

Friday, January 25, 2008 - 1:29 PM CST

Avery Ranch A&M health science campus moves forward

Austin Business Journal

Texas A&M University's board of regents voted to accept a 15-acre donation from the Avery family for the Round Rock Health Science Center campus. Dr. Kathryn Kotrla, chair of psychiatry and behavioral science at the HSC-College of Medicine, has also been appointed as associate dean in Round Rock.

The university will also purchase 10 acres from the family for \$1.3 million and has the option to purchase an additional 25 acres in the future. The fair market value of the 25-acre property is estimated at between \$8.17 million and \$11.43 million, A&M officials say.

"The Avery family and the City of Round Rock have both embraced the concept of a planned higher education/health care corridor," says Nancy Dickey, president of the Texas A&M Health Science Center and vice chancellor for Health Affairs for the Texas A&M University System. "It is extraordinarily rewarding to be part of this wonderful community expansion."

A&M first announced its plans to use \$9 million from the Texas legislature to build a Round Rock medical campus last spring, as reported by the Austin Business Journal on June 15, 2007. By September, the school was talking with the Avery family about possible use of the family's land for that school, as reported by the Austin Business Journal on September 28, 2007.

Rep. Dan Gattis, R-Georgetown, says the A&M campus, which could eventually become a four-year medical school, will put medical students directly in hospitals by the end of 2008. A&M has been working with Scott & White, but its HSC has also signed affiliation agreements St. David's HealthCare, Seton Family of Hospitals and Lone Star Circle of Care.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to provide sophisticated and individualized medical education to the next generation of Texas physicians," Kotrla says. "The HSC-COM Round Rock is a remarkable place to pair physicians in training with experienced, caring Williamson County physician educators. Everyone benefits by bringing medical education to Williamson County. This powerful community-academic partnership ties our Texas A&M medical education to the goal of exceptional health care as envisioned by Central Texas legislators and community leaders."

The Texas A&M Health Science Center focuses on health education, outreach and research. Its seven colleges throughout Texas are Baylor College of Dentistry, the College of Medicine, the College of Nursing, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, the Institute of Biosciences and Technology, the Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy and the School of Rural Public Health.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin