



NEWS RELEASE

Jan. 15, 2013

Contact: Carmelle Malkovich, 602-746-9303 (pager)

Barrow Opens Groundbreaking ALS Center

New Center Expected to Attract Patients around the Nation

Barrow Neurological Institute at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center today announced the opening of a new groundbreaking center expected to bring Arizona to the forefront of research and medical treatment for one of the world's most devastating and debilitating diseases - ALS, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

The Gregory W. Fulton ALS and Neuromuscular Disorders Center at Barrow will provide state-of-the-art comprehensive medical services to patients and is expected to become a national leader in clinical research. The 32,000-square-foot facility was primarily funded through the support of Ira A. and Mary Lou Fulton, whose son Gregory Fulton died from ALS in 2011. The Fultons donated \$2.7 million to Barrow Neurological Foundation in 2011 for the creation of the center.

"This new center will provide our patients with the latest comprehensive medical services to improve the quality of life for patients and their family members, and will pave the way for the future of ALS research," says Shafeeq Ladha, MD, clinical director of the Gregory W. Fulton ALS and Neuromuscular Disorders Center at Barrow.

In addition to ALS, the center will provide treatment for other neuromuscular disorders including muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis. Dr. Ladha estimates that the center could see a 50 percent increase in patient volume and will include patients from throughout the country.

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is a progressive and neurodegenerative disease in which the cells that control voluntary muscle movements die, leading to paralysis and, ultimately death. Scientists don't yet know what causes ALS and there is no cure. There is just one FDA-approved medication that slows disease progression and it is only marginally effective. Most individuals die from ALS within three to five years from the onset of symptoms. The researchers at Barrow's Gregory W. Fulton ALS and Neuromuscular Disorders Center expect to change that. The new center will integrate researchers and medical staff so that they work side by side with patients and together develop new treatments.

"At most ALS centers, it's not the norm for researchers to interact directly with the patients and families that they're trying to impact," says Robert Bowser, PhD, director of the Gregory W. Fulton ALS and Neuromuscular Disease Research Center at Barrow and one of the nation's leading ALS researchers. "Clinical care and research are usually two separate silos but that's not the case at Barrow."

—more—



NEWS RELEASE

2-2-2-2

Barrow Opens World-Class ALS Center

2-2-2-2

This new integrative approach will allow the center to develop and test new treatments quickly. “We believe that we will be leaders in bringing new drugs to the forefront,” says Dr. Bowser. “Some of these will be tested for the first time ever on patients at our center.”

Although the center just opened its doors, several research studies and clinical trials for ALS are currently underway. As many as 30 trials for other neuromuscular disease will also be offered.

Other highlights of the new center include:

- Seven subspecialty-trained neurologists
- Social workers, nutritionists, respiratory therapists, and physical, speech and occupational therapists
- 16 consultation rooms, 4 treatment rooms
- A therapy gym
- An infusion suite
- Two dedicated clinical research suites
- A new tissue banking program to allow scientists to better understand the pathology of the disease
- Two labs for specialized testing
- A resource center stocked with materials about neuromuscular diseases
- Community classes

“The new center is essentially a one-stop shop for patients to receive all their ALS care”, says Dr. Ladha. “Before, services were fragmented and patients had to travel to different locations for different aspects of their care. Now they can receive all their medical care in one place.”

— Barrow —