



Southern
Illinois University
School of Medicine

NEWS RELEASE

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SIU Med School Opens Fertility/IVF Center

A new fertility and in vitro fertilization center has formally opened at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield.

The SIU Fertility and IVF Center can provide a comprehensive approach to finding solutions for infertile couples. The team is led by three SIU faculty physicians with extensive experience in assisted reproductive technologies as well as three senior laboratory staff members with similar expertise, including in embryology and andrology.

“The center is led by physicians with dual board certification in obstetrics and gynecology and reproductive endocrinology and infertility as well as in urology,” says Dr. J. Ricardo Loret de Mola, practice director for the center as well as chair and associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology. “The newly constructed, world-class laboratory offers the best possible environment for our patients’ gametes and embryos as well as overall patient experience, security and privacy.”

Other members of SIU’s fertility team include nurses, program coordinators, psychologists and geneticists as well as a nutritionist and an acupuncturist.

“One in every nine couples has a problem conceiving. Recent medical advances make pregnancy more possible for couples wishing to undergo treatments to have a baby and the SIU team has medical professionals with decades of extensive experience,” says Dr. Gary Horowitz, medical director for the center. He also is associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology and chief of SIU’s reproductive endocrinology and infertility division.

Treatment options for women include medications, stimulated ovulation and intrauterine insemination, minimally invasive corrective surgery and tubal reversal, as well as robotic assisted reproductive surgery and in vitro fertilization (IVF) and embryo transfer. An egg donation and surrogacy program also is available.

“About half of infertile couples have factors involving the female while up to 50 percent can trace problems to the male or to a combination of male and female factors, so it is important to include expertise in male infertility at any center,” explains Dr. Tobias Köhler, assistant professor of surgery and chief of male infertility in the urology division in the surgery department. “In addition to the male infertility services, we also can involve other SIU specialists as needed.”

Treatment options for men include medications, non-surgical sperm aspiration, therapeutic testicular biopsy, intracytoplasmic sperm injection with IVF, and vasectomy reversal.

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The center uses special security precautions to protect the privacy of the patients. A unique software program, IVF Witness, tags all samples and tissues from couples with harmless radio frequencies and tracks them so they are continuously monitored and recorded. The center has its own ventilation system and various materials such as stainless steel, stone products and special paints were chosen because they do not emit chemicals that may be toxic to embryos.

There are several exam rooms in SIU’s new center as well as two retrieval rooms for procedures for women and two separate rooms for men. The andrology laboratory has equipment for computer-assisted semen analysis and robotic instrumentation for hormone analysis.

A sterile embryology laboratory is used for procedures including IVF and is only accessible to the senior staff. A special epoxy floor in the laboratory has been installed to help maintain sterile conditions. LED lights of special wavelengths that are not toxic to embryos have been installed in the ceilings, to keep the lighting levels low during the delicate procedures.

The best equipment has been selected from around the world, explains laboratory director Mary McAsey, Ph.D., associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology and director of research for the department. “The nine incubators are new from Scotland, the sterile hoods are from Denmark, software came from England and the cryogenic equipment is from Australia. Continuous monitoring systems have been installed to monitor incubators, refrigerators, freezers and laboratory temperature and humidity. We’ve also been very pleased with the dedication of the area contractors who worked with us and put a lot of pride into their work.”

The SIU fertility specialists are members of the Society for Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility (SREI), an organization of physicians who have been certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology for proficiency in the evaluation and treatment of reproductive disorders, including infertility. The physicians also are credentialed by the Accreditation Council for Gynecologic Endoscopy, a certifying arm of the American Association of Gynecological Laparoscopists and accredited by the Ultrasound Practice Council of the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine. The center has enrolled in the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology (SART) for certification after a year of operation. A consultant has reviewed the lab and approved it for Class 1000 environmental certification.

Both the medical and laboratory staff have extensive experience in fertility and IVF, having worked in successful programs across the U.S. This includes experience with regulators including the Federal Drug Administration, College of American Pathologists and SART.

The center is located at the SIU Clinics/Moy Building (lower level), 751 N. Rutledge St., in Springfield. For more information, call 217-545-BABY (2229) weekdays.

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Note to media – A complete press packet about SIU’s new fertility center, including photos and fact sheets, is available online at www.siumed.edu/news. Contact Public Affairs, 217-545-2155 or publicaffairs@siumed.edu for specific requests.