



Wisdom for Your Life.

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Dr. Roberto Fernandez Named Medical Director Pat Summitt Alzheimer's Clinic at The University of Tennessee Medical Center**

**Knoxville, Tenn.,** Sept. 22, 2016 – Leaders at The University of Tennessee Medical Center announced neurologist Roberto Fernandez, MD, MPH, PhD, as the medical director of The Pat Summitt Alzheimer's Clinic. The clinic is set to open at the end of the year and bears the name of the late Pat Summitt, the legendary college women's basketball coach who passed away earlier this year after facing Alzheimer's disease.

Fernandez will assume the medical leadership role and assist in the opening of the clinic, which The University of Tennessee Medical Center is opening on its campus with partnership funding support from The Pat Summitt Foundation. The establishment of the clinic is intended to dramatically increase research, clinical trials, treatment, education, and other critical elements relative to the growing need for Alzheimer's related services. The number of Americans with the disease currently stands at approximately 5.5 million and is expected to nearly triple, to 16 million, by the year 2050.

"Dr. Fernandez is one of the leading experts on Alzheimer's disease and possesses the knowledge and passion to make the Pat Summitt Alzheimer's Clinic a diagnosis, treatment, caregiver support, and research facility that is truly worthy of Pat Summitt's name," said Steve Ross, senior vice president for Strategic Development at The University of Tennessee Medical Center. "His leadership also will allow us to attract the most talented clinicians to join and grow our outstanding Alzheimer's team at the medical center on behalf of those facing Alzheimer's disease throughout our region."

Fernandez is a physician scientist and board certified neurologist with a subspecialty in behavioral neurology. Since 2012, he has served as an assistant professor of neurology at University of Virginia Health and has worked with the Memory and Aging Care Clinic. At the clinic he works closely with a multidisciplinary group of neuropsychologists, nurses, care coordinators and social workers to provide care and support to patients suffering from dementia. He is also actively involved in clinical trials of new treatments for Alzheimer's disease. He is an accomplished and published researcher who served as either principal investigator or sub-investigator on numerous Alzheimer's research projects and clinical trials. A native of Costa Rica, he received his MD degree at the Universidad Autónoma de Centro America. He earned a Masters of Public Health degree and a Ph.D. in Neurobiology and Anatomy at the University of Rochester Medical Center in Rochester, New York, where he subsequently completed a residency in Neurology and fellowship in behavioral neurology.

“I am humbled and honored to be named medical director of the Pat Summitt Alzheimer’s clinic,” said Dr. Roberto Fernandez. “Over the past several months, I’ve learned much about Coach Summitt’s extraordinary accomplishments and most importantly, her incredible human qualities. Her courageous fight against Alzheimer’s disease is one that is taken on by millions of patients around the world. Thanks to Coach Summitt’s vision and generosity, the tireless work of so many at UT Medical Center and the Pat Summitt Foundation, and the support of countless donors, we will now be able to expand access to high quality care and provide compassionate support to patients and caregivers across the region, all while advancing Alzheimer’s research with the ultimate goal of finding a cure.”

The sharp rise in Alzheimer’s cases and the need for Alzheimer’s related care and services is particularly high in the Knoxville region. Medical center representatives say their current Alzheimer’s clinic, which treats and serves about 3,000 patients and their families, is at its maximum capacity. That number is expected to increase to approximately 6,000 within the next five years.

“We are excited to reach this historic milestone in our partnership with The University of Tennessee Medical Center to establish the Pat Summitt Alzheimer’s Clinic,” said James A. Haslam, II, chairman of the Pat Summitt Foundation Advisory Board. “It was coach Summitt’s wish that making a difference in the battle against Alzheimer’s disease would be part of her lasting legacy. Today, as we welcome Dr. Roberto Fernandez and his wife, Dr. Denia Ramirez, to Knoxville, we have taken another significant step in accomplishing that goal on behalf of Pat.”

Fernandez will be working with the medical center in the establishment and opening of the clinic as he completes elements of his work in Virginia and is scheduled to begin full-time at The Pat Summitt Alzheimer’s Clinic in early 2017.

### **About The Pat Summitt Foundation**

The Pat Summitt Foundation, a Fund of East Tennessee Foundation, was established by Pat Summitt in November 2011. Dedicated to winning the fight against Alzheimer’s disease, its mission is to award grants to exemplary non-profit organizations that advance research for treatment and a cure, provide support for patients and caregivers, and educate the public on Alzheimer’s disease.

In January 2015, The Pat Summitt Foundation formed a strategic partnership with the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville, TN, to create The Pat Summitt Alzheimer’s Clinic. The Foundation launched a 5-year, \$2.5 million fundraising campaign to help establish the Clinic that is now scheduled to open late this year. To learn more please visit [www.patsummitt.org](http://www.patsummitt.org), like us on Facebook.com/patsummittfoundation, and follow us on Twitter: @webackpat.

### **About University of Tennessee Medical Center**

The mission of The University of Tennessee Medical Center, the region’s only hospital to achieve status as a Magnet® recognized organization, is to serve through healing, education and discovery. UT Medical Center, a 609-bed, not-for-profit academic medical center, serves as a referral center for Eastern Tennessee, Southeast Kentucky and Western North Carolina. The medical center, the region’s only Level I Trauma Center, is one of the largest employers in Knoxville. For more information about The University of Tennessee Medical Center, visit online at [www.utmedicalcenter.org](http://www.utmedicalcenter.org).