

FOR RELEASE: April 1, 2008

Contact: Darryl Geddes  
Office: 315-464-4828  
Home: 315-637-7941  
E-mail: geddesd@upstate.edu

Firouz Daneshgari, M.D., an expert in female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery, joins SUNY Upstate Medical University as chair of urology

Danesghari, who led successful female pelvic medicine surgery center at Cleveland Clinic, will build expanded urologic cancer, pediatric urology and female pelvic surgery program at SUNY Upstate in partnership with Crouse Hospital and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — SUNY Upstate Medical University has appointed Firouz Daneshgari, a leading urological physician, as chair of the Department of Urology.

The appointment, effective April 1, sets in motion a three-pronged approach at building new clinical, educational and research programs in female pelvic disorders, urological cancer and pediatric urology in a collaborative effort among SUNY Upstate, Crouse Hospital and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC).

In announcing the appointment, Steven Scheinman, M.D., SUNY Upstate senior vice president and dean of the College of Medicine, called Daneshgari “a remarkable, dynamic young leader in urology in America.”

“Dr. Daneshgari has a rare combination of talents: he is a visionary with a strong business sense, a gifted researcher who is also much sought-after as a surgeon and physician,” Scheinman said. “We are very fortunate to have recruited a leader of his caliber to take our department of Urology to a new level of national prominence.”

With his appointment this spring, Daneshgari will begin work to develop a collaborative program between SUNY Upstate and Crouse Hospital in female pelvic surgery, female urology and urogynecology aimed at treating women diagnosed with urinary incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse, fecal incontinence, pelvic pain and sexual dysfunction.

This program will be housed at Crouse Hospital and is expected to begin accepting patients this summer. “We are pleased and excited to be working with Dr. Daneshgari in the establishment of what will be a unique program for the treatment of women’s urogynecological issues in Central New York,” said Paul Kronenberg, M.D., president and CEO of Crouse Hospital.

Daneshgari will lead recruitment efforts at both SUNY Upstate and Crouse for physician-scientists to join this new program. “This type of collaboration will go along way to supporting women’s health, with patient as the primary focus of everything we do,” he said.

In the short term, Daneshgari’s highest priority will be the recruitment of two pediatric urologists, with the goal that they be on staff in time for the opening of the Golisano Children’s Hospital in early 2009.

Daneshgari also will be recruiting specialists in urologic cancer, including a joint program in urological oncology between SUNY Upstate and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Urological cancers, particularly cancers of the prostate, but also of the bladder and kidney, are increasing as the population ages. Daneshgari will lead recruitment efforts for laparoscopic and urologic cancer surgeons specializing in robotic surgery as well as top-level researchers in this field of medicine.

“Dr. Daneshgari’s appointment as chair of urology is one that will greatly benefit the veterans of Central New York,” said William Marx, M.D., of the VAMC. “He will bring not only outstanding research opportunities to Upstate Medical University and the Syracuse Veterans Affairs Medical Center, but will allow the VAMC to expand important urologic services to the veterans. This recruitment further strengthens the cooperative relationship between Upstate Medical University and the VAMC.”

Daneshgari (pronounced donesh-GA-ry) was recruited from the Cleveland Clinic, where since 2001, as a professor of surgery and molecular medicine at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine, he served in a variety of leading positions, including as director of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery Center, founder and director of the fellowship program and one of the most productive translational research programs in the Country and professor of surgery and molecular medicine at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine.

Daneshgari is one of the leading educators of physicians in this medical specialty, having founded and led a nationally ranked fellowship program in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery, and developed one of the widely praised educational programs for residents known as “National Urology Resident Preceptorship Program” (NURPP). Daneshgari-trained physician-scientists hold key positions in medical institutions across the country, including Case Western Reserve University, the University of Pennsylvania, University of Memphis, University of Shanghai, Taiwan University and the Cleveland Clinic.

Daneshgari is considered a leading researcher in this field with more than \$10 million in federal and industry grants, most notably from the National Institutes of Health for support of his work in finding new treatments for female pelvic floor disorders as well as female incontinence caused by diabetes.

Daneshgari has won numerous accolades for his research and prominent medical career. One of the most significant honors came in 2007, when he received the Zimskind Award from the Society for Urodynamics and Female Urology, which is presented to the individual who has made the most significant contribution tofor “continuing excellence and leadership” in the field of female urology in the United States.

He is a much sought-after speaker, with dozens of speaking engagements annually worldwide. He has authored numerous book chapters and written more than 70 articles published in peer-reviewed journals, such as Journal of Urology, Urology and Obstetric Gynecology.

A fellow of the American College of Surgeons, Daneshgari also holds memberships in many associations and organizations, among them the American Urological Association European Association of Urologists, and International Consultation on Incontinence.

Prior to joining the Cleveland Clinic, Daneshgari was on the faculty of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center.

The development of collaborative multi-institutional program in female pelvic disorders will be a first for Central New York. Daneshgari says with the new program Central New York will be well positioned to address what has become one of the fastest growing medical conditions suffered by women. Within the next 20 years and with healthy aging of the women population, nearly 50 percent of women will suffer from pelvic floor disorders, and one out of every 10 will need surgery to correct this condition in their lifetime, he said.

“More women will suffer from a pelvic floor disorder in their lifetime than from asthma, heart disease and hypertension; it is that pervasive,” Daneshgari said.

Pelvic floor disorders may be caused by being pregnant and have vaginal deliveries that weaken or stretch supporting muscles in the pelvis, as well as obesity, heavy lifting, injuries tumors and a hysterectomydiabetes and aging.

Daneshgari said he would continue to serve as a mentor to up-and-coming physicians specializing in this area, by creating a fellowship programa full component training program at SUNY Upstate, similar to his pioneering fellowship and research program at Cleveland Clinic. “The need to continuing building expertise in this area on a national level is great: More than 60 million outpatient consults are expected by 2030. I expect the demand for services in female pelvic medicine will skyrocket and we need the physicians and scientists available to serve the community.”

While there are some services for women currently available locally, there are not enough to meet the anticipated demand that market studies indicate in the near future. Daneshgari says that development of a trusting and complimentary relationship with the community physicians is one of his primary goals. “ “We have lots of room to grow in outreaching to our community physicians in regard toby offering educational programs, participation in collaborative studies and bringing the whole Upstate medical community together.”

“This medical program will make Syracuse a destination for these services,” he said, noting that while at Cleveland Clinic, he has the Cleveland Clinic has provided care in female pelvic medicine to numerous patients from Central New York.

Daneshgari said he is committed to making SUNY Upstate a significant driver in research in this area, noting that his physician recruits will bring with them significantly funded projects.

“Providing absolutely the best care and treatment is only one aspect is at core of the program,” he said. “In addition, wWe would need a robust research focus to ensure that newer and better treatments are pursued. In order to advance our patient care, we must create new knowledge,” he says.

In addition to his appointment to the SUNY Upstate faculty, Daneshgari will hold appointments at Crouse Hospital and the Veterans Administration Medical Center.