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**For Immediate Release**

**UC Health Acquires Cincinnati’s Largest Arthritis Practice**

CINCINNATI, March 25, 2015—UC Health has acquired Cincinnati Arthritis Associates (CAA), a professional medical subspecialty group that provides patient-centered care for Tristate residents suffering from arthritis, immune-mediated inflammatory disease and musculoskeletal disorders.

The acquisition will allow UC Health and CAA to be the largest provider of immunology and rheumatology services in the region, said Stephen Strakowski, MD, senior vice president, strategy and transformation at UC Health and a professor of psychiatry and behavioral neuroscience in University of Cincinnati College of Medicine.

“CAA’s addition to UC Health significantly extends our commitment to patients suffering from a wide variety of musculoskeletal disorders and CAA’s strong commitment to our academic mission will help us better educate future doctors and advance care through research,” said Strakowski. “By joining our large multispecialty physician group, University of Cincinnati Physicians, and world-class hospitals, CAA’s ability to maximally provide the best care for patients is reinforced and extended. Together, we can take better care of patients than apart.”

Strakowski said the acquisition will allow UC Health to enhance its teaching program, patient access and geographic reach within the Tristate and expand multidisciplinary care relationships, while CAA will have access to enhanced contracting, IT & network support, office support services and can participate in UC Health clinical and academic missions.

Six physicians and a nurse practitioner along with a medical support team at CAA will continue providing excellent patient care at three locations in the region. Two locations have moved. CAA’s offices at Christ Hospital have moved to UC Health Physicians Office in Midtown at 3590 Lucille Drive, Cincinnati, and its location at Western Hills is now at nearby UC Health, White Oak, at 5575 Cheviot Road, Cincinnati. CAA physicians will continue seeing patients at the UC Health West Chester campus, 7700 University Drive, West Chester.

Two CAA physicians will also receive new faculty appointments in the University of Cincinnati (UC) Department of Internal Medicine, while three other physicians have appointments with the university, said Gregory Rouan, MD, Gordon and Helen Hughes Taylor Professor of Medicine and Chair of the Department of Internal Medicine at UC.

CAA’s team includes:

* **Larry Houk, MD**, professor and clinical director in the Division of Immunology, Allergy and Rheumatology;
* **Avis Ware, MD**, associate professor in the Division of Immunology, Allergy and Rheumatology;
* **Yolanda Farhey, MD**, professor in the Division of Immunology, Allergy and Rheumatology;
* **Emily Muntel, MD**, who completed her internal medicine residency and subspecialty training at UC;
* **Brian Houk, MD**, who is a 2009 graduate of UC College of Medicine and completed his internal medicine residency and a fellowship in rheumatology at UC;
* **Michael Luggen, MD,** a professor in the Division of Immunology, Allergy and Rheumatology; and
* **Pat McMahon**, a nurse practitioner, who is a 1985 UC master of nursing graduate and current dean of academic affairs at Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health.

“The relationship between UC Health and CAA has been formalized with the acquisition, but a strong partnership has existed between the two for more than 30 years with CAA physicians serving as faculty in the Department of Internal Medicine and making strong research contributions to the university community,” said Rouan.

Ware said the partnership with UC Health will allow CAA to continue to be leaders in treating rheumatic diseases in the Tristate. “We all have experience in the diagnosis and treatment of complex rheumatic diseases. Several of us have participated in translational research and clinical trials. We actively collaborate with several prominent groups in the city and the university including Cincinnati Children’s Hospital’s pediatric rheumatology division as well as UC Medical Center’s neurology and orthopedics departments.”

“We are working with UC Medical Center on quality improvement and patient safety which will have an enormous impact on our patients as we move forward,” said Ware.

***About UC Health****UC Health, the University of Cincinnati’s affiliated health system, includes University of Cincinnati Medical Center, ranked one of the best hospitals in the region by* U.S. News & World Report*; West Chester Hospital, one of Cincinnati’s newest hospitals and the recipient of the 2013 HealthGrades® Outstanding Patient Experience Award™, ranking it above 90 percent of hospitals nationally for patient satisfaction; Drake Center, Cincinnati’s premier provider of long-term acute care; University of Cincinnati Physicians, Cincinnati’s largest multi-specialty practice group with more than 700 board-certified clinicians and surgeons; Lindner Center of HOPE, the region’s premier mental health center; and several institutes focusing on the areas of cancer, the neurosciences, cardiovascular and diabetes. To learn more, visit* [*UCHealth.com*](http://www.uchealth.com/)*.*

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