resolution photographs of Ralph deVere White, Scott Christensen and a UC Davis Cancer Care Network fact sheet.

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UC DAVIS LAUNCHES NETWORK OF COMMUNITY CANCER CENTERS

Hospitals in Marysville, Merced, Pleasanton, Sacramento and Truckee unite to provide quality cancer care close to home

(SACRAMENTO, Calif.) — UC Davis Cancer Center announced today the launch of a new organization formalizing its collaborations with cancer centers throughout Northern and Central California. Called the UC Davis Cancer Care Network, the organization unites five hospital-based cancer centers dedicated to providing quality patient care in community settings. Scott Christensen, a UC Davis associate professor of hematology and oncology, will serve as medical director of the new organization.

In addition to UC Davis Cancer Center in Sacramento and its satellite clinics in midtown Sacramento, Rocklin and Elk Grove, network members are Fremont-Rideout Cancer Center in Marysville, Mercy Cancer Center in Merced, Regional Cancer Center at ValleyCare in Pleasanton and Tahoe Forest Cancer Center in Truckee.

This is the first network devoted entirely to specialty care for UC Davis and believed to be one of the first dedicated to cancer care for a public institution. UC Davis has operated UC Davis Medical Group — a network of primary and specialty care providers — since 1995.

"This new network is a direct outcome of our leadership role in cancer care and our mission as the region's only National Cancer Institute-designated cancer center," said Ralph deVere White, director of UC Davis Cancer Center. "We are deeply committed to assuring cutting-edge care for patients throughout Northern and Central California, and our new network embodies that commitment."

UC Davis began this effort in 2000 by initiating partnerships with Fremont-Rideout and Mercy Cancer Center. After these successful alliances, UC Davis began discussions with leaders at additional hospitals interested in collaborating with an academic medical center. As a result, ValleyCare and Tahoe Forest joined forces with UC Davis this month. Discussions with additional cancer centers are ongoing.

Christensen will be responsible for overall leadership of the network, including medical quality oversight, strategic management, budget direction and clinical studies guidance. He is a

physician noted for his dedication to patient quality of life and expertise in breast cancer, sarcomas, melanoma, pain management, hospice care and improving access to innovative treatments.

In addition to deVere White and Christensen, the network management team includes Kay Harse, chief administrative officer, UC Davis Cancer Center; Patricia Keast, regional affiliations officer, UC Davis Health System; and Jeanine Stiles, associate director for administration, UC Davis Cancer Center.

"Today we formalize a unique approach to collaborative care by uniting the strengths of a research-based medical center with the insights of community physicians," explained Christensen. "Through the network, patients gain access to the expert cancer care we offer without having to travel to Sacramento. Their physicians are now allied with specialists and researchers who are on the frontlines of developing new diagnostic techniques and novel treatments."

An important feature of the network is "virtual tumor boards." All network sites are linked through state-of-the-art telemedicine technology, giving oncologists and others involved in cancer care convenient opportunities to meet via real-time video-conferencing, share medical information and reach consensus on patient treatment plans. These sessions will also be utilized to evaluate appropriate clinical trials opportunities and identify patients who should be referred to UC Davis for specialty care. UC Davis physicians will also utilize the technology to provide education sessions on the latest advances in cancer treatment. The technical infrastructure for virtual tumor boards was established with funding from Blue Shield of California Foundation and support from participating facilities.

While agreements with network members are distinct based on a menu of service options, the unifying goal is ensuring quality community-based care for cancer patients. This was the driving force behind UC Davis' first collaboration with Fremont-Rideout Cancer Center.

"Our partnership with the UC Davis Cancer Care Network is an extension of our community-based system of health care for the Yuba City/Marysville region," said Theresa Hamilton, chief executive officer of Fremont-Rideout Health Group. "Opening the Fremont-Rideout Cancer Center enhanced our commitment to meeting regional and community medical needs. Our affiliation with the UC Davis Cancer Care Network allows us to bring new forward-reaching technological advances in treatment and state-of-the-art cancer care to our patients in a supportive community environment."

The network has taken a year to finalize with continuous advocacy and support of health system leadership.

"Establishing the Cancer Care Network and expanding our hospital partnerships supports our role as the leading tertiary care provider in the region," said Ann Madden Rice, chief executive officer for UC Davis Medical Center. "These partnerships will make it easier for patients to receive the quality specialty and subspecialty care that we provide. We look forward to expanding these partnerships for the benefit of cancer patients in our region."

UC Davis Cancer Center — the nation's 61st National Cancer Institute center — serves more than 9,000 patients each year at its clinics in Sacramento. The center is the region's only comprehensive, integrated cancer program, providing both basic and advanced cancer care. Its research program is the first to link the physicians and researchers throughout UC Davis with scientists at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory toward the goal of speeding progress on early cancer detection, reducing overall cancer incidence, enhancing patient quality-of-life, improving survival rates and making discoveries that will one day cure cancer. For more information, visit www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer.

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