



Wisdom for Your Life.

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### The Pat Summitt Clinic to Advance Alzheimer's Care; Honor Legendary Coach

**Knoxville, Tenn.,** Jan. 15, 2017 – As the number of patients afflicted by Alzheimer's disease grows to epidemic proportions in the United States, The University of Tennessee Medical Center has opened The Pat Summitt Clinic to expand its treatment capabilities, research initiatives and family support and educational programs for Alzheimer's and other dementias. The clinic opening fulfills the wishes of the late Pat Summitt, the legendary longtime coach of the Tennessee Lady Vols basketball team who raised national awareness about Alzheimer's after being diagnosed with the disease in 2011. Summitt passed away in 2016.

"The establishment of The Pat Summitt Clinic at The University of Tennessee Medical Center allows us to dramatically increase our research, clinical trials, treatment, education, family caregiver support and other critical elements relative to the growing need for Alzheimer's related services throughout our region and beyond," said Joe Landsman, president and CEO of The University of Tennessee Medical Center. "It's fitting that the clinic honors the unparalleled drive, determination and commitment that Coach Pat Summitt demonstrated, and taught so many of us, whether it was in an effort to win a national championship or on a mission to seek an end to a terrible disease. The latter will prove to be Pat's greatest legacy."

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.

Shortly after Summitt's diagnosis, she and her son, Tyler Summitt, created The Pat Summitt Foundation, with a mission to award grants to non-profit organizations dedicated to making advances in care and research aimed at finding a cure for Alzheimer's. In January 2015, with Coach Summitt in attendance, The University of Tennessee Medical Center and The Pat Summitt Foundation announced the formation of a strategic partnership to create the clinic, with the foundation launching a 5-year, \$2.5 million fundraising campaign to provide partnership funding to help the medical center create the 7,500 square-foot-clinic.

"Mom fought Alzheimer's head on and when faced with the diagnosis, just as she handled every opponent she ever faced, she never hid in the shadows and she never admitted defeat," said Tyler Summitt. "Now with the opening of the clinic, in a way she's won her final game against Alzheimer's and the proof is the trophy that is The Pat Summitt Clinic. More victories for mom will come with every patient and caregiver that walks through those doors and is impacted by this clinic."

The need for the clinic and its growth capabilities in the Knoxville and Southeast region is immense. While The University of Tennessee Medical Center currently provides care for 3,000 patients and families facing Alzheimer's and other dementias, there is a waiting list for appointments. According to Landsman, the medical center is aggressively recruiting nationally recognized physicians and other experts in the field to help the clinic double its patient volumes in the coming years to accommodate the estimated need of approximately 6,000 patients and families. Additionally, as the medical center grows its Alzheimer's research and clinical trials initiatives, there are plans to create a 2,500-square-foot research lab to complement the clinical space.

The Pat Summitt Clinic is located in the Brain & Spine Institute at The University of Tennessee Medical Center. It is led by medical director Dr. Roberto Fernandez, a nationally recognized neurologist, researcher, and leading expert on Alzheimer's disease. According to Fernandez, The Pat Summitt Clinic will be well positioned to bridge the gap that so often exists between basic scientific research and clinical practice. Fernandez and his multi-disciplinary team will pursue multiple avenues of research that will advance our knowledge of Alzheimer's disease and may lead to treatments and interventions that can slow or possibly stop cognitive decline and improve quality of life for those facing the disease.

The patient focused approach is evident in numerous design elements of the clinic. A large aquarium in the lobby of the clinic, artificial lights behind shutters against the walls inside patient rooms that simulate appealing natural light, and a careful selection of materials and color schemes throughout the clinic are all meant to provide a soothing and comforting environment for patients and visitors, according to medical center representatives.

“Pat's vision for The Pat Summitt Foundation was to make a difference in this disease starting here in East Tennessee through funding of education, patient and caregiver care, and clinical research,” said foundation advisory board chair, James A. Haslam, II. “The opening of The Pat Summitt Clinic at The University of Tennessee Medical Center is a realization of that vision that will have an impact on thousands of lives now and in the years to come.”

Representatives from the medical center and the foundation announced the opening of the clinic Sunday at a small event for Summitt's family, Lady Vol family, and those instrumental in the creation of the clinic. Landsman acknowledged that the first few patients of The Pat Summitt Clinic were actually seen in late December, as team members felt strongly about ensuring that Summitt's legacy to advance care for Alzheimer's disease occurred in the same year as her passing.

The announcement comes at the beginning of “We Back Pat” Week, a creation of the Southeastern Conference (SEC), in cooperation with its 14-member institutions. During this, the sixth “We Back Pat” Week, January 16-23, SEC member institutions' women's basketball teams will highlight the efforts of The Pat Summitt Foundation during their home games. The week-long initiative is focused on bringing awareness and recognition to the foundation and its fight against Alzheimer's disease.

The medical center and foundation also will hold an open house on Sunday, Jan. 29, 2 – 4 p.m., where members of the public can receive a tour of The Pat Summitt Clinic. For more information about The Pat Summitt Clinic or for volunteer opportunities at the clinic, visit [www.utmedicalcenter.org/pat-summitt-clinic](http://www.utmedicalcenter.org/pat-summitt-clinic).

**[About The Pat Summitt Foundation](#)**

The Pat Summitt Foundation, a fund of East Tennessee Foundation, was established by Pat and Tyler Summitt in November 2011. Its mission is to award grants to 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 to create The Pat Summitt Clinic. The Pat Summitt Clinic will greatly improve access to healthcare services for families and patients facing Alzheimer's disease in a facility created to advance Alzheimer's research, detection, treatment, family caregiver support, and ultimately, lead to a cure. To learn more please visit [www.patsummitt.org](http://www.patsummitt.org), like us on facebook.com/patsummittfoundation, follow us on Twitter @webackpat and on Instagram @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).