

New vision set for Tulane Heart and Vascular Institute

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Dr. Robert Hendel specializes in the diagnosis and management of complex cardiac diseases, with a focus on advanced cardiac imaging. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

As the new director of the Tulane Heart and Vascular Institute and section chief of cardiology, Dr. Robert Hendel's vision for the institute is clear: "Growth, with responsibility."

Hendel plans to add eight new cardiologists to the section to bolster current programs and expand into new areas. Two of these new physicians are in the discipline of electrophysiology, which is the study of irregular heart rhythms and

abnormalities in the way electrical impulses are carried through the heart. The Heart and Vascular Institute plans to develop a center of excellence related to atrial fibrillation, a common heart disorder. Additional physicians will soon be added in interventional and structural cardiology, along with experts in cardiac imaging.

“We believe that enhanced growth in the Section of Cardiology is critical,” Hendel said. “We're bringing onboard many new physicians in a variety of disciplines within cardiology. We hope to bridge into other areas within medicine, especially population health management. We're also looking for collaborations in other areas, such as endocrinology, specifically related to the cardiovascular complications of diabetes.”

“We will continue with the pioneering work here at Tulane in the treatment of coronary artery disease and vascular abnormalities,” Hendel said. “It is our goal to provide a full spectrum of cardiovascular services for our community and beyond.”

Hendel joined Tulane earlier this year from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, where he was professor of medicine and radiology. He was also associate chief medical officer, chief of cardiovascular services and director of the cardiac care unit at the University of Miami Hospital. While in Miami, he also served as interim chief of the cardiovascular division as well as director of cardiac imaging and outpatient services.

Hendel specializes in the diagnosis and management of complex cardiac diseases, with a focus on advanced cardiac imaging. He was president of the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology and the Cardiovascular Council of the Society of Nuclear Medicine and currently serves on the board of trustees for the American College of Cardiology. He has pioneered the creation and implementation of appropriate-use criteria, which is an effort to balance benefits, risks and costs in using cardiac imaging, as well as interventional and electrophysiology procedures in cardiology.

In addition to clinical care, Hendel is committed to medical education and research. The cardiology program has 20 fellows and an active research program. Hendel will continue his research in nuclear cardiology and the implementation of appropriate use criteria, to help inform and advise clinicians in the rational use of cardiovascular technology.

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