

■ BHCS forms biotech company to develop and produce patient-specific cancer vaccines

On November 1, 2004, Baylor Health Care System (BHCS) announced its formation of a cancer immunotherapy company, known as ODC Therapy Inc. (Figure 1). ODC will develop, produce, and distribute customized cancer vaccines. Researchers at the Baylor Institute for Immunology Research, led by Jacques Banchemereau, PhD, have invented and optimized processes for the production of personalized cancer vaccines and tested these novel therapies in phase I clinical trials. Since 1998, more than 375 personalized vaccines have been manufactured and used to treat 63 patients diagnosed with late-stage metastatic melanoma.

"Studies in these patients have established that dendritic cells loaded with tumor antigens can induce tumor-specific immune responses and clinical responses. ODC has selected a protocol for further development wherein dendritic cells generated from patients' blood monocytes are loaded with a killed allogeneic tumor cell line as a source of tumor antigens," said Dr. Banchemereau. "In a recent phase I dose-escalation



Figure 1. Jacques Banchemereau, PhD, Michael A. E. Ramsay, MD, and Joel Allison at the press conference announcing the formation of ODC Therapy Inc., Baylor's new biotech company. Photo: Karen Campbell.

trial, 20 patients with metastatic melanoma were treated with this first-generation vaccine. While the results of this trial are still being analyzed, one patient has demonstrated a complete remission and another remarkable partial remission. At 22 months since the beginning of the trial, 14 of the patients are still alive."

"Therapies selected for further development by ODC initially will include a melanoma vaccine for late-stage melanoma patients. ODC also will measure immune cell production and cytokine release in response to tumor-specific antigens as a service for clinical and research applications," said Tom Turpen, PhD, president, ODC Therapy Inc. "These assays provide valuable insights for the discovery of mechanisms of disease and healing. This information may be used to develop prognostic and diagnostic markers for health management and surrogate markers for clinical trial endpoints."

ODC Therapy Inc. is a privately held company owned by BHCS and initially will lease facilities in the Zelig H. Lieberman Research Building, home to Baylor Institute for Immunology Research. BHCS provided \$4 million in seed financing in July 2004. Prior investments in technology development and clinical trials include more than \$20 million in funding at the Baylor Institute for Immunology Research, a component of Baylor Research Institute. The board of directors of ODC comprises experienced leaders in the Dallas business, financial, and health care communities. ODC has licensed a portfolio of intellectual property from Baylor Research Institute and Rockefeller University in the fields of cancer immunotherapy and immunomonitoring. Technology Innovation Group Inc. served as a consultant to BHCS during the establishment of ODC.

■ BUMC receives Consumer Choice Award for the ninth consecutive year

BUMC has been named a 2004/2005 Consumer Choice Award winner by National Research Corporation, the nation's leading health care performance measurement firm. BUMC is the only hospital in Dallas County to receive this recognition. BUMC was also recognized in many categories, including best overall quality, best doctors, best nurses, most personalized care, latest technology and equipment, and widest range of services.

■ BUMC opens neurosurgery center with CyberKnife and Gamma Knife technology

In December 2004, BUMC opened a neurosurgery center with advanced technology, including the CyberKnife and Gamma Knife. Baylor is the first medical center in North Texas and one of only a few in the country to offer both of these stereotactic radiosurgery systems, which can treat brain, spine, and other tumors considered inoperable or untreatable with conventional therapy.

"Having both the Gamma Knife and the CyberKnife at Baylor gives patients and physicians the most advanced means available for targeting and destroying tumors," said David Barnett, MD, chief of neurosurgery at BUMC. "We are recruiting a team of neurosurgeons and other specialists who have extensive experience using the technology and who have published research on these newest radiosurgery procedures."

Stereotactic radiosurgery systems allow physicians to accurately deliver high doses of focused radiation, minimizing damage to healthy tissue. The Gamma Knife—which uses multiple radiation beams to target brain tumors, vascular malformations, and other disorders of the brain—also treats patients who experience functional disorders, such as trigeminal neuralgia, Parkinson's disease, and epilepsy. The CyberKnife synchronizes treatments to a patient's breathing rhythm and has on-board, real-time imaging to precisely target tumors in and around the brain. This technology can treat patients with tumors in the spine, lungs, pancreas, liver, and prostate.

The addition of the two latest-model technologies will further expand the treatment capabilities of Baylor's premiere neuroscience program, already ranked as one of the country's best by *U.S. News & World Report*.

ACCOLADES

Joel Allison, BHCS's president and chief executive officer, was named one of the 100 most influential people in health care in a fall 2004 *Modern Healthcare* ranking of health care leaders.

Robert T. Gunby, MD, an obstetrician-gynecologist on BUMC's medical staff, received the Texas Academy of Family Physicians Patient Advocacy Award in July 2004. Dr. Gunby is also president-elect of the Texas Medical Association.

Marvin J. Stone, MD, director of Baylor Sammons Cancer Center, received a lifetime achievement award from the International Society for the Study of Macroglobulinemia at the society's recent meeting in Paris. At the same meeting, **Kartik Konduri, MD**, an oncologist on BUMC's medical staff, received a young investigator award.

Remy Tolentino, RN, MSN, CNA, BC, chief nursing officer at BUMC, recently received *NurseWeek's* Nursing Excellence Award for Leadership.

■ **Baylor Regional Medical Center at Plano offers amenities, innovative technology**

When the doors of Baylor Regional Medical Center at Plano opened on December 1, patients experienced an upscale, elegant atmosphere supported by advanced technology to enhance patient care. "Our goal is to create the ideal patient experience. Through detailed design and advanced technology, we want to make each patient's visit to Baylor Plano



Figure 2. Jack Aenchbacher, president of Baylor Regional Medical Center at Plano, at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

safe, efficient, and very comfortable," said Jack Aenchbacher, president, Baylor Regional Medical Center at Plano (Figure 2).

Patients stay in private, larger-than-average hospital rooms designed with warm colors, soothing pieces of artwork, and soft lighting. Each room features a 30-inch LCD television, and Internet access is available. Patients can order room service meals from a selection of food choices appropriate for their medical condition. Nursing unit design is more amenable for patients, families, and staff as well. Each floor has a family lounge, including kitchen resources. Family members are welcome to stay overnight in the patient's room. Throughout the hospital, large windows bring in natural light. A garden-level patio outside the medical center cafeteria provides family members and patients a tranquil place to visit. Attention to landscaping enhances the grounds and complements the interior décor.

New technology allows physicians to digitally display, archive,

and transmit images such as x-rays, computed tomography images, and magnetic resonance images. This advanced technology offers immediate access to images and other medical records and the ability to manipulate images and conduct online consultations with other physicians.

Baylor Regional Medical Center at Plano is located at 4700 Alliance Boulevard, near the intersection of President George Bush Turnpike and Preston Road in Plano. The 350,000-square-foot hospital currently has 96 inpatient beds; 32 day-surgery patient beds; 12 operating rooms; and a full-service, 24-hour emergency department treating all general adult emergencies. Five cardiac catheterization, electrophysiology, and interventional laboratories and two endoscopy suites are available for diagnostic and treatment services. Next door to the hospital, the nearly 189,000-square-foot Baylor Medical Pavilion I houses a full range of primary care physicians and medical specialists, as well as the Baylor Scoliosis Center and the Women's Imaging Center. Construction will begin soon on a second physician office building.

■ **Baylor opens rehabilitation center at the Frisco Soccer and Entertainment Center**

BHCS has become a signature partner of the Frisco Soccer and Entertainment Center. It is building a 6000-square-foot rehabilitation cen-

ter that will be seamlessly integrated into the northwest corner of the stadium (Figure 3). BHCS will become the exclusive hospital and health care partner of the facility and of local soccer associations for 13 years, beginning in 2005. BHCS will also be the title sponsor of the East

Gate entrance to the stadium and will provide a mini triage center at the adjacent soccer park for major events.

The on-site, outpatient rehabilitation center will provide aquatic and sports medicine equipment and programming for athletic testing, performance enhancement, and injury treatment. Physical therapists, occupational therapists, athletic trainers, physical medicine physicians, and orthopaedic surgeons will provide care to patients. In addition to treating sports-related injuries, the clinic will treat a variety of acute and chronic musculoskeletal conditions.

■ **Baylor Motion and Sports Performance Center opens**

The Baylor Motion and Sports Performance Center opened in November at the Baylor Tom Landry Center. The center features advanced technology that uses 12 high-speed digital cameras to capture motion. After the motion is recorded, an interactive report is created, providing both digital video and a three-dimensional skeletal reconstruction of the person in action,



Figure 3. Artist's rendering of the Baylor Rehabilitation Center at the Frisco Soccer and Entertainment Center.

in conjunction with graphical results of various parameters.

Patients with cerebral palsy, osteoarthritis, sports injury, stroke, amputations, spinal cord or brain injury, and joint replacement may benefit from the analysis. Coaches may also refer athletes for assessment: "We can evaluate the mechanics of such high-speed activities as baseball pitching and batting, track and field events, golf, and tennis," Dr. Fabian Pollo, director of orthopaedic research, explained. "Such analyses give coaches and trainers the information they need to help athletes correct or fine-tune their performance and minimize their susceptibility to injury."

■ **Baylor Regional Medical Center at Grapevine offers surgery for newborns**

Responding to the community's needs, Baylor Regional Medical Center at Grapevine's neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) has expanded services to include surgeries for newborns. "When we designed our new NICU in 2002, we had this expanded service in mind," said Martha Langham, RN, director of women's and children's services at Baylor Grapevine. "Because of the trusting relationship they have developed with our staff, many parents of babies in the NICU express disappointment when their child must be transferred to another facility for surgery." Along with neonatal surgery, the NICU has added a high-frequency ventilator. In fiscal year 2004, 2723 babies were born at Baylor Grapevine.

■ **BUMC studies common arthritis drug for colon cancer prevention**

The Baylor Charles A. Sammons Cancer Center is participating in a research trial to evaluate the effects of the COX-2 inhibitor drug celecoxib on patients diagnosed with stage I colon cancer. The double-blind study, sponsored by the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project, is evaluating whether the drug can prevent the recurrence of cancerous polyps. The impact of celecoxib on quality of life, disease-free survival, and occurrence of new cancers of the colon and rectum also will be evaluated.

Michael D. Grant, MD, the Baylor Sammons physician serving as principal investigator of the trial, said, "The implications of the study will be far-reaching beyond the population of patients who have colon cancer. The findings may subsequently be applied to all people at risk of developing the disease."

UPCOMING CME PROGRAMS

The A. Webb Roberts Center for Continuing Education of Baylor Health Care System is offering the following programs:

- **Eighth Annual Tyler Breast Conference**, March 19, 2005, at Harvey Convention Center, Tyler, Texas
- **Update in Liver Diseases 2005**, March 19, 2005, at BUMC
- **Urology Update 2005**, March 25, 2005, at BUMC
- **Third Annual Baylor Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Course**, May 5-7, 2005, Lakewood Country Club, Dallas, Texas

For more information, call 214-820-2317.

In addition, **Focus on Research** forums at BUMC offer CME credit. The following speakers will be featured:

- **Cara A. East, MD**, January 11, 2005
- **C. Richard Boland, MD**, February 15, 2005
- **Cody C. Arnold, MD**, March 8, 2005
- **William D. Dockery, MD**, April 12, 2005
- **William Duncan, PhD**, May 17, 2005

The forums will be held in the Folsom Room, 17 Roberts, at noon. For more information, contact Janet Collinson at 214-820-2687.

■ **Baylor physicians begin breast cancer studies involving ductal lavage and anastrozole**

The W. H. and Peggy Smith Baylor Sammons Breast Center is conducting the Serial Evaluation of Ductal Epithelium (SEDE) study. Approximately 100 women are expected to enroll in the study at Baylor; they will undergo ductal lavage every 6 months for 3 years to determine if their breast ducts contain atypical cells that could develop into cancer. "The purpose of the study is to define the relationship between the study of cells from ductal lavage and long-term breast health in women at high risk of breast cancer," explained Joyce O'Shaughnessy, MD, principal investigator. "Outside of ductal lavage there is no way to detect atypical breast cells in the breast ducts. This procedure can tip us off that a woman may be at particularly high risk for breast cancer, allowing us to discuss risk-reduction options with her."

Early treatment options may be increasing as well. The W. H. and Peggy Smith Baylor Sammons Breast Center is participating in the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast Project's B-35 study comparing the aromatase inhibitor drug anastrozole with tamoxifen in women with ductal carcinoma in situ. While anastrozole has been approved for invasive breast cancer, this study is the first to test the drug for noninva-

sive breast cancer. Michael Grant, MD, principal investigator, said anastrozole has been shown to be superior to tamoxifen in other studies involving invasive breast cancer. "We're always looking for better drugs with fewer side effects to improve survival in women with breast cancer," explained Dr. Grant.

■ **Baylor's Internet site receives award**

Baylor's Internet site, www.BaylorHealth.com, was honored at the eHealthcare Leadership Awards in November 2004. Competing against more than 1200 entries, Baylor received a silver award in the category of "Best e-Business Site," which highlights the success of the site in supporting business operations. BaylorHealth.com assists with patient support, physician referrals, fundraising activities, and employee recruitment. Baylor also received a distinction in the "Best Overall Internet Site" category, which is judged on the basis of features such as medical care support, health care content, navigation, site design, and interactivity.

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