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Gabriel Lasala

Position: medical director, TCA Cellular Therapy and LifeSource Cryobank LLC; president, Tchefuncte Cardiology Associates; medical director of the cardiac catheterization lab, Lakeview Regional Medical Center

Age: 47

Family: wife, Rechel; and children, Florencia, 23, Julie, 21, Nicholas, 14, Caroline, 11

Education: doctor of medicine, University of Cordoba in Argentina

THE OFT-USED generalization of a mad scientist doctor spending long nights with little sleep in a lab while he performs extensive, cutting-edge research for groundbreaking medical therapies is an image that might describe Dr. Gabriel Lasala's work ethic.

"On average, I get about four hours of sleep a night," Lasala said. "We're always researching and testing something, and when we think we find a solution, we test it again."

For the past eight years, Lasala has spent most of his time researching adult stem-cell therapies to help advance his cardiology practice.

In 2000, Lasala traveled to Chile and met with Dr. Jose Minguell, who was conducting several large animal trials with stem cells. Lasala was so impressed by the trial research that he brought it back to Covington. After years of further findings and advancement on adult stem-cell therapies, he opened two private stem cell-related businesses: LifeSource Cryobank and TCA Cellular Therapy, which launched in October. TCA Cellular is the research



photo by Tracie Morris Schaefer

company affiliated with LifeSource Cryobank.

The centers are conducting three Food and Drug Administration clinical trials related to stem cell treatment of myocardial injuries and limb ischemia.

LifeSource is the only cryopreservation facility in the Gulf South and the first facility in the United States to accept adult stem cells from bone marrow along with the more traditional umbilical cord blood storage. TCA Cellular is the only private company in the United States

participating in FDA protocols related to stem cell research.

"It's unbelievable that we're actually doing this kind of extensive and high-profile research in our own backyard, and the potential economic impact from stem cell storage is almost as unlimited as the potential of stem cell therapy itself."

Lasala plans to expand his research to include stem cell therapy for neurological diseases and spinal cord injuries. •

— Tommy Santora