

PCMH, ECU Dedicate the East Carolina Heart Institute



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Press Release Summary: Officials from East Carolina University and University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina dedicated the East Carolina Heart Institute today. The Heart Institute puts ECU and Pitt County Memorial Hospital "at the forefront of progress and the cutting edge of the future," said Dr. W. Randolph Chitwood, director of the East Carolina Heart Institute.



We focus on the patient's continuum of care, bringing together all specialists needed to diagnose, treat and manage disease.

Press Release Body: GREENVILLE, N.C. – Officials from **East Carolina University** and **University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina** dedicated the **East Carolina Heart Institute** today. Several hundred invited guests joined leaders from the two organizations to celebrate the facility. **The Heart Institute puts ECU and Pitt County Memorial Hospital** "at the forefront of progress and the

cutting edge of the future," said **Dr. W. Randolph Chitwood, director of the East Carolina Heart Institute.**

"What we dedicate today is a concept called the East Carolina Heart Institute that encompasses these new facilities, dedicated to the people of this region, and to the physicians, researchers, educators and staff devoted to their care," said **Chitwood**, who is cardiothoracic surgery and vascular surgery at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. He is also senior associate vice chancellor for health sciences at ECU.

The dedication ceremony, held at the **East Carolina Heart Institute** at **ECU**, capped more than four years of work to bring a world-class cardiovascular disease institute to eastern North Carolina. In 2004, the General Assembly approved \$60 million for a research, education and outpatient care facility at **ECU. Pitt County Memorial Hospital** secured private funding for a \$160 million bed tower. Today, leaders from the two organizations celebrated the end of construction on both facilities.

Many who attended the ceremony also toured the two facilities after the event ended. The crowd included local and state officials, donors and other friends of each organization.

The celebration marked *"the most significant collaboration University Health Systems and East Carolina University have ever undertaken,"* said **UHS CEO Dave McRae**. *"It's the biggest step of a journey we started more than 30 years ago, when a small county hospital and a fledgling medical school committed to forming the world-class academic medical center we're part of today,"* McRae said.

ECU and **PCMH** have been "joined at the hip" for decades, **ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard** said. *"The East Carolina Heart Institute is the latest partnership between us, and it will make a major and lasting impact in eastern North Carolina, the entire state and beyond,"* Ballard said.

The new buildings aren't the only sign of a new approach to heart disease for **ECU** and **PCMH**. The two organizations have also redefined their model for treating cardiovascular illnesses. Both have organized their clinical staffs around illnesses and disease processes, rather than following a traditional model based on academic specialties. That new model encourages more information-sharing among doctors and puts new emphasis on patients' best interests, Chitwood said. *"This new*

model of care delivery is an innovative way to blend the science and art of medicine so that we add value to the patient,” **Chitwood** said.

The prevalence of cardiovascular disease in North Carolina justifies the massive investment in treating and researching heart and vascular illnesses. Cardiovascular disease is the second-leading cause of death in the state, and nearly a quarter of N.C. residents suffer from cardiovascular ailments.

Planning for the **East Carolina Heart Institute** dates to early 2003. **ECU** and **PCMH** held a groundbreaking for the Heart Institute in March 2006. In addition to the six-story 375,000-square-foot bed tower, the **Heart Institute at Pitt County Memorial Hospital** spawned a pair of companion projects: construction of a massive central utility plant to power the new building and the relocation of Moye Boulevard.

The Heart Institute at Pitt County Memorial Hospital has 120 cardiovascular beds, six operating rooms, seven interventional laboratories, three electrophysiology labs and a heart-healthy cafeteria, all designed to create the optimal patient care environment.

The four-story, 206,000-square-foot **East Carolina Heart Institute at ECU** houses science and clinical research, robotic-surgery training, future space for simulation laboratories, a clinical outpatient facility for cardiovascular diseases, a database center, offices and an auditorium.

The Heart Institute at Pitt County Memorial Hospital will open Jan. 5. ECU physicians have been seeing patients at the East Carolina Heart Institute at ECU since September. For more information please visit www.eastcarolinaheartinstitute.com

Web Site: <http://www.eastcarolinaheartinstitute.com>

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