

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jim 'Catfish' Hunter Foundation and The ALS Association Announce Opening of ALS Clinic at Pitt County Memorial Hospital in September

GREENVILLE, N.C., July 10, 2008 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) -- The ALS Association - Jim "Catfish" Hunter Chapter today announced that Pitt County Memorial Hospital will open an Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) clinic in late September. ALS, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a neurodegenerative disease that attacks nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, leading to progressive paralysis usually in less than five years. The new clinic will be the only multi-disciplinary clinic in eastern North Carolina to serve persons with ALS.

"We are excited to offer a clinic devoted to ALS in Greenville to help serve everyone living with this dreadful disease," said PCMH President Steve Lawler. "Our communities have certainly felt the impact of ALS. With this clinic, we expect to provide better access to expert medical care, cutting-edge research and clinical trials. The end result will be a one-stop shop for health care needs."

The clinic, slated to open September 26th, will work in partnership with Duke University's ALS Clinic and will be led by Richard Bedlack, MD, PhD and Robert Frere, MD of East Carolina Neurology. Bedlack is the director of the Duke ALS Clinic and a world-renowned neurologist in the ALS community. Also playing an integral role in the clinic will be the Jim "Catfish" Hunter Chapter, The ALS Association's North Carolina chapter, by providing valuable information and resources to people with ALS.

"This clinic is long overdue, but we are thrilled to have so many caring people coming together to make this a reality," said Jerry Dawson, President of the ALS Association's Jim "Catfish" Hunter Chapter. "Specifically, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Representative Walter B. Jones, Steve Lawler, Dr. Richard Bedlack, Dr. Robert Frere and most importantly Helen Hunter and the Jim 'Catfish' Hunter ALS Foundation for providing the necessary funding to make this a reality. No longer will people with ALS in this area of our state have to travel long distances to receive world class care."

Funding for the clinic was generously provided by the Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Foundation in Hertford, NC. The foundation, named in honor of the North Carolina native and Major League Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher, was founded in 1999. Hunter, who was arguably the best pitcher in baseball in the 1970s, was diagnosed with ALS in 1998 and died from complications of the disease a year later at the age of 53. During that time, he used his celebrity status to increase awareness for ALS. More recently, Keith LeClair, East Carolina University's former baseball coach, lost his battle with ALS in 2006. The deaths of these men not only brought the effects of a disease like ALS to light, but also showed the need for an ALS clinic in eastern North Carolina.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony, with invited guests of honor including Senator Elizabeth Dole, Senator Richard Burr Representative Jones, N.C. Senator Marc Basnight and the Hunter family, will formally introduce the Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Clinic to the Down East community on its opening day.

About the Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Foundation

The Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Foundation is sometimes confused with the ALS Association Jim "Catfish" Hunter Chapter but is a separate non-profit organization based in Hertford, North Carolina. The Foundation was formed in 1999 by Jim "Catfish" Hunter, his family and friends and the Bear Swamp-Beech Springs Ruritan Club. The Foundation is a proud supporter and partner of The ALS Association - Jim "Catfish" Hunter Chapter. The Foundation provided the start up funding necessary to establish key Chapter programs such as the Respite Care and Augmentative Communication Grant programs.

The Foundation also works to support research and provide grants based on need to families living with and fighting ALS. Through events such as softball tournaments, golf tournaments and walks, the Foundation works diligently to provide help for all people living with ALS. For more information: The Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Foundation, Post Office Box 47, Hertford, North Carolina 27944.

About Pitt County Memorial Hospital

Pitt County Memorial Hospital, one of four academic medical centers in North Carolina, is the flagship hospital for University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina and serves as the teaching hospital for the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University. Pitt Memorial is a regional resource for all levels of health services and information.

About The ALS Association

The ALS Association is the world leader in ALS research, patient care and ALS advocacy and is the only national not-for-profit health organization dedicated solely to the fight against ALS. The Association's nationwide network of chapters provides comprehensive patient services and support to the ALS community. The mission of The ALS Association is to lead the fight to cure and treat ALS through global cutting-edge research, and to empower people with Lou Gehrig's disease and their families to live fuller lives by providing compassionate care and support.

The Jim "Catfish" Hunter Chapter has been serving PALS across North Carolina since 1987. The Chapter has grown into an award-winning 501(c)3 non-profit organization because of its efforts in service, advocacy, and fundraising. The Chapter has been recognized by The ALS Association as Chapter of the Year the past two years.

More about the Chapter can be found at <http://www.CatfishChapter.org>.

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