

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

UMMC SENIOR LEADER ANNOUNCES TRANSITION PLANS

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JACKSON, Miss. – Dr. James E. Keeton, vice chancellor for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine, has announced he will retire at the end of the next academic year, June 30, 2015. Keeton has served in the role since July 2009, the first six months on an interim basis.

A national search will be conducted to identify the next leader of the Medical Center. The process will yield two-to-three candidates for final selection by University of Mississippi Chancellor Dan Jones, with the approval of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning Board.

"This is a bittersweet decision for me," Keeton said. "Every day I've worked at the Medical Center since 2002 has been a privilege. To be able to serve my alma mater in this way has been pretty special. I've had opportunities to work with people – inside and outside UMMC – that would never have come my way but for this job."

The vice chancellor, who has a dual role as dean of UMMC's medical school, essentially acts as the chief executive of a \$1.6 billion enterprise engaged in health professions education, research and patient care. The Medical Center encompasses six health sciences schools with more than 2,900 students and employs more than 9,600 people.

Keeton, 74, is a native of Columbus, Miss. He graduated from the University of Mississippi and earned his medical degree at UMMC. He trained in surgery and pediatric urology at UMMC and in London, England. He served two years in the Medical Corps of the United States Navy at the rank of lieutenant commander. He was in the private practice of pediatric urology for 27 years.

Keeton has led the Medical Center through some challenging times, including during the recession of 2008 and the rollout of the national health-care law. Despite those external factors, his tenure has seen the planning, funding and groundbreaking for a new School of Medicine building, the implementation of a \$90 million electronic health record system, and the recruitment of more than 30 individuals to senior leadership positions.

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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 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 click [here](#).