

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

UMMC TAPS NEW CEO FOR ADULT HOSPITALS

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JACKSON, Miss. — Kevin Cook has been named chief executive officer of the University of Mississippi Medical Center's adult hospitals, effective July 8.

A native of Miami, Fla., Cook had served as president and CEO of St. Vincent Medical Center in Toledo, Ohio, and was the Metro President of Toledo for Mercy Health Partners, part of a large non-profit health system operating in Ohio and Kentucky, before joining UMMC. He takes over for Dr. Janet Harris, chief nursing executive officer, who had served as interim-CEO since 2011.

UMMC's adult hospitals include the University Hospital, Wallace Conerly Critical Care Hospital, and the Winfred L. Wiser Hospital for Women and Infants on the Medical Center campus in Jackson and Holmes County Hospital in Lexington.

Cook earned his bachelor's degree from Hobart and William Smith College in Geneva, N.Y., in 1990 and joined the U.S. Marine Corps, serving from 1991-99. He earned his Master of Science in business administration from Boston University and took on his first role in health care as an administrator at River Region Health System in Vicksburg in 2002.

In 2006, Cook made the switch to not-for-profit health care, transitioning to COO of Mercy Hospital Mt. Airy in Cincinnati in 2006. Within that system, he soon took on leadership roles in Scranton, Pa., then Toledo, where he oversaw a number of projects at the regional health-system level, helping to improve financial performance through operational transformation. He also initiated outreach activities with a coalition of community partners that are helping to reinvigorate economically challenged parts of Toledo.

"Mr. Cook is a highly qualified executive with an impressive record of leadership in health care, and his skills are a good match for our organization as we work toward our vision for the growth and development of the UMMC clinical enterprise," said Dr. James Keeton, UMMC vice chancellor for health affairs.

"He takes over for Dr. Harris, who has provided outstanding leadership during the interim period and who now is able to return to her full-time role as chief nursing executive officer."

Cook says he was happy to return to Mississippi.

"I love this part of the country. This is my third time living in this state between being stationed in Meridian and working in Vicksburg," he said. "And there's a real opportunity to be able to make a difference on a statewide basis. There probably is no institution in the state as well positioned to make a difference for the citizens of the Mississippi from a health and wellness perspective than this institution."

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The University of Mississippi Medical Center, located in Jackson, is the state's only academic medical center. UMMC encompasses five health science schools, including medicine, nursing, health related professions, dentistry and graduate studies, as well as the site where University of Mississippi pharmacy students do their clinical training. The Medical Center's health-care enterprise includes five hospitals in the University Hospitals and Health System, and University Physicians, the faculty group practice. The Medical Center's threefold mission is to educate tomorrow's health-care professionals, conduct innovative research to improve human health, and to provide the highest quality care available to the state's population. A major goal of the Medical Center is the improvement of the health of Mississippians and the elimination of health disparities. For more information, contact the Division of Public Affairs at 601-984-1100 or visit us on the Web at umc.edu/publicaffairs