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**CARDIOLOGISTS AND HEART SURGEONS MEET FOR
“CONTROVERSIES AND ADVANCES” CONFERENCE**

***Stem cell therapy for cardiac regeneration, medicine in the media and
healthcare reform to be addressed***

LOS ANGELES (September 25, 2007) – Stem cell therapy for cardiac regeneration and the controversial issue of medicine and the media will be the focus of the keynote addresses at the seventh annual “Controversies and Advances in the Treatment of Cardiovascular Disease” conference. Conducted by Cedars-Sinai Medical Center at the Beverly Hills Hotel on Oct. 4 and 5, the conference is co-sponsored by the California Chapter of the American College of Cardiology, the California Chapter of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, and Promedica International CME.

Professional differences of opinion often have stood between heart surgeons and cardiologists, and recent innovations in minimally invasive medical procedures have done nothing to reduce the friction. The ongoing debate as to whether it is better to replace and repair aortic and mitral valves surgically or to manage them medically is just one example. And when considering treatment options for Atrial Fibrillation, the choices are even more diverse – should the physician opt for minimally invasive surgery, drugs or a catheter treatment? And then there is the highly controversial stent issue – drug-eluting vs. bare metal which is better?

This major symposium – one of the very few that brings together both cardiologists and heart surgeons – will directly explore the controversies and latest medical and surgical advances in an open forum. Many subjects will be addressed in debate formats. Others will be lectures presented by highly respected leaders in their fields.

Lawrence K. Altman, M.D., author of the book “Who Goes First? The Story of Self-Experimentation in Medicine” and a member of the *New York Times* science news staff since 1969, will be one of two keynote speakers. Altman, senior medical correspondent at the *Times*, has published an average of 100 scientific stories a year and writes the column “Doctor’s World.” His remarks will focus on medicine and the media.

A clinical professor at New York University Medical School, Altman has received three Howard W. Blakeslee Awards from the American Heart Association and the George Polk Award for excellence in journalism.

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Eduardo Marbán, M.D., Ph.D., recently named director of the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute, will be the second keynote speaker and will discuss stem cell therapy for cardiac regeneration. Prior to joining Cedars-Sinai, Marbán was a member of The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine faculty for 22 years, most recently serving as chief of cardiology and professor of cardiology, physiology and biomedical engineering.

Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Circulation Research* and an expert in molecular and cellular mechanisms underlying heart problems, Marbán is widely known for directing major multidisciplinary research programs leading to gene therapy, drug treatment and stem cell discoveries.

“The field of cardiology is poised for a revolution in which cell-based methods will be used to regrow healthy heart muscle after myocardial infarction or in chronic heart failure. Cardiac stem cells (CSCs) show great promise for regenerative therapy. Before 2003, when these resident stem cells within the heart were first discovered, the heart was thought to have little or no regenerative potential,” said Marbán, providing a preview of his address.

“We have isolated cardiac stem cells from adult human and porcine endomyocardial biopsy specimens, differentiated them *in vitro* and characterized their functional properties. They can regrow healthy heart muscle and blood vessels,” Marbán continued. “We also have developed methods to isolate and expand CSCs from routine biopsy specimens; they readily become excitable and contractile. These observations provide both a simple method and a solid rationale for the use of CSCs for autologous cardiac regeneration therapy.”

Autologous refers to cells reimplanted within one patient, not transplanted from one person to another.

Marbán came to Cedars-Sinai to serve as the first director of the Heart Institute, which integrates and oversees the development of programs in cardiology, cardiac surgery, cardiac imaging and other areas. He has received funding to support three clinical studies reintroducing cardiac stem cells into heart patients, with first enrollment anticipated early next year.

Additional keynote speakers will include Dr. Jack Lewin, CEO American College of Cardiology, who will speak on healthcare reform.

Program directors for “Controversies and Advances in the Treatment of Cardiovascular Disease” include: Gregory P. Fontana, M.D., cardiothoracic surgeon and vice chairman of Surgery; Raj Makkar, M.D., cardiologist and director, Interventional Cardiology; P.K. Shah, M.D., cardiologist and director of the Division of Cardiology; Alfredo Trento, M.D., cardiothoracic surgeon and director of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Cedars-Sinai; and John G. Harold, M.D., FACC, cardiologist and President, California Chapter American College of Cardiology (ACC), ACC Governor for Southern California, and a recent Chief of Staff at Cedars-Sinai.

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Sessions on Thursday, Oct. 4, will address coronary artery disease (part 1), mitral valve and carotid artery disease, arrhythmias and atrial fibrillation, and the future and new techniques. Friday's sessions look at coronary artery disease (part 2), aortic valve disease, congenital heart disease, and surgery and interventional cardiology. Several lectures and/or debates will be presented on each subject.

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The first in Southern California and one of only 10 hospitals in the state whose nurses have been honored with the prestigious Magnet designation, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center is one of the largest nonprofit academic medical centers in the Western United States. For 19 consecutive years, it has been named Los Angeles' most preferred hospital for all health needs in an independent survey of area residents. Cedars-Sinai is internationally renowned for its diagnostic and treatment capabilities as well as breakthroughs in biomedical research and superlative medical education. It ranks among the top 10 non-university hospitals in the nation for its research activities and is fully accredited by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs, Inc. (AAHRPP). Additional information is available at www.cedars-sinai.edu.

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