**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For more information, contact:

The University of Tennessee Health Science Center

Peggy Reisser – (901) 448-4072, mreisser@uthsc.edu

**UTHSC Launches Take Care Campaign to Promote**

 **Emotional Health and Well-Being of Students**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Memphis, Tenn. (September 11, 2018) – The University of Tennessee Health Science Center Wednesday kicks off a new Take Care campaign designed to support the physical and emotional health and well-being of its students.

The campaign is a key component of a campus-wide initiative launched earlier this year focusing on the mental health and resilience of students. Adopted after consultation and recommendations from national student mental health organizations, the initiative centers on preventive care and early intervention to help students successfully cope with the demands of pursuing an advanced health science degree.

The university has added counseling personnel and care navigators, improved student access to mental health services, and aims to destigmatize mental health care by marrying academic assistance with mental health support. To accomplish this, student mental health services have been moved out of the traditional health clinic setting and into the Office of Student Academic Support Services and Inclusion (SASSI).

The Take Care kick-off event from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. in the Student-Alumni Center, will bring faculty and staff together to communicate as a campus that UTHSC cares for its students. Sponsored by SASSI and the Office of Student Life, it will include vendors sharing wellness services, such as massage, painting, Reiki, and yoga, as well as information and contacts that may be helpful to students.

“Our goal is to impact the culture of our campus for our students by normalizing self-care and removing any barriers or stigma associated with utilizing support earlier, so that they will thrive, not just survive in navigating and adjusting to the demands of our challenging programs and training,” said Kathy Gibbs, MEd, MS, assistant vice chancellor for the Office of Student Academic Support Services and Inclusion. “SASSI has been successful in creating a preventive model for academic success, and we believe that students will also respond to mental hygiene and wellness support and resources in the same way.”

Other aspects of the campus effort include developing programs and curriculum focused on mental hygiene, wellness, suicide and substance abuse prevention, diversity, and health disparities; demonstrating and modeling skills to handle the emotional, academic, social, and physical demands of a health science education; and increasing not only on-campus resources, but online and community help as well, in the form of a [#takecare website](http://uthsc.edu/take-care/) with lots of wellness information and links, 24-hour access to a help line at (901) 690-CARE, and other support.

On September 14, themovie “Ripple Effect” will be shown at 11:30 a.m. in the Student-Alumni Center auditorium**.** The film highlights the journey of Kevin Hines, who at age 19, attempted to take his life by jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge. Today, he is a mental health advocate, motivational speaker, and author who spreads a message of hope, recovery, and wellness.

“There is a growing awareness that prevention is preferable to remediation,” said Kimberly Williams Collins, PhD, HSP, counseling psychologist with University Health Services. “To the extent that we can provide individuals with tools and strategies prior to a crisis, the better equipped they are to cope and resume or maintain regular functioning. Awareness and prevention are areas that we really want to emphasize through our Take Care movement.”

*As Tennessee’s only public, statewide, academic health system, the mission of the University of Tennessee Health Science Center is to bring the benefits of the health sciences to the achievement and maintenance of human health through education, research, clinical care, and public service, with a focus on the citizens of Tennessee and the region. The main campus in Memphis includes six colleges: Dentistry, Graduate Health Sciences, Health Professions, Medicine, Nursing, and Pharmacy. UTHSC also educates and trains medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, and health professions students, as well as medical residents and fellows, at major sites in Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Nashville. For more information, visit* [*www.uthsc.edu.*](http://www.uthsc.edu/) *Find us on Facebook:* [*facebook.com/uthsc*](http://facebook.com/uthsc)*, Twitter:* [*twitter.com/uthsc*](https://twitter.com/uthsc)*, LinkedIn:* [*linkedin.com/uthsc*](https://www.linkedin.com/school/university-of-tennessee-health-science-center/)*, and Instagram:* [*instagram.com/uthsc*](https://instagram.com/uthsc)*.*

**###**