SUMMER 2008

VolunteerVet™

The University of Tennessee • College of Veterinary Medicine

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Veterinary College Celebrates Expansion

The University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine (UTCVM) has celebrated the completion of its small animal teaching hospital expansion with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Construction on the $10 million, 32,000-square-foot expansion began during the winter of 2007. The expansion will provide more space for several service areas.

UT Vice President for Agriculture Dr. Joseph DiPietro said the small animal hospital matches the caliber and class of the people who work there. "The veterinary program, like all programs at UT, is another window to the public," he said. "Clients who come here see the university in a different light, and it's important they see we're on the cutting edge of veterinary medicine."

Dr. Leon Potgieter, UTCVM interim dean, said the hospital's activities have long outgrown the available space. "When the college was built more than 30 years ago, it was never anticipated the facility would need to accommodate the approximately 15,000 small animals we currently treat each year," Potgieter said. Since 1978, the patient caseload has increased by more than 70 percent.

In addition to an isolation suite for small animals with infectious diseases, the expansion includes medical oncology, radiation oncology, canine physical rehabilitation and therapy, and avian and zoological medicine.

Among other disciplines, the college has a national reputation in avian/zoological medicine and canine physical rehabilitation and therapy. According to Dr. Robert DeNovo, associate dean for Administration and Clinical Programs, "The facility will allow UTCVM to push the bar of contemporary educational standards to a new level."

Housed within the new space is a linear accelerator used to treat cancer patients with radiation therapy, a heated therapy pool and two underwater treadmills.

The college is still working to secure funding to expand its large animal teaching hospital.





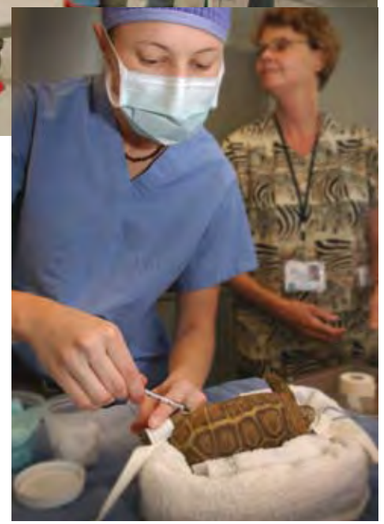


Left: Dr. Bob DeNovo, Dr. Michael Blackwell, Dr. Leon Potgieter and Dr. Joe DiPietro participate in the ribbon cutting ceremony in April.



Able to Spread Our Wings

Due to the nature of the beasts, UTCVM's Avian and Zoological Medicine service is now a hospital within a hospital and home to one of the largest and most modern avian and zoological medicine wards in the country. The service, which provides primary medical care to such organizations as the Knoxville Zoological Gardens, Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tiger Haven, American Eagle Foundation and Appalachian Bear Rescue, has moved from its cramped room with cages built for dogs and cats to a state-of-the-art facility. The service now boasts its own endoscopy suite and procedure room. It houses a ward with a separate air intake for birds, a heated ward for reptiles, a ward for small mammals and one for wildlife that even includes a pond for aquatic fowl. There's also a secure, purpose-built room for treating dangerous animals such as bears, lions and tigers and other creatures that will eat you.



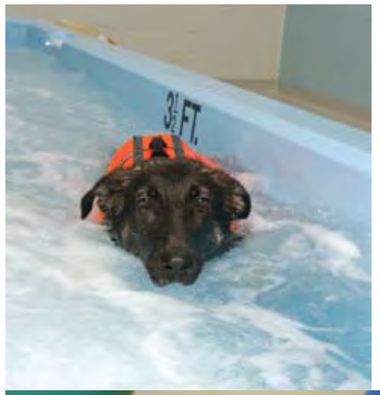


More Room to Fight Cancer

Cancer is common in pets, and as animals age, their likelihood of being diagnosed with the disease increases. A large portion of the expansion of the small animal teaching hospital is dedicated to diagnosing and treating cancer. Medical Oncology has moved from a crowded treatment room it shared with two other services (each service having a clinician, resident, intern, students, veterinary technician and veterinary assistant) to its own 1,600 sq ft space.

Previously, medical oncology, the chemotherapy room and radiation oncology were spread throughout the building. Now the services are side-by-side, not only enhancing the ability to process an increasing caseload and to better coordinate the technical staff, but also improving consultation and coordination between medical and radiation oncologists, as well as having a tremendous impact on teaching.





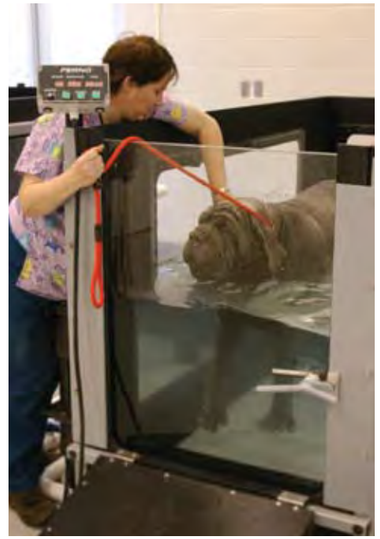
Canine Physical Rehabilitation and Therapy

Ready to Make a Splash

UTCVM has worldwide recognition for its work in canine physical and rehabilitation therapy. Prior to the expansion, the service basically worked out of a small office and stored its equipment in the halls. The service now stretches its legs in more than 3,000 square feet of space, which includes an aquatic center housing a heated therapy pool and two underwater treadmills, an exam room, an acupuncture and laser therapy room, and an exercise room with rubberized core flooring.

The space allows the clinicians to utilize additional modalities while meeting the needs and expectations of our clients and visitors from around the world who come to UTCVM for clinical training in canine physical and rehabilitation therapy.





Linear Accelerator

Beam me up!

Radiation therapy is a critical component of many kinds of cancer treatment, and now UTCVM is home to Tennessee's only linear accelerator dedicated to treating animals. The $1.5 million high-tech machine, used to irradiate tumors, is housed in the expansion surrounded by 8-foot-thick concrete walls.

Using five computers to run the linear accelerator, radiation oncologist Dr. Bill Adams can shape the beam to fit the irregular contour of almost any tumor, lessening damage to surrounding tissue. The precise beams can be turned on and off in order to "shoot and skip," allowing clinicians to treat a tumor that curves around an organ or bone without repositioning the patient. Treatment time is a matter of seconds rather than minutes, reducing the amount of time a patient is under anesthesia.



MRI Now Available at UTCVM

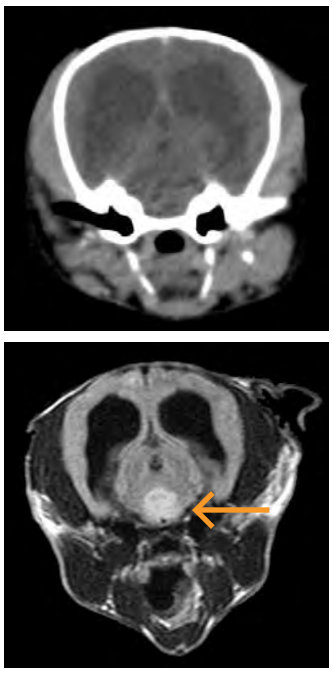
As we continually strive to bring the future to you today, the UT College of Veterinary Medicine has responded to the region's needs by creating a service that is brand new to our area, the UT Veterinary Imaging Service.

In April, a superconductive MRI unit was installed at UTCVM, complementing the existing imaging equipment (digital radiography, fluoroscopy, ultrasound, computed tomography and nuclear medicine). Until now, pet owners had to travel more than 300 miles away from Knoxville for veterinary MRI.

Non-invasive and incredibly sensitive, MRI gives radiologists a clearer image of the inside of the body, unveiling images not seen with other types of equipment. MRI can help diagnose disorders of the nervous system; musculoskeletal disorders; soft tissue lesions; nasal, orbital and ear diseases; and thoracic and abdominal disorders.

Since MRI uses magnetic fields rather than radiation, it is considered a very safe diagnostic tool to help pinpoint abnormalities inside the body. While the college currently offers MRI scans for small animals, MRI will be available for horses by 2009.





The images are of the same dog. The MRI shows the existing brain tumor. The tumor is the round white area in the middle of the second photo.

VETERINARY IMAGING SERVICES
UT College of Veterinary Medicine

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