



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **SOUTHWEST MEDICAL ASSOCIATES ENTERS INTO AGREEMENT WITH SCRIPPS TO BRING HEPATOLOGIST TO NEVADA**

**Donald Hillebrand, M.D., to specialize in hepatitis, liver failure and transplantation**

*Las Vegas, April 29, 2008* – In the wake of the recent high profile hepatitis cases, Southwest Medical Associates (SMA) Gastroenterology Department has entered into an agreement with one of the nation's premier health care institutions, Scripps Health and its Center for Organ and Cell Transplantation. This agreement will provide SMA with extended gastroenterology services as well as hepatitis C, acute liver and transplant care expertise.

Under this agreement, Donald J. Hillebrand, M.D., Scripps' medical director of liver transplantation, will be traveling to Las Vegas several days a month, beginning May 9, to join SMA's gastroenterology team. The SMA team is headed up by Department Chief Jeff Zabel, M.D., and includes Nicholas Tibaldi, M.D., and Noel Fajardo, M.D.

Dr. Hillebrand, a specialist in gastroenterology and transplant hepatology, is board certified in internal medicine, gastroenterology and transplant hepatology. He will support, address and manage hepatitis treatment, as well as complications of advanced liver disease including cirrhosis, and acute liver failure. Dr. Hillebrand's services will be available to members of Sierra Health Services plans, including Health Plan of Nevada, Senior Dimensions, Sierra Health and Life and other Sierra plans on Thursdays and Fridays.

SMA, the largest multi-specialty medical group in Nevada, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Sierra Health Services, Inc. Scripps Center for Organ and Cell Transplantation specializes in liver, kidney, pancreas, and pancreatic islet transplants. The center, based in Torrey Pines, CA, also provides living donor programs for liver and kidney transplants.

#### **ABOUT SOUTHWEST MEDICAL ASSOCIATES**

Southwest Medical Associates operates 12 medical clinics throughout Las Vegas, including several urgent care centers and an outpatient surgery center. The clinics are staffed by approximately 250 physicians and physician extenders. For more information, visit [www.smalv.com](http://www.smalv.com).

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## **ABOUT SCRIPPS HEALTH**

Founded in 1924 by philanthropist Ellen Browning Scripps, Scripps Health is a \$2 billion non-profit community health system based in San Diego, Calif. Scripps treats a half-million patients annually through the dedication of 2,600 affiliated physicians and 11,600 employees among its five acute-care hospital campuses, home health care services, and an ambulatory care network of clinics, physician offices and outpatient centers. Recognized as a leader in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disease, Scripps is also at the forefront of clinical research and graduate medical education. In 2007, Scripps committed more than \$150 million in capital and facility improvements across the San Diego region while providing significant charity care to the community – more than \$236 million in uncompensated care in 2007. Scripps Health Foundation generated \$74 million in charitable donations in 2007 to support the Scripps mission.

Scripps facilities include: Scripps Green Hospital, Scripps Memorial Hospital Encinitas, Scripps Memorial Hospital La Jolla, Scripps Mercy Hospital, Scripps Mercy Hospital Chula Vista, The Whittier Institute for Diabetes, 10 Scripps Clinic locations, three Scripps Mercy Medical Group locations, and Scripps Home Health Care Services. For more information, visit [www.scripps.org](http://www.scripps.org).

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