MU med school expansion tied to tobacco tax hike

15 hours ago • Associated Press

MU MENTION P. 2

COLUMBIA, Mo — A University of Missouri plan to expand its medical school with a second clinical campus in Springfield likely won't happen without an increase in the state's tobacco tax, university leaders said Wednesday.

They were joined by business and health leaders at a news conference in Springfield to show support for raising the cigarette tax — the lowest in the nation — from the current 17 cents per pack to 90 cents. Missouri voters will consider the ballot measure known as Proposition B in Tuesday's general election.

When asked if a failed ballot measure would scuttle the plans for the proposed Springfield campus, Columbia campus Chancellor Brady Deaton replied: "Unless there's some alternative (funding), that would not allow this initiative to occur."

The cigarette tax hike is expected to generate between $283 million and $423 million annually, according to the state auditor's office. Half of the extra money would go to public school districts, with 30 percent set aside for higher education and 20 percent to pay for efforts to keep people from starting to use tobacco or help current users quit.

The Columbia-based School of Medicine wants to provide third- and fourth-year medical students with experience treating patients at CoxHealth and St. John's Hospital in southwest Missouri.

Most of the medical school's physical expansion would occur in Columbia, which now admits just 96 new students each year from 1,500 applicants. Construction of a new medical education building in Columbia would cost an estimated $30 million, with another $3 million needed for
physical improvements at the two Springfield hospitals. Operational costs would require another $10 million annually.

Under the proposed expansion, Missouri would boost its first-year class by 32 students, a one-third increase.

The tobacco vote is the third effort in the past decade to boost state revenue with a cigarette tax hike. Voters rejected a 55-cent-per-pack increase by about 31,000 votes in 2002, and a 2006 ballot measure calling for an 80-cent increase failed by about 61,000 votes.

Still, University of Missouri President Tim Wolfe remains confident that voters will support the measure, particularly with the stipulated benefits for funding education.

"The (political) environment is much more ready for a positive vote on this than it was previously," he said.

The measure could also benefit from the absence of organized opposition from the largest tobacco companies. That's because the measure would eliminate a loophole that allows makers of cheaper brands to recoup money they paid into a state fund set up to offset costs associated with smoking-related illnesses.

The Missouri Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association, though, opposes the tax increase and is warning voters that the guarantees of increased education spending is subject to the future whims of Jefferson City lawmakers. A pair of recent state appeals court rulings sided with the state when it didn't deliver on statutory obligations to restrict money for certain functions.

"The state's budget is a shell game. There is no lock box guarantee that Prop B will increase education funding," reads one "Vote No on Prop B" flier distributed by the trade group.

Business leaders from Columbia and Springfield and the CEOs from the two Springfield hospitals joined University of Missouri officials Wednesday at the news conference. Jon Swope, president and CEO of Mercy Springfield, which operates St. John's Hospital, emphasized the public health benefits of the tax hike and its expected impact on driving down the number of smokers in Missouri.

He described seeing hospital patients smoking on the sidewalk of the smoke-free complex, "with their IV poles, or in wheelchairs or in hospital gowns."

"That's the power of addiction," he said.

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Business, health leaders rally for Mo. tobacco tax

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — Missouri business, health and education leaders are joining forces to boost support for increasing the state's tobacco tax.

Proposition B on Missouri's Nov. 6 ballot seeks to raise the cigarette tax from the current 17 cents per pack to 90 cents.

Missouri's tax is now the lowest in the nation. Voters rejected smaller increases in 2002 and 2006.

Education officials hope to tap into the nearly $300 million the increase is projected to generate each year, with most of the revenue going toward public schools.

A news conference is scheduled Wednesday at the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce. Participants include top leaders of the University of Missouri system, the system's Columbia campus and CoxHealth and Mercy health systems of Springfield.
O'FALLON, MO. • Al Nevers, a 56-year-old trucker from Illinois, isn’t a smoker. But on a recent swing through Missouri, he stopped at a U-Gas station on Bryan Road to pick up a carton of Newports.

The cigarettes were for his friends back in Chicago.

“When they hear I’m going to Missouri, they say, ‘Hey, get me some cigarettes,’” Nevers said.

Cigarettes are cheaper here because of Missouri’s lowest-in-the-nation tobacco tax – 17 cents per pack. On Tuesday, state voters will decide whether they want to shed that distinction.

Proposition B would raise the tax to 90 cents per pack. That would move Missouri closer to the middle nationally, giving the state the 33rd-highest rate. Taxes on other tobacco products sold in Missouri also would rise.

Supporters say the measure would benefit both public health and education. The money generated — an estimated $283 million to $423 million a year — would be earmarked for public elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, and programs that discourage youths from smoking and help smokers quit.

“It’s a win-win-win for the state of Missouri,” Norm Siegel, president of the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City, said at a recent rally in the Capitol Rotunda. The foundation and the American Cancer Society have helped bankroll the campaign and the initiative petition that got the measure on the ballot.

Opponents, led by cigarette makers and retailers, say that if the tax passes, Missouri businesses will lose their edge in luring cross-state customers such as Nevers. Lower cigarette sales could result in lower sales tax revenue for cities and counties.

Also, the increased tobacco tax revenue might not boost education funding because legislators could use it to supplant current school money, opponents say.
“Just because that money goes in the front door doesn’t mean current appropriations will stay the same,” said Ron Leone, who is running the opponents’ campaign for the Missouri Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Stores Association PAC.

Similar concerns about whether politicians could be trusted with the tax money helped defeat an 80-cent cigarette tax increase in 2006 and a 55-cent increase in 2002.

Supporters call the opponents’ arguments scare tactics. They say they have built in safeguards, such as mandatory audits, and are confident the new tobacco tax money would go to schools.

Specific budget proposals won’t be drawn up until state revenue estimates are set, but several key legislators said in interviews this week that if Prop B passes, they would try to abide by voters’ wishes to increase education funding.

“If we have a real bad downturn, I think we can do it,” said Rep. Rick Stream, R-Kirkwood, who is in line to head the House Budget Committee if he is re-elected. “If the public has voted for that, I don’t see why I should get in the way of it.”

House Speaker Tim Jones, R-Eureka, said he would follow Stream’s lead as budget chairman. Jones said he was misquoted in media reports that indicated he would ignore voters’ will on Prop B allocations.

“I was trying to explain there’s just no guarantee of future legislatures ever being bound by that,” Jones said.

Even so, there’s precedent for following voters’ instructions on school money, said Roger Kurtz, executive director of the Missouri Association of School Administrators. He cites the state sales tax for education, known as Proposition C. It passed in 1982.

“Thirty years of track record on Prop C is all I need to feel comfortable that this is going to work,” Kurtz said of Prop B.

With the election just five days away, both sides are airing television ads. But the supporters’ coalition, called Missourians for Health and Education, is outspending opponents by about 2½ to 1.

The anti-smoking forces built a broader coalition this time by slating most of the tax proceeds for education instead of hospitals, as previous ballot proposals did.

Drafters also eliminated a pricing loophole that benefits smaller cigarette makers. That change led the largest tobacco companies, including R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., to sit out the fight.

A recent Post-Dispatch/News 4/Kansas City Star poll found the measure had a sizable lead — 52 percent to 40 percent, with 8 percent undecided.

HEALTH IMPACT CITED
Both sides agree that raising tobacco tax rates by a significant amount would reduce cigarette sales, particularly to price-sensitive adolescents. Other states have proved that.

Mississippi, for instance, increased its cigarette tax by 50 cents in 2009. Consumption of cigarettes is now the lowest it has ever been in Mississippi, according to the Tax Burden Report on Tobacco.

Missouri Auditor Tom Schweich’s revenue estimate for Prop B is based on proponents’ estimate that if the tax is raised, cigarette sales in the state will decline by about 30 percent — from about 521 million packs sold annually to 362 million packs sold.

In addition to higher cigarette taxes, Prop B would levy a 25 percent tax on loose tobacco for rolling cigarettes and a 15 percent tax on cigars and other tobacco products.

Prop B supporters say reducing smoking would boost Missourians’ health, as well as the state budget.

Missouri currently has the 11th highest smoking rate in the country, based on 2010 data. Nearly 21 percent of adults and more than 18 percent of high school students smoke.

The toll on public health includes lower life expectancy, higher lung cancer and heart disease rates and thousands of deaths each year because of smoking-related illnesses.

For Missouri taxpayers, the bill is more than $532 million a year spent by the Medicaid program for medical care related to smoking.

“Why are we encouraging smoking with such a low tobacco tax?” asks Warren Erdman, a Kansas City businessman and University of Missouri curator who is helping lead the tax campaign. “We have to fix this, and now’s the time to do it.”

Under Prop B, public elementary and secondary schools would get 50 percent of the new tax money while higher education would get 30 percent.

The remaining 20 percent would go to programs aimed at helping people steer clear of smoking.

Examples include: training middle school youths as peer counselors to discourage smoking; helping college students address campus tobacco policies on secondhand smoke; and furnishing nicotine replacement medication and counseling for smokers who want to quit.

Such efforts are privately financed now — for example, by the St. Louis-based Missouri Foundation for Health. The group’s $4-million-a-year anti-smoking campaign began in 2004 and ends this year. Program Director Matt Kuhlenbeck said the long-term savings on medical care for people who quit or never start smoking produced a return of $4.60 for every dollar invested.
Missouri should be spending $72 million a year on tobacco control efforts, according to a formula set by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But the state spends less than $60,000, a record that earned Missouri an “F” from the American Lung Association.

Under Prop B, a new pool of tobacco cessation money would be overseen by a nine-member board appointed by the governor.

Opponents have criticized the set-up, saying that an unelected board can’t control state purse strings. Also, Prop B would allow the board members to be employed by groups that receive no-bid contracts for tobacco cessation work.

“The same groups that spent the money to put Proposition B on the ballot and are currently spending millions on the campaign to get it passed will be the ones most likely to profit should it succeed,” said Leone, the petroleum marketers executive.

The American Cancer Society, which has contributed more than $2.8 million toward the Prop B campaign through various arms, including its cancer action network, denied any self-interest.

“We have no intention of seeking any of this money, period,” said a statement from Kelly Headrick, vice president of field advocacy operations.

The cancer society also disputes opponents’ argument that Missouri cities and counties could lose local sales taxes.

If consumers buy fewer cigarettes, they will spend the money on other goods, Prop B supporters say, so sales taxes wouldn’t suffer.

In any event, Missouri’s new 90-cent tax would still fall below the $1.49 national average and well below the $1.98 tax in Illinois. So, Illinois residents would still have reason to cross the border to buy smokes.

However, four bordering states — Kentucky, Tennessee, Nebraska and Kansas — would have lower rates, ranging from 60 cents in Kentucky to 79 cents in Kansas.
Rhonda Gibler named new MU director of budget

By Lizzie Johnson
October 31, 2012 | 5:45 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Rhonda Gibler, MU associate vice provost for MU Extension management, was a little surprised when she got word of her new job position: MU director of budget.

Gibler was at an annual fall meeting for extension work in North Dakota when she received the call.

"I immediately called my husband," Gibler said. "I never felt like I was an absolute shoo-in. There was a little bit of surprise, but I mostly felt honored that they were entrusting me with this. I know it's an important role."

Gibler, 43, will succeed Tim Rooney starting Jan. 1, 2013. Rooney, who has held the position since September 2002, announced his retirement in August.

Rooney was out of the office Tuesday and not immediately available for comment.

Gibler's responsibilities will include planning MU's budget, coordinating fiscal and budget goals with the University of Missouri System and advising the chancellor and provost about long-term planning, trends and resource allocations.

Gibler will be paid $161,906 yearly, said Mary Jo Banken, MU News Bureau director.

Gibler said she has no immediate plans for change.

"I really like to dig in and learn things before I make rash assessments about what may or may not need to change," Gibler said. "It is healthy in all organizations for change to shape what we are doing. I want to do that in a careful and educated way."

As associate vice provost for extension management, Gibler led a committee that created a three-year plan to investigate fee generation and review revenue generation policy.
Before her job as associate vice provost, she served as assistant vice provost and director of administrative management for MU Extension and as a research analyst for the Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan.

Banken said a successor for Gibler has not been named.

Gibler said she has the skills to be successful at the job.

"There are the numbers," she said. "But then there are all of those things that don't quickly translate to a number that also matter. The fact that I enjoy both of those things will give me strength in this position. I'm very excited."

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.
Gibler named MU’s chief budget director

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

Rhonda Gibler has been named chief budget director at the University of Missouri.

She starts next semester, replacing longtime director Tim Rooney, who is retiring.

Gibler is now associate vice provost of management services for MU Extension. Her appointment was announced yesterday.
MU seeks greater academic prestige

One key area is faculty citations.

By Janese Silvey

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

University of Missouri professors need to boost the number of researchers in their fields citing their studies, Chancellor Brady Deaton said.

MU Chancellor Brady Deaton:
"We're not happy where we are."

Compared with peers in the American Association of Universities, MU is near the bottom when it comes to citations, one of three primary criteria for membership to the prestigious group.

"We're not happy where we are," Deaton said during a general faculty meeting yesterday.

Although slightly better, MU also is near the bottom in terms of how many faculty members belong to national academies and are receiving other types of awards.

Affecting all of those areas is the fact MU's faculty consists of a smaller percentage of full-time professors than AAU peers.

At MU, 32 percent of faculty are full-time professors; the AAU public peer average is 49 percent. MU has disproportionately higher percentages of assistant and associate professors. That
means other institutes have "more senior people who have been around longer and are better networked," Provost Brian Foster said.

Citations also depend on how large a field of study is. MU has a lot of researchers in specialized areas, "so there aren't as many people out there to make citations," he said.

Professors can, and sometimes do, cite their own papers when following up on previous work.

"But you don't want to do it deliberately for the purpose of boosting numbers," said Professor Stephen Montgomery-Smith, chairman of Faculty Council's faculty affairs committee. "People would notice."

Deaton and Faculty Council Chairman Harry Tyrer are forming committees to study each of the three areas and how MU can improve.

There's external and internal pressure to do so.

Although MU's AAU membership isn't in immediate danger, membership is no longer in perpetuity. The association last year voted out the University of Nebraska, the first time in the group's history a member has been ousted.

One sticking point is that the AAU does not count funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture when tracking a university's grant funding. That means millions of federal dollars award to MU's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources aren't taken into consideration. "That's a fight we're having internally," Deaton said.

And unless Congress takes action, sequestration kicks in Jan. 2. That across-the-board federal spending cut would equate to a loss of about $17 million in research dollars to MU and would make it tougher for the university to compete for future federal research money.

Adding to the pressure on MU is UM System President Tim Wolfe's new plan to have the four campuses compete for state funding. Wolfe has said he plans to withhold 5 percent or 10 percent of state funding — as much as $40 million — and distribute those dollars to campuses based on campus-specific goals and performance. For MU, Deaton said, AAU membership is a "very high priority."

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Made In The U.S.A.' May Actually Be Hurting American Retailers

American-made products may be hurting American stores.

U.S. consumers tend to place a higher value on products they believe are made in America, according to a recent study from researchers at the University of Missouri. But for some, more valuable can translate into more expensive, making potential customers less likely to buy the American-made version of a product.

For the study, which was published in the Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, Assistant Professor Jung Ha-Brookshire showed participants a white cotton shirt and told them it was made in China and that it sold for $40 in stores. She then showed them the same shirt and told them it was made in America. The participants placed the value of the American-made version at $57 on average.

"Americans tend to severely overvalue apparel produced entirely in the U.S.,” Ha-Brookshire said in a press release. “This is concerning because if Americans place higher values on these U.S. products, they perceive those products to be too expensive and are less likely to buy them.”

The study’s findings mirror fashion trends, which indicate that buying American-made clothes is increasingly viewed as a luxury. Some have tried to cash in on the new luxury label; Dave Schiff launched a site aiming to sell American-made clothes to shoppers as a premium product, according to The New York Times. Mike Catherwood, a co-host of radio show “Loveline,” told The Huffington Post in September that his year-long experiment to only buy American-made clothing has turned out to be quite expensive.

In addition, a “Made in the USA” label has more weight with consumers than in the past, according to a survey cited last month by Seeking Alpha. That trend is also holding true on the campaign trail; a Mitt Romney ad uses the claim that Chrysler moved production of its Jeep vehicles to China under President Obama as a way to attack the president’s handling of the auto bailout.
Stevan Whitt has been appointed chief medical officer at the University of Missouri Health System and associate dean for clinical affairs in the MU School of Medicine.

He replaces Les Hall, who will serve as interim dean of the medical school when Robert Churchill's retirement becomes effective tomorrow.

Whitt, a critical care specialist, is now chief of staff for University Hospital and a division chief at the medical school.

As chief medical officer, he will be responsible for providing physician leadership to promote quality patient care at all MU Health Care facilities.

Whitt received his medical degree from MU in 1994 and has received an "Outstanding Faculty Teacher" award seven times.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU Health Care, University Hospital physicians shift jobs

By Ashley Crawford
October 31, 2012 | 7:13 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Three MU Health Care physicians will move into new positions in the next two months.

Effective Thursday, the current chief of medical staff at University Hospital, Stevan Whitt, will become the chief medical officer for MU Health Care and senior associate dean for clinical affairs in the MU School of Medicine. Whitt has served as chief of the Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Environmental Medicine in the MU School of Medicine. He received his medical degree from MU in 1994.

Also on Thursday, the current vice chief of medical staff at University Hospital, James Kessel, will step into Whitt’s position as chief.

Kessel has been at MU since 2003 and currently serves as professor of clinical surgery in the School of Medicine.

The vice chief typically replaces the chief at the end of a two-year term, but Kessel will move up early because of Whitt’s new position, Mary Jenkins, public relations manager for University Hospital, said. This means that Kessel will serve as chief for three years and two months. Kessel’s vice chief of medical staff position is currently vacant, and Jenkins said there are no details on when it will be filled. The vice chief is usually a position elected by the University Hospital medical staff.

Also on Wednesday, Thomas Selva was named chief medical information officer of the MU Health Care and medical director of the Tiger Institute for Health Innovation, effective Dec. 1. Selva has been at MU since 1989 where he started as a resident physician and became an assistant professor in 1992.

Supervising editor is Zach Murdock.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU Life Science Business Incubator provides help for biomedical companies

By Ruisha Qian
October 31, 2012 | 8:52 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – For cancer patients, a loss of weight can be fatal.

Due to shifts in molecules and accelerated metabolisms, cancer patients can suffer from significantly decreased appetites, fatigue and a drastic loss of body mass in muscles, bones and organs. It’s known as cachexia anorexia syndrome, or cachexia in short. Even patients who take in more calories or receive supplementary nutrition can lose lean body mass.

Cachexia hinders treatment responses and patients’ ability to tolerate treatments. It also can cause the heart, liver, kidneys and other organs to fail. According to the National Institutes of Health, about 20 to 40 percent of cancer patients die from cachexia.

Researchers have long been experimenting with therapeutic approaches to combat cachexia. Thirty years ago, they found a particular class of molecules called melanocortins that control metabolism. But when they began to use it as a potential drug, they kept running into cardiovascular side effects and didn’t understand what caused them, Kenneth Gruber, a cardiovascular specialist, said.

Gruber was the first scientist to solve this problem. In 2009, the idea of setting up a company and developing a drug that could slow down the metabolism without causing cardiovascular problems struck him while he was doing research at the California Polytechnic State University. He founded the company Tensive Controls Inc., but he needed a good home for the start-up. He found one in Columbia.

The MU incubator

Owned by MU and operated by the Missouri Innovation Center, the MU Life Science Business Incubator at Monsanto Place opened in January 2009.

So far, 22 tenants of the incubator have raised $20 million from federal grants, state programs and private investors, and they have created 50 local jobs, incubator CEO Jake
Halliday said.

"We made an active decision as part of our strategy to increase high-quality, high-paying jobs by attracting young companies and creating a high-tech company cluster," he said.

The biggest selling point for the incubator is its collaboration with MU. There's an abundance of scientific discoveries, but not all of them grow into commercial products that benefit people — partly because of a lack of necessary help.

"There's a bottleneck in understanding these inventions, primarily in shaping them to their proper potential market and generating the necessary connections, personnel and exposure to get them off the ground," Brian Thompson, founder of Elemental Enzymes Inc. said. A tenant of the incubator since 2011, Thompson's company is developing a new kind of enzyme that is reliable and durable. Its products will find applications in various industries and in pollution treatment.

Existing enzymes are "notoriously unstable," Thompson said. With the help of the incubator, Elemental Enzymes has been able to move from an idea to a product that will enter the market in 2013.

"The incubator helps critically evaluate scientific ideas and provides a location to further refine these ideas into viable business entities and mature products," Thompson said. He said being close to fellow entrepreneurs also helps new businesses avoid the kinds of early pitfalls that doom some companies in their early years.

A relocation for Tensive Controls

Gruber knew access to animal trials would be crucial in his company's quest to develop a drug intended for use with people. So when Wake Forest University took back its promise to let Tensive Controls use its animal facilities, Gruber had to find a new home for his startup.

Thousands of business incubators across the nation are eager to attract new tenants. But when Gruber searched Google for incubators with access to animal trial facilities, there weren't many. The MU incubator caught his attention because of its access to state-of-the-art animal-trial facilities and the oncology research team at the College of Veterinary Medicine. MU welcomed the future tenant with a generous offer in addition to the animal facilities. Gruber got a faculty position as an adjunct professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Physiology. He also was offered lab space at the Dalton Cardiovascular Research Center, right across the street from the incubator.
"It's one-of-a-kind offer," Gruber said. "There's nothing close to this."

He immediately seized the opportunity, which he said was "too good to not explore." Gruber remembers the early afternoon of Labor Day 2010, when he emailed Halliday and received a positive reply within two hours. In January 2011, the company moved to its new home. Having lab space at the incubator and access to animal-trial facilities could easily save the company hundreds of millions of dollars, Gruber said. The incubator charges him the same amount of money as any faculty member at MU.

“What we get is better facilities than most pharmaceutical companies do and at a much lower cost,” Gruber said. Carolyn Henry, director of the Scott Endowed Program in Veterinary Oncology, which collaborates with Tensive Controls on its animal trials, said the move indicates a consistent effort to bring researchers of different disciplines together to solve real-world problems.

“It continues to build on our efforts in translational medicine, where we can take an answer to a clinical problem from idea stage, through animal studies, into human clinical trials and eventually to the market — all here on the MU campus,” she said. Meanwhile, MU could benefit from shared revenue, intellectual property and an enhanced image as a leader in scientific discovery, Henry said. The companies also can provide training for students in biomedical innovation.

**Work bears fruit**

Tensive Controls conquered the cardiovascular side effects in a little more than two years, which is very fast, Gruber said. Then came the question of how to get the drug to cross various barriers to reach the brain, which controls metabolism. After 1 1/2 years of research, the company improved the drugs so that they could go through the digestive system intact.

The company finally developed two slightly different drugs that could reverse accelerated metabolisms with no cardiovascular side effects. The two drugs, which Gruber calls “Olympic candidates,” have been undergoing small-animal trials for months, and both are working well.

Tensive Controls isn't the only one trying to develop drugs that combat cachexia. Three or four drug companies have made attempts to bring similar drugs to the market, but all of them have failed in small-animal trials. The National Institute of Health gave Tensive Controls a preliminary grant of $200,000, evidence of its confidence in the company. After the two new drugs were developed, the institute awarded it another grant for $2 million. When the final drug candidate is chosen, the company will select a contract manufacturer to produce it in
large quantities and use it in large-animal trials.

"Companion animals are the closest we can get to human beings," Gruber said. "They stay with us, eat what we eat, and the cancers in these animals are quite similar to those in human beings."

Among all the companies trying to develop similar drugs, Tensive Controls is the first to propose going into companion-animal trials.

"We have faith in our drug," Gruber said, referring to the Scott Endowed Program. "We think we can go into a totally objective study on large animals, conducted by independent clinical trial networks in the vet school."

The animals will be recruited from cancerous pets brought to the Veterinary Medicine Teaching Hospital by their owners. The trials have been approved by the National Institutes of Health and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee on campus, and they are expected to begin early next year.

Gruber estimated the company won't get into human clinical trials until 2014. If everything goes well, it would get approval from the Food and Drug Administration for the final drug in 2015 or 2016.

The drug could open a therapeutic window for cancer treatment as patients could tolerate radiation or chemotherapy longer. Gruber said he would be glad to leave a legacy of raising cancer survival rates.

Tensive Controls won't be the one to produce the final drug, however. If the drug shows great prospect, Tensive Controls would likely be bought by a major pharmaceutical company, marking its graduation from the incubator.

So far, one company, Dietary Innovation LLC, has graduated from the incubator, and its owner, Joe Parcell, decided to keep it in Columbia, Vice President Quinten Messbarger said. Halliday said most companies that graduate from the incubator are likely to stay here, attracting investments from outside and boosting the economy.

Supervising editor is Scott Swafford.
MU freshmen continue to live in converted study rooms

By Lizzie Johnson
October 31, 2012 | 4:43 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA -- In August, a record-breaking number of freshmen flooded MU, prompting the need for temporary housing for 80 students. They moved into converted study rooms, student staff rooms and off-campus accommodations.

Nearly two months later, 15 students are still in makeshift rooms, making it the longest time students have been in the temporary housing at MU.

"We do our best to squeeze students in as best we can," said Frankie Minor, director of MU Residential Life. "We do lose students over the course of the semester, but there is a possibility that some of those students may not have a permanent assignment before the end of the semester."

Students living with student staff members were relocated to permanent accommodations in mid-October. As of last week, there were still 15 students living in converted study rooms in Hudson and Gillett halls.

The study rooms have an aluminum and glass wall, which is covered with white board inserts. They do not have a closet or carpet.

The number of students in temporary housing edged up from fewer than 25 in fall 2011 to 80 this August, paralleling an increase in enrollment. This fall, 6,560 freshmen enrolled at MU, up from 6,168 in fall 2011.

Enrollment for first-year students has increased steadily for years — by more than 1,500 since 2007.

MU freshman Maya Shelton said her temporary room in Gillett Hall has become her home.

"I don't really want to move out," she said. "I like having my own room, so I am enjoying that aspect. Plus, I am all settled in now."
Minor said Residential Life will work with students to remain in the spaces permanently, depending on the residential community’s need for the study space.

In the spring semester, about 310 residents of Johnston Hall will be displaced because of renovations.

"We tend to lose up to 500 or more students from the fall to the spring semester, so we are not concerned," Minor said. "Some move off-campus, some study abroad, and some move in with their fraternities or sororities. It’s a combination of factors. We will able to find housing for everyone."

The housing overflow catalyzed a change in how contracts are given out. A fixed number of housing contracts will be available for fall 2013 and will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis.

Minor said he did not know how many contracts will be available to freshmen yet.

"If you drag your heels and wait, your chances will be less and less," Minor said. "The bottom line is that we try to accommodate as many people as possible, but there is only so much we can do."

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.
New fMRI technology allows better preparation for brain surgery

By Taylor Weatherby
October 31, 2012 | 2:20 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA —Tap your fingers. Wiggle your toes. Move your tongue. Rhyme words with cat.

These tasks are protocols known as paradigms, and though they may seem simple, the brain works hard to complete them. That’s what the new functional magnetic resonance imaging system at University Hospital is able to detect. The fMRI system uses paradigms to determine the location of different functional parts of the brain — in addition to the brain’s anatomy and problem areas, visible on an MRI — and create a three-dimensional picture of a patient’s brain.

The hospital’s is the only fMRI machine in mid-Missouri; the next closest is in St. Louis.

"An MRI scan shows the brain’s anatomy and any abnormalities, but not the function of those abnormalities," said Dr. N. Scott Litofsky, chief neurosurgeon at University Hospital. "The fMRI shows the anatomy and abnormalities and the areas of eloquent functions in the anatomy."

Twenty-five years ago, while still in training to become a neurological surgeon, Litofsky assisted a surgeon who was performing a procedure to remove a tumor that was near the speech region of the patient’s brain. Because fMRI wasn’t available at the time to determine the exact location of the speech area of the brain, the person’s ability to speak was affected. Today, fMRI technology could determine the precise location of the speech region and help preserve its function, he said.

How it works

Before a patient is evaluated in the fMRI machine, he or she will have already had an MRI scan of the brain to detect the problem area, said Mark Burton, MRI supervisor of University Hospital.

During an fMRI scan, the patient lies inside the MRI device and performs certain paradigms, such as reading words or moving fingers, which lets the fMRI determine where the functional parts of the brain are located. The paradigms include motor, visual, language and picture
naming tests. Which tasks a patient performs is determined by the problem area in his or her brain.

After the fMRI scan has been performed, the computer system creates a 3-D map of the patient's entire head and brain. That image is displayed on a monitor so a technologist and the patient's physician can look through every millimeter of the brain, Burton said. The colors in the map indicate increased oxygen levels, which shows the active areas of the brain that were stimulated by the paradigms: red indicates high activity; green, no activity; and pink indicates parts of the brain that do not control particular functions, such as speech or movement.

The regions of the brain that control movement, speech, sight and other functions are generally in the same areas for most people; however, most people aren't aware that the areas' size, shape and exact location may vary from person to person, Litofsky said.

"The brain is pretty complicated," he said. "Each technological tool we have helps us understand how the brain works and helps us treat patients based on their specific problem." Although fMRI and MRI scans show physicians different things, they both operate from the same machine. University Hospital acquired a new MRI machine that has fMRI capabilities in May. Although the equipment and software for the fMRI arrived during the summer, it has only been in use for approximately eight weeks because physicians and MRI technologists had to receive specialized fMRI training before it could be used, Litofsky said.

**Technology makes the difference**
The fMRI will be used to evaluate conditions such as brain tumors, brain cysts, arteriovenous malformation and other vascular malformations in the brain, Litofsky said. It will also benefit patients who may need epilepsy surgery or movement disorder surgery.

With the new technology, Litofsky will be able to ensure that surgery on a patient's brain will not result in the loss of a major function, because the fMRI technology can localize that function and help preserve it. The fMRI software helps guarantee a patient's safety, ultimately creating better results.

"It's a luxury to be able to plan what we're going to remove," he said. "It's like the Boy Scout motto, 'Be prepared.' Because of this new technology, we can be more prepared going into surgery."

*Supervising editor is Simina Mistreanu.*
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

University Hospital's Staff for Life Helicopter Service celebrates 30 years

By Taylor Weatherby
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COLUMBIA — Halloween felt more like Christmas for University Hospital Staff for Life members Wednesday.

The hospital unveiled its newest helicopter, a McDonnell Douglas MD-902 twin-engine aircraft, as part of the Staff for Life Helicopter Service's 30th anniversary celebration.

The new helicopter is not an addition to the University Trauma Center's fleet but rather a replacement for an older helicopter, which had been in use since 1993 and had to be taken out of commission a little more than a year ago. A temporary replacement has been used since then, and the new MD-902 will go into use once pilot training is completed, which is projected to be done in the next one to two weeks.

One of two 902s in the fleet under Air Methods Corp., which owns and operates University Hospital's helicopters, the aircraft is customized in MU's black and gold tradition. The black model includes gold detailing resembling tiger stripes with MU’s trademark tiger logo on each side. A logo on the bottom of the helicopter will identify it as an MU unit from below when it is in flight.

"It's gorgeous, I love it," said Leeann Johnson, chief flight nurse for Staff for Life, who has been with the service for 28 years. "It's sexy," she said, with a laugh.

"To finally have it here is fabulous," said Jeffrey Coughenour, co-medical director of the Staff for Life service and a trauma surgeon at University Hospital. "We've been waiting for it to arrive for a few months now."

Coughenour was one of the people who helped select the helicopter. He and Jacob Quick, a general surgeon at University Hospital who has knowledge of graphic design, contributed to the look of the new helicopter.
Some of the features of the new model include a bigger cabin for the nurse, paramedic and patient, an auto-pilot system, a terrain avoidance system, weather information and increased patient lift capabilities. It will also be safer and quieter than the previous model, said Patti Klein, regional vice president for Air Methods Corp.

The Staff for Life Helicopter Service began operations in November of 1982 under the direction of Frank Mitchell, who also founded mid-Missouri’s first hospital ambulance service in the 1960s.

Mitchell, an MU graduate, served as a surgeon in a U.S. Army hospital in Germany. In his two years of treating Army trauma patients, he saw the benefits that quick medical care offered a trauma patient.

"That's one of the few positive aspects of the war," Coughenour said. "You learn how to take better care of injured patients."

After serving in the Army, Mitchell returned to his native state to start working at University Hospital, which had been open just two years. He conducted a study in 1980 and found that 40 percent of those who died as the result of serious traumatic incidents might have lived if they had received medical care more quickly.

Because of the numerous rural roads in mid-Missouri, he implemented the helicopter service with a trial air transport program in coordination with the Missouri State Highway Patrol in September of 1980 and began official operations in late November two years later.

The Staff for Life Helicopter Service now has three bases: The "mothership" at University Hospital, one at Lake Ozark General Hospital and another in La Monte. In its 30 years, the Staff for Life Helicopter Service has helped about 30,000 patients, averaging about 1,000 patients per year among the three stations.

_Supervising editor is Katherine Reed._
Proposition 1

The mental health sales tax

By Henry J. Waters III

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

Proposition 1 on the Nov. 6 ballot would establish a quarter-cent tax on all retail sales in Boone County to fund expanded mental health services in the county. The tax was put on the ballot by the Boone County Commission after supporters garnered 8,200 signatures on petitions and is expected to raise $5.4 million annually to help fund programs for youths younger than 19.

The funds would be managed by a nine-member board of directors named by the county commission.

Local mental health services supporters have for years bemoaned a lack of services, but two previous attempts to impose a similar tax have failed, mainly because promoters have not been able to define persuasively enough just how the funds would be used.

Again this year, promoters are having more success describing the need than the solution, but this might be inevitable.

Proposition 1 advocates cite reductions in state funding for mental health programs for youths at the same time problems continue or worsen. Using data collected by the University of Missouri's Institute of Public Policy, they point to statistics showing how many youths under 19 with problems fail to receive services. Columbia Public Schools Superintendent Chris Belcher says his organization spends a lot of time dealing with student mental health problems while state government "turns a blind eye." Social workers say programs are understaffed and students face obstacles receiving care.

They argue the addition of $5.4 million a year would fill some gaps. The new mental health board would decide how to deal out the funds. Promoters of the new tax include agents of programs likely to receive additional funding.

Proponents are doing a good job describing the problem with statistics showing a number of young people with problems. Even more moving, though less of an empirical argument for the
creation of the new tax, are individual cases in which family members say they could not receive help for a stricken child. At the risk of seeming hard-hearted, I'm sure such cases would persist even with the new funding, and more worrisome is the creation of an entirely new program with a dedicated tax aimed at augmenting programs otherwise funded by general government budgets.

If Boone County provides new funding out of proportion to that available in other counties, will other sources of funding be reallocated? The idea of funding mental health programs with a balkanized, county-by-county pattern of local taxes is problematic but not the fault of locals seeking new support.

No doubt mental health services in this area would be improved if the new tax money were available. Just how or how much can't be assured and, to be fair, perhaps never could be assured. The best case new tax proponents can describe is increased funding to augment the number of programs and social workers available.

I can't find it in my bones to oppose this tax, but I can't generate unlimited enthusiasm, either.

If voters decide to provide more money for mental health, the new board should be part of county government, not a free-standing appropriations committee. An earmarked quarter-cent hike is a substantial addition to the local sales tax total and will generate a lot of money for handing around. The county commission could monitor the newly created board with the broader mental health picture in mind.

HJW III

I write down everything I want to remember. That way, instead of spending a lot of time trying to remember what it is I wrote down, I spend the time looking for the paper I wrote it down on.

— BERYL PFIZER
Missouri Sports Hall of Fame honors Norm Stewart era

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — The Missouri Sports Hall of Fame is honoring the Norm Stewart era of University of Missouri basketball as it induction two all-time greats who played under the former Tiger coach.

Willie Smith and Derrick Chievous will be inducted into the hall at a Nov. 15 luncheon in Springfield. Stormin' Norm is among the expected guests, and former Missouri guard Jon Sundvold is master of ceremonies. Current Missouri coach Frank Haith is also expected to attend.

Smith, nicknamed "Mr. Magic," led the Tigers to a Big Eight Conference title in 1976 while averaging 25.3 points per game. He's among a handful of Missouri players to have their jersey numbers retired.

Chievous left Missouri as the Tigers' leading all-time scorer and led the team to regular-season and conference tournament titles in 1987.