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## NATIONAL LEADERS IN HEART TRANSPLANTATION AND HEART FAILURE JOIN CEDARS-SINAI HEART INSTITUTE

LOS ANGELES (Jan. 21, 2010) – The California Heart Center, the cardiology group that developed the nation's largest heart transplant program, has joined the [Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute](#) and Cedars-Sinai Medical Care Foundation.

The California Heart Center physicians, who are nationally and internationally regarded for their expertise in treating advanced heart failure, are moving from UCLA to assume leadership roles at the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute. Their group, which will remain in private practice, will also become part of the Cedars-Sinai Medical Care Foundation.

The group is led by Jon Kobashigawa, M.D., a past president of the International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation who has authored more than 200 scientific manuscripts. Kobashigawa also leads a number of major multi-national clinical research studies. His past medical studies have resulted in groundbreaking medical protocols, such as customized anti-rejection medications for transplant patients.

At the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute, Kobashigawa will serve as director of heart transplantation, director of advanced heart disease and as the institute's associate director for clinical affairs.

"What attracted us was not only Cedars-Sinai's long-standing strengths in heart-related patient care and research, but the vision and leadership of [Heart Institute Director Eduardo Marbán](#) and his colleagues," Kobashigawa said. "Over the last several years, it's become clear that the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute is on a trajectory to become one of the world's leading cardiovascular programs, having attracted several of the nation's top heart physicians and researchers."

Kobashigawa's colleagues at the California Heart Center also will have key roles in the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute:

- Jaime Moriguchi, M.D.; medical director, Mechanical Circulatory Support Program
- Michele Hamilton, M.D.; director, Heart Failure Program
- Antoine Hage, M.D.; director, Solid Organ Transplant Cardiology
- Jignesh Patel, M.D., Ph.D.; co-medical director, Heart Transplant Program
- Michelle Kittleson, M.D., Ph.D. director, Post-Graduate Education in Heart Failure and Transplantation.

An additional member of the group, Babak Azarbal, M.D., practices interventional cardiology with a focus on heart failure patients. Azarbal was chief resident during his internal medicine training at Cedars-Sinai.

(more)

“Our team of doctors has always put patients first,” Kobashigawa said. “That common commitment is why we were motivated to join the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute, where the highest-quality patient care informs the groundbreaking innovation, research and medical education.”

Long recognized as a national leader, the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute has been growing rapidly over recent years. After [Eduardo Marbán, M.D., Ph.D.](#), former chief of cardiology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, joined Cedars-Sinai as the institute’s director in 2007, the addition of heart rhythm expert [Sumeet S. Chugh, M.D.](#) and hypertension specialist [Ronald Victor, M.D.](#), rounded out the Institute’s senior leadership. In June 2009, Marbán and his team completed the first procedure in which a patient’s own heart tissue was used to grow specialized heart stem cells that were then injected back into the patient’s heart in an effort to repair and re-grow healthy muscle in a heart that had been injured by a heart attack. Other groundbreaking programs include research by [P.K Shah, M.D.](#), who has developed novel gene therapy approaches to protect against heart attacks and strokes, and the unified approach to women’s heart problems pioneered by [Noel Bairey Merz, M.D.](#), director of the Women’s Heart Center.

“The Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute has a long tradition of expertise and innovation, going back to the days of establishing the first cardiac intensive care unit and the invention of the Swan-Ganz catheter,” Marbán said. “The addition of the doctors of the California Heart Center signifies our commitment to become one of the world’s best programs in heart failure and regenerative medicine.”

“We are delighted to have the California Heart Center join the Cedars-Sinai Medical Care Foundation, as they share our commitment to quality and to serving patients,” said Thomas D. Gordon, Cedars-Sinai’s senior vice president, [Medical Delivery Network](#).

The California Heart Center is headquartered on the third floor of 8536 Wilshire Blvd. in Los Angeles. The Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute’s Advanced Heart Disease Center will be located on the second floor.

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