



## **Powerhouse Institutions across Houston/Galveston Launch Project Metis**

### **A Bold Step Toward Global Leadership in Brain Health and the Emerging Brain Economy**

December 4, Houston/Galveston, TX —The University of Texas Medical Branch, Rice University and Memorial Hermann Health System are proud to announce the formal launch of Project Metis, a groundbreaking initiative led by Center for Houston's Future to position the Houston/Galveston region as the global leader in brain health and the emerging brain economy.

Project Metis brings together world-class institutions, visionary leaders, and strategic partners to drive human flourishing, innovation and economic growth via a holistic focus on lifelong brain health.

Project Metis, a name inspired by the Greek goddess of wisdom and deep thought, reflects a commitment to advancing understanding, prevention, and treatment across the full life cycle of the brain—from early development to healthy aging.

The initiative is chaired and supported by three pillars of our region, each with unique expertise and depth in brain health, including Rice's newly launched Rice Brain Institute, UTMB's Moody Brain Health Institute, and Memorial Hermann's comprehensive neurology care spanning stroke, neurotrauma, brain health and more.

Chairing the Project Metis Steering Committee are:

- Founding Chair: Dr. Jochen Reiser, President of UTMB and CEO of the UTMB Health System.
- Project Chair: Amy Dittmar, Howard R. Hughes Provost and Executive Vice President, Rice University
- Project Chair: Dr. David L. Callender, President and CEO, Memorial Hermann Health System

These leaders and other partners will work with Center for Houston's Future President and CEO David Gow and the Center team to guide Project Metis.

“Brain health is the defining frontier of this century, and UTMB is proud to lead it,” said **Dr. Jochen Reiser, UTMB president and CEO of the UTMB Health System**. “Through the Moody Brain Health Institute, our scientists are unraveling the mechanisms of neurodegeneration, cognitive functioning, and recovery. Our clinicians are part of this initiative to deliver advanced care to patients across the Texas Gulf Coast.

“Project Metis gives us the opportunity to scale this work—uniting research, innovation and clinical excellence across institutions to improve lives and strengthen the emerging brain economy. Together, we can make the Houston–Galveston region the world’s most vibrant hub for brain health discovery and care.”

“Project Metis will make Houston a national and global leader in advancing lifelong brain health,” said **Amy Dittmar, Rice’s Howard R. Hughes Provost and executive vice president for academic affairs**. “Brain health requires a holistic approach, and that's exactly what Rice offers with the Rice Brain Institute, with excellent researchers from a breadth of disciplines, spanning engineering and computing, natural sciences, social sciences and public policy. Working together, all of the Project Metis institutions will produce discoveries that benefit people here in Houston, across Texas and around the world.”

Added **Dr. David Callender, president and CEO, Memorial Hermann Health System**:

“Through our work, we see both the immense human toll of brain-related illness and the tremendous potential of early intervention, coordinated care and long-term prevention. That’s why this bold new initiative matters so much and why we at Memorial Hermann are so proud to play a role,”

CHF, a 25-year-old nonprofit focused on the region’s future, has a long and successful record of bringing parties together to collaborate on visionary strategic planning and action across disciplines from healthcare to energy to the arts.

“Now is exactly the right time for Project Metis and the Houston-Galveston Region is exactly the right place,” said **CHF President and CEO David Gow**. “Texas voters, by approving the state-funded Dementia Prevention Institute, have shown a strong commitment to brain health, as scientific advances continue daily. The initiative aims to harness the Houston’s regions unique strengths: its concentration of leading medical and academic institutions, a vibrant innovation ecosystem, and a history of entrepreneurial leadership in health and life sciences.”

Other early Steering Committee members include Lime Rock Resources, bp and The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

“I am excited about this initiative and look forward to continuing the focus for Houston on mental health and the brain economy in general. Houston is well positioned to champion this effort and to move forward with exciting progress for both for the region in general and for the businesses in our area,” said **Eric Mullins, chairman and CEO, of Lime Rock**.

“At bp, we believe healthy minds drive creativity and innovation – qualities that move our people and our business forward,” said **Dr. Steve Iley, bp’s chief medical officer**. “We’re proud to support the Center for Houston’s Future and Project Metis in creating workplaces and communities where everyone can perform at their best.”

“We are proud to join this exciting initiative to prioritize advances in neuroscience and brain health, and we look forward to contributing to breakthroughs that will help so many patients in need. With an increasing recognition of the dynamic interplay between cancer and the nervous system, we have prioritized research initiatives through our first-of-its-kind Cancer Neuroscience Program to create a greater biological understanding as well as bring new treatments to help patients survive and thrive,” said **Peter WT Pisters, M.D., president of MD Anderson**.

HKS, Houston Methodist and American Psychiatric Association Foundation are also Project Metis supporters.

Tentative plans envision over the course of a multiyear effort, that Project Metis will:

- **Launch working teams** focused on brain health across all life stages (early years, workplace years and healthy aging), science/medical advances, and Innovation & Commercialization.
- Develop a regional **Brain Health Index** to track progress and equity.
- **Activate and scale** by implanting pilot projects in areas such as clinical care, education, and workplace wellness; build an ecosystem; and share Houston’s progress and learnings at major international forums, including Davos and the UN General Assembly.
- **Communicate and inspire** via high-visibility events and other thought leadership.

“Project Metis is more than an initiative—it’s a movement to unlock human potential. By uniting science, innovation, and collaboration, we aim to make Houston the epicenter of brain health for generations to come,” said Gow.

### **About the key stakeholders**

**CHF:** Center For Houston’s Future, a nonprofit independent affiliate of the Greater Houston Partnership, brings business, government, and community stakeholders together to engage in fact-based strategic planning, collaboration, and action on issues of great importance to

the region's success. It engages in research, holds thought-leadership events and develops leaders. In addition to Project Metis, its recent strategic initiatives have focused on areas including energy transition with a focus on clean hydrogen; health care, including working to advance Houston as a medical AI hub, and health equity; and Vision 2050, a strategic visioning plan for the region. The Center's Business/Civic Leadership Forum has an alumni network of more than 1,400 leaders. The Center celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

**UTMB:** The first academic health center in Texas opened its doors in 1891 and today has four campuses, five health sciences schools, seven institutes for advanced study, a research enterprise that includes one of only two national laboratories dedicated to the safe study of infectious threats to human health, a Level 1 Trauma Center and a health system offering a full range of primary and specialized medical services throughout the Texas Gulf Coast region. UTMB is an institution in The University of Texas System and a member of the Texas Medical Center.

**Rice University:** Located on a 300-acre forested campus in Houston, Texas, Rice University is consistently ranked among the nation's top 20 universities by U.S. News & World Report. Rice has highly respected schools of architecture, business, continuing studies, engineering and computing, humanities, music, natural sciences and social sciences and is home to the Baker Institute for Public Policy and Kinder Institute for Urban Research. Internationally, the university maintains the Rice Global Paris Center, a hub for innovative collaboration, research and inspired teaching located in the heart of Paris, and Rice Global India in Bengaluru, India. With 4,776 undergraduates and 4,104 graduate students, Rice's undergraduate student-to-faculty ratio is just under 6-to-1. Its residential college system builds close-knit communities and lifelong friendships, just one reason why Rice is ranked in the top 10 for best quality of life by the Princeton Review.

**Memorial Hermann:** Charting a better future. A future that's built upon the HEALTH of our community. This is the driving force for Memorial Hermann, redefining health care for the individuals and many diverse populations we serve. Our 6,600 affiliated physicians and more than 34,000 employees practice the highest standards of safe, evidence-based, quality care to provide a personalized and outcome-oriented experience across our more than 270 care delivery sites. As one of the largest not-for-profit health systems in Southeast Texas, Memorial Hermann has an award-winning and nationally acclaimed Accountable Care Organization, 17\* hospitals and numerous specialty programs and services conveniently located throughout the Greater Houston area. Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center is one of the nation's busiest Level I trauma centers and serves as the primary teaching hospital for McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston. For 118 years, our focus has been the best interest of our community, contributing nearly \$500

million annually through school-based health centers and other community benefit programs. Now and for generations to come, the health of our community will be at the center of what we do – charting a better future for all.

*\*Memorial Hermann Health System owns and operates 14 hospitals and has joint ventures with three other hospital facilities, including Memorial Hermann Surgical Hospital First Colony, Memorial Hermann Surgical Hospital Kingwood and Memorial Hermann Rehabilitation Hospital-Katy.*

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