

Weill Cornell Medical College Breaks Ground for New Medical Research Building in NYC

(Newswise) – NEW YORK – Weill Cornell Medical College today celebrated the start of construction on its new Medical Research Building, a state-of-the-art facility that will more than double the institution's existing research space. The 18-story, \$650 million building is the centerpiece of Weill Cornell's \$1.3 billion Discoveries that Make a Difference Campaign, the country's largest for a medical college. A total of \$1 billion has been raised toward this goal in a record time of less than four years.

The 480,000-square-foot building will include 16 floors of programmed space with initiatives dedicated to translational bench-to-bedside research targeting some of our most daunting health challenges, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, children's health, neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, and global health and infectious diseases. More than \$200 million will go toward recruitment of additional research faculty.

"As we celebrate the start of construction, we can be confident that we are building on a solid foundation of research successes and toward a future that will further establish Weill Cornell and New York City as one of the world's leading centers for biomedical research," says Sanford I. Weill, who is Chairman of the Board of Overseers of Weill Cornell Medical College and a 1955 graduate of Cornell University. "It is here where our physicians and scientists will be working to find the answers to the health challenges of our time, and bring hope and health to people in New York and around the globe."

Monies raised for the Discoveries that Make a Difference Campaign include an impressive 93 gifts of \$1 million or more, of which 33 specifically support the new Medical Research Building. These include \$135 million provided through a challenge gift from Joan and Sanford I. Weill as part of their historic \$250 million pledge in 2007 – believed to be the single largest gift ever given to a medical school. In addition, the campaign received a \$100 million gift from long-time supporters of Weill Cornell who wish to remain anonymous.

Maurice R. "Hank" Greenberg, a member of the Board of Overseers of Weill Cornell Medical College and Chairman and CEO of The Starr Foundation, and his wife, Corinne, have been leading supporters of the Campaign as well. The Starr Foundation has given \$75 million, in addition to \$25 million from Corinne and Hank Greenberg – all toward the Medical Research Building.

"This is a historic milestone in the history of the Medical College, and Corinne and I are very proud to be a part of it," says Mr. Greenberg. The Greenbergs and the Starr Foundation have been generous and loyal benefactors of Weill Cornell Medical College

and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, the College's clinical partner. Mr. Greenberg is also the Chairman Emeritus of NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital.

"We are forever grateful to Joan and Sandy Weill, Corinne and Hank Greenberg, The Starr Foundation, all our fantastic donors and everyone who has helped make this project possible," says Dr. Antonio M. Gotto Jr., the Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean of Weill Cornell Medical College. "This building will be an enormous boon to our research scientists, who are pursuing translational research across the spectrum of medicine. It will make us highly competitive in terms of available workspace for scientists, allowing the College to recruit more than 30 additional top-tier researchers."

"Academic collaboration is a part of Cornell's DNA, and as such is encoded in every aspect of the Research Building's design and function," says Peter C. Meinig, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Cornell University. "Research undertaken here will be about breaking new boundaries, sharing resources and successes. The greatest advances happen in places where biomedical disciplines intersect. This is such a place."

"This innovative facility will open numerous opportunities for sharing ideas and technologies and reduce the time it takes research to go from laboratory concept to medical treatments," says Dr. David J. Skorton, President of Cornell University. "A model for the research enterprise in the 21st century, it promises to expand knowledge while addressing the needs of patients, their families and the communities we serve."

"While we will celebrate the opening of the Medical Research Building in a few short years, what captures our collective imagination is all that will be happening inside: our renowned faculty members and newly recruited researchers working together with the singular purpose and a shared passion to solve the most pressing health care needs of our time," says Robert J. Appel, Weill Cornell Overseer and Chairman of the Medical College's Discoveries that Make a Difference Capital Campaign. "In the last year, we have raised more than \$150 million, bringing our campaign total over \$1 billion and enabling the construction of this building – a particularly impressive feat given the current economic climate. We are incredibly grateful to all our donors for helping make this happen."

A groundbreaking ceremony today included remarks by the Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor of the City of New York; Dr. David J. Skorton, President of Cornell University; Peter C. Meinig, Chairman of the Cornell University Board of Trustees; Sanford I. Weill, Chairman of the Weill Cornell Medical College Board of Overseers; Maurice R. Greenberg, Member of Weill Cornell's Board of Overseers; Dr. Antonio M. Gotto Jr., Dean of the Medical College; Dr. Herbert Pardes, President and C.E.O. of NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital; and Robert J. Appel, Chairman of Weill Cornell's Discoveries that Make a Difference Campaign.

Located on East 69th St. between York and First Avenues, the building is scheduled to be dedicated in December 2011.

Innovative Design Emphasizes Collaboration

Designed by Polshek Partnership Architects, the building has open floor plans throughout to facilitate communication and collaboration between scientists, aiming to

transcend the barriers of academic departments and encourage interdisciplinary research. Its proximity to the Weill Greenberg Center, the Medical College's award-winning ambulatory care building, will further enhance communication between investigative researchers and practicing clinicians.

When complete, an array of sophisticated lab equipment will be made available to partnering medical and academic institutions in the community, helping to attract scientists, physicians, students and patients from around the world.

The facility will also be environmentally friendly, energy efficient, and aesthetically pleasing, with a glass façade that reduces energy consumption and bathes interior areas with natural sunlight.

Research To Advance Patient Care

- **Cancer Research.** The building will be the locus for the new Weill Cornell Cancer Center, which was created to translate discoveries into effective preventive and treatment strategies, create synergies in cancer research, advance global efforts in cancer prevention, and educate and train medical professionals and researchers. The researchers' goal is to collaborate to find ways to stop cancer before it ever has the chance to gain a foothold.
- **Heart Health.** Researchers will investigate new treatments for heart disease, specifically in the areas of atherosclerosis, angiogenesis and cardiac genetics. Scientists across disciplines will work with physicians to tackle major questions such as genetic predispositions to cardiac arrest, the influence of cholesterol in heart disease, and the causes of imbalance in blood vessel formation.
- **The Brain.** Weill Cornell researchers will continue to lead the way in groundbreaking research in brain health. Every day, researchers in the lab and physicians working with patients make strides that deepen the understanding of the basic biology of the brain. Weill Cornell successfully conducted the first gene therapy for Parkinson's disease, which strikes 50,000 new people in the U.S. each year, and is exploring new frontiers for the causes and treatment of stroke, which affects 700,000 Americans each year.
- **Children's Health.** Weill Cornell physician-scientists will collaborate across specialties to seek answers to the most prevalent health issues affecting children today, including leukemia, epilepsy, asthma, diabetes, autism and childhood infections. As one example, new insights into the biology of the brain promise to lead to cell-based therapies for several common neurological disorders such as epilepsy, which afflicts about 45,000 children under the age of 15 each year. Physician-scientists will build on research breakthroughs already under way in pediatric cancers, obesity and diabetes, heart disease, neurological disorders and infectious diseases.
- **Stem Cell Biology, Developmental Biology and Molecular Medicine.** Among the recent notable advances in biomedicine, none stir the imagination and raise hope more than those in regenerative medicine – the science of marshaling the body's

own cellular resources for restoring tissue and function. In only a few short years, research breakthroughs in the Ansary Stem Cell Institute at Weill Cornell have positioned us as global leaders in a key discipline in regenerative medicine – stem cell biology. Continuing research in this area will lay the groundwork for developing new treatments for cardiovascular disease and other conditions.

- **Global Health and Infectious Diseases.** The Medical Research Building will be the international hub of Weill Cornell's extensive global network of scientists and physicians working to develop innovative ways to combat infectious diseases and develop treatments for the growing burden of chronic diseases. It will be linked with The Center for Global Health, a collaborative effort between Weill Cornell and Cornell University in Ithaca, to build on programs in Australia, Brazil, Haiti, India, Peru and Tanzania, among many other countries.
- **Diabetes, Metabolic Disorders and Obesity.** Weill Cornell investigators will study new ways to address diabetes and insulin-related metabolic disorders, which now affect more than 20 percent of the national population. They are studying the effects of bariatric surgeries on obesity and cancer; the use of islet cells in kidney transplantation, providing a promising new cell therapy for the cure of Type 1 diabetes; and ongoing clinical trials on glucose control. In addition, Weill Cornell research programs in genetic medicine are furthering understanding of the interaction of the environment and genetics in the risk for diabetes, and how genetic variations cause disarray in the metabolism of carbohydrates, as well as developing new therapies to treat the epidemic of diabetes and obesity.

Discoveries That Make A Difference

The Campaign for Weill Cornell Medical College, Discoveries that Make a Difference, will raise an unprecedented \$1.3 billion in private philanthropy to translate the findings of basic science into the most advanced treatments for patients as quickly as possible. In the 21st century, the most profound discoveries in medical science will occur at the intersection of disciplines and through the collaboration of new ideas. Discoveries will fund a bold strategic plan including paradigm-shifting initiatives in biomedical research, medical education and patient care to advance global health and well-being.

The Discoveries Campaign leverages the synergies created by Weill Cornell's partnerships with NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, The Rockefeller University, The Methodist Hospital–Houston, as well as Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, and through our work in global health in Tanzania and Haiti. The Campaign will support the recruitment and retention of the very best faculty, doubling our existing research space with the construction of a new biomedical research building, and expanding programs in discrete areas, including: cancer; cardiovascular medicine; obesity, diabetes and metabolic disorders; neurodegenerative, neuropsychiatric diseases and aging; stem cell, developmental biology, regenerative and reproductive medicine; global health and infectious diseases; children's health; and collaborative opportunities with our Ithaca campus. Student scholarship is another priority of the Campaign, to assure the College continues to attract the very best students regardless of their ability to pay for top-quality medical education. For more information on the Discoveries Campaign, please visit www.weill.cornell.edu/campaign.



Weill Cornell Medical College

Weill Cornell Medical College, Cornell University's medical school located in New York City, is committed to excellence in research, teaching, patient care and the advancement of the art and science of medicine, locally, nationally and globally. Physicians and scientists of Weill Cornell Medical College are engaged in cutting-edge research from bench to bedside, aimed at unlocking mysteries of the human body in health and sickness and toward developing new treatments and prevention strategies. In its commitment to global health and education, Weill Cornell has a strong presence in places such as Qatar, Tanzania, Haiti, Brazil, Austria and Turkey. Through the historic Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, the Medical College is the first in the U.S. to offer its M.D. degree overseas. Weill Cornell is the birthplace of many medical advances – including the development of the Pap test for cervical cancer, the synthesis of penicillin, the first successful embryo-biopsy pregnancy and birth in the U.S., the first clinical trial of gene therapy for Parkinson's disease, and most recently, the world's first successful use of deep brain stimulation to treat a minimally conscious brain-injured patient. Weill Cornell Medical College is affiliated with NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, where its faculty provides comprehensive patient care at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center. The Medical College is also affiliated with the Methodist Hospital in Houston, making Weill Cornell one of only two medical colleges in the country affiliated with two U.S. News & World Report Honor Roll hospitals. For more information, visit www.weill.cornell.edu.