



Contact: Greg Harrison
(310) 829-8010
(858) 472-5560 (cell)
gregory.harrison@stjohns.org

Saint John's Health Center
Appoints Internationally Recognized Neurosurgeon
*Former Chair of Neurological Surgery at University of Pittsburgh to
Develop New Neuroscience Institute*

Santa Monica, Calif., Aug. 30, 2009 – Saint John's Health Center today announced the appointment of world-renowned neurosurgeon Amin Kassam, MD, as Director of the new Saint John's Neuroscience Institute and faculty member of the John Wayne Cancer Institute at Saint John's. Dr. Kassam will lead the development of the new Neuroscience Institute which will offer an international minimally invasive neurosurgery center, as well as neuro-oncology, neuro-vascular surgery and other neuroscience services. The Institute will build on the foundation established over the two years by Daniel F. Kelly, MD, Medical Director of the highly regarded Saint John's Brain Tumor Center.

Prior to his arrival at Saint John's, Dr. Kassam served as Chairman of the Department of Neurological Surgery, Professor of Neurological Surgery, and Director, Minimally Invasive endoNeurosurgery Center at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC). In this role, he directed one of the world's leading neurosurgical centers, consistently ranked as one of America's best neuroscience facilities by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Dr. Kassam joined the faculty of the University of Pittsburgh in 1997. During the 12 years, he held several positions and pioneered a number of novel procedures and techniques. He developed the multidisciplinary Minimally Invasive endoNeurosurgery Center which deals with the complex skull base pathology. Dr. Kassam also was a pioneer in the development of the Expanded Endonasal Approach which uses the nostrils as natural portals to remove brain and skull base tumors rather than using a traditional craniotomy (surgical opening through the top of the skull). He also was Director of the Center for Cranial Nerve Disorders at UPMC. During his tenure, physicians at the center performed more than 1,000 microvascular decompressions for disorders such as trigeminal neuralgia and hemifacial spasm.

“We are privileged to have someone of Dr. Kassam's unique and rare expertise to join Saint John's,” said Lou Lazatin, Chief Executive Officer of Saint John's and John Wayne Cancer Institute. “His appointment advances what Dr. Kelly founded at Saint John's. A Kelly and Kassam team will further our legacy of providing breakthrough medicine with inspired healing.”

Dr. Kassam is the latest in a series of nationally recognized medical experts to join Saint John's from leading academic medical centers, going back to the relocation of the John Wayne Cancer Institute from UCLA in 1991. Saint John's began developing its neuroscience program with the arrival of Dr. Kelly from UCLA and establishment of the Saint John's Brain Tumor Center in 2007. The Brain Tumor Center provides comprehensive care, minimally invasive surgery and support for patients with brain tumors, skull base tumors and pituitary adenomas.

"I am blessed to have the opportunity to join Dr. Kelly, a true world authority and innovator in minimally invasive neurosurgery, and Saint John's Health Center, with a new state-of-the-art facility that is the future home of the Chan Soon-Shiong Center for Translational Sciences and an unwavering commitment to patient care," Dr. Kassam said. "I hope to be able to contribute to the foundation Dr. Kelly has established in Southern California and the history of groundbreaking research at the John Wayne Cancer Institute, such as the sentinel node research discovery that is now the world standard."

"It is an incredible opportunity to have Dr. Kassam join our team here at Saint John's," Dr. Kelly said. "We could not have asked for a more experienced, innovative and committed partner to advance and expand our ongoing efforts in minimally invasive neurosurgery, neuro-oncology and the neurosciences."

Dr. Kassam has performed more than 3,000 neurosurgical procedures including more than 1,000 minimally invasive endoscopic endonasal procedures with his team. He specializes in minimally invasive endoscopic brain tumor surgery, skull base and pituitary tumor surgery, vascular surgery, as well as trigeminal neuralgia and hemifacial spasm. His recent focus has been on the development of surgical tube, called a "brain cannula," combined with detailed fiber tract mapping of the brain (tractography) to allow maximal and safe endoscopic removal of deeply situated brain tumors.

Dr. Kassam has written 128 peer-reviewed publications, authored 32 book chapters and delivered 119 national and international lectures. He has trained 11 clinical fellows, served as a visiting professor 28 times and taught 57 courses around the world. A board-certified neurosurgeon, Dr. Kassam received his medical and undergraduate education at the University of Toronto. He completed his residency and fellowship training at the University of Ottawa.

###

About Saint John's

Since its founding in 1942 by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Saint John's Health Center has been providing the patients and families of Santa Monica, West Los Angeles and ocean communities with breakthrough medicine and inspired healing. Saint John's provides a spectrum of treatment and diagnostic services with distinguished areas of excellence in cancer care, spine, orthopedics, women's health, cardiac care and specialized programs such as the internationally acclaimed John Wayne Cancer Institute. Saint John's is dedicated to bringing to the community the most innovative advances in medicine and technology. For more information, visit

www.newsaintjohns.org

Brain Tumor Center

The Saint John's Brain Tumor Center provides comprehensive care, minimally invasive surgery and support for patients with brain tumors, skull base tumors and pituitary adenomas. For more information, visit, www.brain-tumor.org