January 31, 2012

UAB today announced a new joint venture with Russell Medical Center in Alexander City, Ala., to enhance oncology services provided in the Lake Martin and surrounding areas. This partnership, UAB Medicine – The Cancer Center at RMC, is the first relationship of its type for both parties.

"It has always been our mission to combine excellence in clinical care, research and education for the pursuit of curing cancer in our patients," says James Bonner, M.D. chair of UAB's Department of Radiation Oncology. "We already have a working relationship with Russell Medical Center, and this new collaboration can provide the latest technologies and therapies with the highest possible precision for fighting cancer to the patients in the region."

The UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center will work closely with RMC's medical oncologist and

staff to support and expand the local treatment program by providing access to UAB Medicine's best practices in cancer care, broader access to clinical trials, continuing medical education for nurses and oncologists and access to the latest education about advancements in the treatment and detection of cancer.

“Our experienced and knowledgeable physicians, scientists and staff use the most advanced technology and techniques available, such as intensity modulated radiation therapy, to deliver a nationally recognized quality of patient care,” says Bonner, who also is a senior scientist in the Experimental Therapeutics program and senior advisor in the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center.

“Russell Medical Center has always been a leader in the health care community of Alabama,” says Jim Peace, Russell Medical Center President and CEO. “This joint venture with UAB Medicine is a continuation of the mission of our hospital and provides the stability of cancer services to the area for years to come. We strive to provide the Lake Martin area with the very best health care has to offer and excellence in cancer care, treatment, research and education, and UAB Medicine is synonymous with that reputation.”

The Cancer Center at RMC opened in June 2001 and offers a multi-disciplinary care team including a medical oncologist, radiation oncologists, skilled oncology nurses, dosimetrist, radiation therapist, clinical dietician, case manager and support staff. “It’s important for Lake Martin residents to know that we are not selling our center, says Peace. “We retain ownership of the building and its contents, and employees will continue to be our personnel. We have a new logo bearing the UAB Medicine brand which we proudly display on our campus. Patients will in essence receive treatments from a UAB Medicine facility without having to travel to Birmingham. It’s a win-win for Russell Medical Center, UAB and residents of the Lake Martin area.”

Innovation in health care is an integral part of UAB Medicine and its strategic plan, AMC21 , to become the preferred academic medical center of the 21st century. Collaborations with regional health-care providers are extremely important to improve health-care delivery as is UAB's focus on interdisciplinary, patient-centered research with hopes of delivering new therapies faster and safer from the laboratory to the bedside.

"We look forward to working with Russell Medical Center to leverage each other's strengths and offer access to leading-edge cancer care and research to Alexander City and surrounding communities," says Edward Partridge, M.D., director of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center and immediate-past president of the American Cancer Society Inc. "UAB Medicine's more than 350 cancer scientists and clinicians are making discoveries every day, and with this new relationship, we can increase access to those discoveries to this region, ultimately saving more lives."

The UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center is among the 40 cancer centers in the nation to meet the stringent criteria for the National Cancer Institute's comprehensive designation. The center is a leader in groundbreaking research, reducing cancer disparities and leading-edge patient care.