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(Note dated information below: Free classes on October 5 and 7, 2009)

UT's Preston Medical Library Marks 20th Year of Providing Free Health Information to Community

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Gain knowledge. Reduce stress. Improve communication with your physician. You might not think a medical library could help its patrons accomplish these goals, but for 20 years, Preston Medical Library has done just that, and in October, they can teach you how.

Preston Medical Library at the University of Tennessee Graduate School of Medicine sometimes surprises people. Of course, the library has a wide variety of medical resources for physicians' research. The librarians are specially trained, and Preston has been a valued resource for the medical community for more than 40 years.

But Preston also offers the unexpected: a service free of charge to us all, the Consumer and Patient Health Information Service. For 20 years, Preston has been providing health information to families, patients and anyone in the community, state and country, free of charge. The information is as close as a telephone or computer. And the best part is that it is reliable, up to date and easy to understand.

“We recently asked about 300 people in the community who have used our health information service if it was valuable to them,” said Sandy Oelschlegel, Library Director. “What we learned is that the service has been much more than just a source of information.”

Users of the Consumer and Patient Health Information Service reported their own stress levels and those of their families were reduced by the information they received from Preston Medical Library. More than 90 percent said they had gained knowledge they could easily understand, and perhaps most importantly, almost 85 percent said the information they received from Preston helped them communicate with their health care providers.

“An important benefit of the service is that people can gather information about their health concerns and be able to have more productive relationships with their physicians,” said Oelschlegel. “The information is not medical advice; that comes from health care providers. The information we provide helps people understand their conditions, so they feel more confident asking questions of their health care providers.”

Oelschlegel estimates that over the 20 years of providing the Consumer and Patient Health Information Service, more than 4,000 patients, family members and others have taken advantage of the resource. “And we see only a growth of the service in the future,” she said. “People are learning that they must be their own healthcare advocates, and Preston Medical Library is here to help them do that.”

To use the Consumer and Patient Health Information Service, call, e-mail or visit Preston Medical Library, located on the campus with University of Tennessee Medical Center: 865-305-9525, library@utmck.edu. A medical librarian will make note of your

health question and do research for you. In a day or two, you will receive the information through the mail or via e-mail.

Preston Medical Library also helps people learn how to access trustworthy health information from the internet. In celebration of Medical Librarians Month in October, the librarians will teach two, free classes on October 5 and 7, 2009, at the library. Anyone in the community is invited to attend. To reserve a seat and for more information, simply call 865-305-8777.

The Consumer and Patient Health Information Service is funded by grateful patients, members of the community and grants, which provide the cost of materials, mailing and resource books, as well as educational outreach programs offered to community groups.

The University of Tennessee Graduate School of Medicine in Knoxville is part of the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, the statewide academic health system. The mission of the UT Health Science Center is to bring the benefits of the health sciences to the achievement and maintenance of human health, with a focus on the citizens of Tennessee and the region, by pursuing an integrated program of education, research, clinical care and public service. The Graduate School of Medicine in Knoxville is home to more than 200 teaching physicians and researchers; more than 190 medical and dental resident physicians in 11 residency and 11 fellowship programs; and more than 180 volunteer faculty physicians and dentists. The school, together with clinical partner University Health System Inc., form the University of Tennessee Medical Center, the only academic medical center in the area. For more information about the UT Graduate School of Medicine, visit <http://gsm.utmc.edu>.

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