

Partner in health care progress

By Joseph Ferretti, Ph.D.

During the year in which Oklahomans celebrate the 40 years of success achieved by the Oklahoma Health Center, I'm proud of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center's role as a key component of the center.

I'm even more proud that the OU Health Sciences Center has improved the quality of life for Oklahomans and served as a tremendous economic engine for our state.

Last year, the OU Health Sciences Center received more than \$124 million in federal grants, a 400 percent increase since 1995. Much of our grant funding comes from federal and other out-of-state sources, bringing new dollars to our state that produces still more new dollars. In fact, every dollar we garner through grants generates \$7 more for the state economy.

Health Center series

This article is one in an occasional series spotlighting some of the institutions that comprise the Oklahoma Health Center in Oklahoma City.

As one of only four comprehensive health centers in the nation with seven professional schools, we serve 3,100 students in 70 programs. The OU Health Sciences Center is committed to education, research and patient care for Oklahomans. Simply put, that means more new discoveries made here at home, the ability to provide

high-quality health care for all Oklahomans and a continued commitment to educating the next generation of health care providers.

Our faculty is the bedrock of our campus. With more than 800 faculty members on campus, we have built a solid foundation for propelling us into the future. Our research efforts are growing and our faculty needs to do the same. It is my hope to see the addition of at least 100 faculty members in the next five years.

The voters of Oklahoma showed their commitment to quality health care in their support of a new comprehensive cancer center through the passage of State Question 713 last fall. We are in the planning phase for construction of the center. Our cancer center faculty is growing, and the fight against cancer in Oklahoma is rapidly progressing. We are already achieving many new cancer research grants, as our cancer center faculty work to better understand the genetics of cancer and to find new treatment and potential cures.

Diabetes is a national epidemic, and Okla-



OKLAHOMAN ARCHIVE

Joseph Ferretti, senior vice president and provost of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, looks over bacterial cultures in a laboratory at the center.

homa with our large Native American population is especially susceptible. We have exciting research under way on our campus that involves diabetes, improved treatments for it and for the many, varied related health problems it can cause. Soon, the Oklahoma Diabetes Center will be open, and our citizens will have the latest, best available care to better manage this disease and their overall health.

There are many other research and teaching successes on our campus. From the latest in mobility technology for those who need wheelchairs or other walking devices to research into antibiotic-resistant bacteria, from new nursing programs aimed at bringing better care to the rural areas of our state to the many important issues in public health, such as smoking and alcohol consumption — there is critical work being done here at the OU Health Sciences Center. These advances also fuel new jobs and our state's economy.

We are grateful to the Presbyterian Health Foundation, the University Hospitals Authority and Trust and the state Legislature, among others, for their unfailing commitment to advancing research, technology and health care here at home.

Together, we will continue to make a difference for the health and well-being of Oklahoma's citizenry and its economy too.

Ferretti is senior vice president and provost of the OU Health Sciences Center.