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For more information, contact:

The University of Tennessee Health Science Center

Department of Preventive Medicine

Margaret Caufield - (901) 448-1669 or

Department of Communications and Marketing

Sheila Champlin – (901) 448-4957

The University of Tennessee Health Science Center

Begins Vitamin D and Prevention of Diabetes Study

Memphis, Tenn. (October 21, 2013) – The Department of Preventive Medicine at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) is seeking participants with prediabetes for a new study sponsored by the National Institutes of Health with collaboration from Tufts Medical Center in Boston. The study, referred to as D2d, will determine if vitamin D can reduce the risk of getting type 2 diabetes in people who are at high risk.

Over 25 million people in the United States have diabetes and over 79 million are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Weight loss and physical activity are known to reduce the risk of diabetes in people at high risk. However, additional preventive measures that are safe, inexpensive and acceptable are urgently needed to prevent type 2 diabetes.

The D2d study is being conducted at 20 centers across the United States and will follow more than 2,000 people enrolled in the study for up to four years. The Memphis site at the UTHSC Department of Preventive Medicine is looking for people who are overweight, who may have a family member with type 2 diabetes, live a sedentary lifestyle, have high blood pressure and are at risk for type 2 diabetes. Women who had gestational diabetes during pregnancy are also at risk for developing diabetes. Some ethnic groups including African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans are also at particularly higher risk for type 2 diabetes.

“Diabetes is a serious medical condition that can lead to an increased risk of heart attack and kidney disease. The D2d study will investigate whether vitamin D can prevent diabetes in persons at high risk for the disease. If we can prevent diabetes we may be able to help people live healthier lives.” said Karen Johnson, MD, professor and interim chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine.

Study participants will be randomly assigned to take either a vitamin D supplement or placebo daily for about four years. Study pills are being provided at no cost. Patients will receive initial reports on specific health markers, including their blood sugar and blood pressure. Participants will be monitored throughout the study for the development of diabetes. Once enrolled, participants will be seen 12 times during the study.

Interested persons are asked to call the UTHSC Department of Preventive Medicine at (901) 448-8400 for more information.

The **National Institutes of Health** (NIH), the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

As Tennessee's only public, statewide, academic health system, the mission of the **University of Tennessee Health Science Center** (UTHSC) 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. Offering a broad range of postgraduate and selected baccalaureate training opportunities, the main UTHSC campus is located in Memphis and includes six colleges: Allied Health Sciences, Dentistry, Graduate Health Sciences, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy. UTHSC also educates and trains cohorts of medicine, pharmacy and/or allied health students -- in addition to medical residents and fellows -- at its major sites in Knoxville, Chattanooga and Nashville. Founded in 1911, during its more than 100 years, UT Health Science Center has educated and trained more than 56,000 health care professionals in academic settings and health care facilities across the state. For more information, visit www.uthsc.edu.

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