

Tomorrow's Medicine

An Interview with Dr. Kenneth L. Davis,
President and Chief Executive Officer, The Mount Sinai Medical Center



Dr. Kenneth L. Davis

EDITORS' NOTE Dr. Kenneth Davis attended Mount Sinai School of Medicine and received the Harold Elster Memorial Award for highest academic achievement in the school's second graduating class. He completed a residency and fellowship in psychiatry and pharmacology, respectively, at Stanford University Medical Center and won a career development award from the Veterans Administration. Upon joining Mount Sinai, he became Chief of Psychiatry at the Bronx Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center and launched Mount Sinai's research program in the biology of schizophrenia and Alzheimer's disease therapeutics. Davis was appointed CEO of The Mount Sinai Medical Center in 2003. Prior to this, he spent

15 years as Chair of Mount Sinai's Department of Psychiatry and was the first director for many of the institution's research entities. Additionally, he received one of the first and largest program project grants for Alzheimer's disease research from the NIH. In addition to his role as CEO, Davis served as Dean of Mount Sinai School of Medicine from 2003 to 2007. He also served as President of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology in 2006. In 2002, he was elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Science, and in 2009, Yale University presented him with the George H. W. Bush '48 Lifetime of Leadership Award. Other honors include the A. E. Bennett Award of the Society of Biological Psychiatry.

ORGANIZATION BRIEF The Mount Sinai Medical Center (www.mountsinai.org) encompasses both The Mount Sinai Hospital and Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Mount Sinai School of Medicine was established in 1968 and has more than 3,400 faculty in 32 departments and 15 institutes, and ranks among the top 20 medical schools both in National Institute of Health funding and by U.S. News & World Report. The school received the 2009 Spencer Foreman Award for Outstanding Community Service from the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Founded in 1852, The Mount Sinai Hospital is a 1,171-bed tertiary- and quaternary-care teaching facility and one of the nation's oldest, largest and most respected voluntary hospitals. The Mount Sinai Hospital is consistently ranked among the nation's best hospitals based on reputation, patient safety, and other patient-care factors by U.S. News & World Report. Nearly 60,000 people were treated at Mount Sinai as inpatients last year and approximately 530,000 outpatient visits took place.

How is The Mount Sinai Medical Center positioned in the market?

Mount Sinai is the largest single individual freestanding hospital in the region, and we are committed to taking the most complex patients with the most serious diseases and giving them state-of-the-art or next generation treatment. This is a place where people come, not just for today's medicine, but for tomorrow's.

Mount Sinai is a leader in medical research. We are an integrated hospital and medical school. Mount Sinai is ranked third in the country in terms of grant dollars per investigator, which is remarkable because this isn't a university; we are just a small biomedical college. We are dedicated to finding new treatments, new diagnostics, and understanding the pathophysiology of disease, because our mission is to provide better care for the next generation of patients. People come here to get that special care.

What are your primary specialties and areas of focus?

Our expertise in cardiac disease is one of the best in the world. Our catheterization lab has the highest volume of cardiac procedures of any in the world, and it is the only one in New York State that has two two-star physicians for quality, and low mortality and morbidity.

We have a program in hematological malignancies that is incomparable from multiple myeloma to myelodysplastic syndrome – we are world leaders. The largest single trial for myelodysplastic syndrome that has ever been run came out of Mount Sinai.

In transplant biology and transplantation, we also have an extraordinary program. The program has grown exponentially, the quality has been outstanding, and our live donor programs are the way of the future because we can't get enough tissue from cadavers to meet the needs for all the people on waiting lists for kidneys and livers.

Our programs in all the neurosciences are truly outstanding. Mount Sinai was the place where the entire proof of concept and multi-center studies were done that led to the approval of the vast majority of all existing Alzheimer's drugs.

Additionally, we lead some of the most important clinical trials for novel therapeutics in multiple sclerosis and we have always been a leader in Parkinson's disease.

Our neuroscience department is among the top four in the country in total research dollars that they receive, which is remarkable for a place that isn't a university. They are doing extraordinary things like understanding the fundamental molecular changes that lead to addiction, rethinking the basic biology of schizophrenia, and identifying some of the most important genes discovered to date relating to autism.

By 2012, you will be completely paperless after an investment of \$100 million in an electronic medical records system. How will that impact the personal part of health care?

By having an integrated electronic medical record, all the information collected by all doctors is shared. Additionally, we are able to have the doctor prompted about certain tests that patients may need and procedures they should consider. It can also prompt them about possible drug interactions. Finally, the electronic medical record, when fully implemented, will have a component called My Chart, which will allow patients to look in on their own medical record from their home computers and to communicate with their doctors electronically.

If anything, this will bring the patient and the doctor closer together to provide better care. We would not be doing this if we thought it would depersonalize medicine.

How critical is community engagement for you and the organization?

Geography in health care is destiny. Our geography is unique in America. Mount Sinai sits at the juxtaposition of the richest and poorest communities in the United States; the largest socioeconomic disparity exists across our campus.

But a core value of Mount Sinai is that everybody is treated the same and everyone has equal access. There is a price to do that. We lose a tremendous amount of money because we insist on an open campus serving all of our communities and to treat everyone regardless of the insurance they have. Consequently, we have a major commitment to our community and to improving the quality of its health. ●