

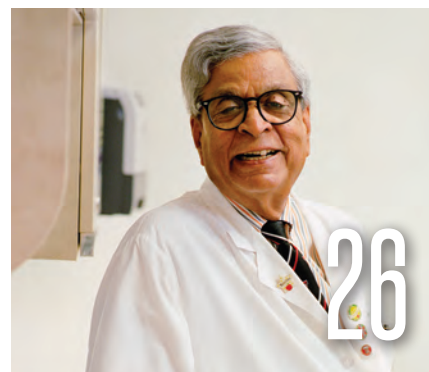
PULSE



A PUBLICATION *for* ALUMNI & FRIENDS *of* TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER



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REASONS TO JOIN THE TTUHSC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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STAY CONNECTED TO OTHER ALUMNI

2

GIVE BACK TO STUDENTS

3
BE INVOLVED

4
CREATE A COMMUNITY

5
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

7

FEEL RESPONSIBILITY TO GIVE BACK

6
TTUHSC GAVE SO MUCH TO ME

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APPRECIATION FOR WHAT TTUHSC HAS DONE FOR MY CAREER

PRIDE IN TTUHSC



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TTUHSCAlumniAssociation

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The Campaign for Your Life, Our Purpose www.yourlifeourpurpose.com



FACTA NON VERBA :: DEEDS, NOT WORDS

Our School of Nursing Veteran to BSN (VBSN) program marked a milestone with its first graduating class earning degrees during the school's inaugural December graduation. I'm proud of the fact that the first seven students to graduate from this program also passed their licensing exams on the first attempt and are now employed as registered nurses in Texas.

The VBSN program credits prior military health care experience and applies it toward a BSN degree, cutting the time for some veterans to receive their degree in 12 months. Our program was the first of its kind in the state, and when it launched in the spring of 2016 was the only such initiative sponsored by the Texas Workforce Commission.

I had the privilege to share our students' success and to represent the Texas Tech University System earlier this summer at a roundtable discussion in Washington, D.C., which focused on improving the quality of education for student veterans and veterans' initiatives. This roundtable event preceded impending updates to the current GI Bill.

We have stepped up our game here at TTUHSC in support of veterans. We now have an office dedicated to serving the men and women who have served our great nation. As educators, it is our purpose to help them with their transition from being a soldier to a civilian student.

Veterans face many obstacles when transitioning from the military back into civilian life. Age, family status and education levels are among them. What's more, experiences and skills gained during their time of service often don't carry the same value as a college degree in some career fields, according to a survey of post 9/11 veterans published in Forbes magazine in 2016.

The success of the VBSN program demonstrates that many of these skills are transferable and, as shown in nursing, should count for something. I'm proud that our faculty developed this educational model that awards college credit hours for military health care experience, based on knowledge and skills.

We have another group of veterans, 60 of them, who also received their degrees from TTUHSC during this last academic year—22 of those earned graduate degrees. Additionally, there are a number of other students who are currently enrolled or who earned degrees while continuing their military service.

Patrick Henry once said, "The battle is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave." I applaud the men and women who have chosen to serve our nation, and I'm proud we have a way to help those who have chosen nursing as a second career.

Tedd L. Mitchell, MD
TTUHSC President

 @TeddLMitchell  @TTUHSCPresident

Texas Tech University System Chancellor
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TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION

Since becoming the fourth university in the Texas Tech University System in 2013, hundreds of our students, residents and fellows have gained valuable and unique experiences in emerging technologies, academic innovations, cultural immersion and collaborative partnerships; and our university is quickly becoming the national model for addressing the health needs of diverse border populations.

What started as just 40 medical students in 2009 has since evolved into more than 600 students on campus pursuing careers in medicine, nursing or biomedical sciences. That amounts to a 1,400 percent increase in our student population.

Under TTUHSC El Paso's strategic plan for growth, we expect this trend to continue in the coming years. By enhancing online programs and adding a Master of Science in Nursing, we are already on track to increase enrollment in the Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing to more than 600 by 2020.

Thanks to a new agreement with The Hospitals of Providence, and the recent grand opening of the nation's newest teaching hospital, TTUHSC El Paso will expand graduate medical education with up to 100 new residency slots. Plans to expand the residency programs at Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso clinics and El Paso's VA Medical Center are also in the works.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has given the university a green light to conduct feasibility planning for the proposed Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine, which has already garnered \$31 million in philanthropic support from the El Paso community.

Richard Black, DDS, MS, has been named interim dean. He is a native El Pasoan who has led the local dental society, the Texas Dental Association, and now is a trustee of the American Dental Association (ADA)—one of only 17 members elected nationally to lead the 160,000 member organization. Black has already visited schools in Utah, North Carolina, Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona and California to speak with some of the top dental educators across the country as we begin to develop what will be the newest and most innovative dental school curriculum.

Victor Sandoval, DDS, MPH, who has served on the ADA's Commission on Dental Accreditation and was past president of the American Dental Education Association, has been recruited to assist with accreditation of the dental school.

Our goal of expanding educational opportunities for students, including cutting-edge medical research, is also underway. In May, the university broke ground on an \$83 million Medical Sciences Building. Read more about the opportunities the MSB II will bring on Pages 20-22.

TTUHSC El Paso is also on target for receiving independent institutional accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges for the first time since becoming a freestanding university.

We have come a long way in a short amount of time and plan to continue to set a standard of excellence in the coming years.

Richard Lange, MD, MBA
TTUHSC El Paso President



 @TTUHSCPEP  @PresidentLange

PULSE EDITORIAL

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TTUHSC donors Celeste and Joe Fralick and Steven Berk, MD, TTUHSC vice president and provost and School of Medicine dean, at their gift announcement.



The trust of Diane Childers, who lost her battle with breast cancer, provided funding for an endowed chair in cancer research at TTUHSC.

Family's Battle with Cancer Leads to Endowed Chair for Research

Diane Childers was known for her community activism, vivacious spirit and unending passion for helping others. The side effects from breast cancer treatments, however, took that all away when she in her early 60s. Not wanting others to suffer from the disease, Childers' desire was for her trust bequest to support cancer research.

"Our family, as so many others, has been impacted by cancer," said Celeste Fralick, Childers' cousin. Celeste and her husband Joe Fralick, a professor in the School of Medicine Department of Immunology and Molecular Microbiology, established the Childers-Fralick Basic Cancer Research Endowed Chair in January.

"Everyone knows a Diane Childers," said TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD. "We thank the Childers and Fralick families for their generosity as this endowed chair will ensure a long-term investment in our research programs."

As trustee of Childers' estate, also having a mother who died of lung cancer and a Stage 4 breast cancer survivor herself, Celeste said the quality of research at TTUHSC outshined the other universities they considered for the endowment.

Kevin Pruitt, PhD, associate professor in the School of Medicine Department of Immunology and Molecular Microbiology, was named to the endowed chair position. His laboratory focuses on how specific proteins create epigenetic "footprints" in cancer cells that enable them to drive the overproduction of estrogen within tumors (Read more about his research on Pages 16-18).

"Celeste and Joe gave us the choice to recruit someone new or find someone within institution (to fill the chair position). When they described their ideal candidate, Kevin immediately came to mind," said Matthew Grisham, PhD, chair of the School of Medicine Department of Immunology and Molecular Microbiology. "They said the investigator should be a rising star, someone whose career was continuing to progress in leaps and bounds.

"Their hope was through his or her investigations, the possibility of new drug therapies for the treatment of these devastating disorders could greatly be increased."



Watch the announcement of the Childers-Fralick gift on Facebook Live at <http://bit.ly/2uf6KRZ>

Nursing Adds Accelerated BSN to DNP Program

Nurses who want to earn an advance degree now have an accelerated option that will save them time and money. The School of Nursing is adding a Bachelor of Science in Nursing to Doctor of Nursing Practice (BSN to DNP) program.

The BSN to DNP program is the first state-supported program in Texas that will give BSN graduates a direct pathway to the doctorate degree while preparing them as family nurse practitioners (FNP) or psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners.

Coursework for the accelerated DNP program will be delivered through a combination of face-to-face and online courses and supervised clinical experiences. Their coursework will meet all educational standards established for these practice fields by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (2006) and the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty's Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs (2016). Graduates will be eligible to sit for national certifications.

The school will continue all current MSN track offerings and the Post-Masters DNP Program for Executive Leadership and Advanced Nursing Practice.

Applications for the accelerated DNP first cohort will be accepted from Nov. 1 to Feb. 15 and begin classes in fall 2018; maximum of 26 students will be accepted with the number of applicants split between FNP and psychiatric mental health tracks.



Visit the School of Nursing website <http://bit.ly/2s9dVGS> for more information

5 minutes with the faculty...

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

BACK-TO-BACK HONORS | Nursing faculty earns multiyear recognition for her work | *By Mark Hendricks*

The last several months of the 2016-2017 school year were rewarding for Deborah Casida, MSN, RN, assistant professor for the School of Nursing in Amarillo.

Casida, who is also the Amarillo site coordinator for the Second Degree Nursing and Veteran to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (VBSN) programs, received the Outstanding Faculty Award from the TTUHSC Student Government Association (SGA) for her efforts related to the Second Degree program. She received the same award following the 2015-2016 school year for her work with the VBSN program.

Students select SGA award recipients, something Casida said makes the award especially gratifying.

"I am honored that the students think so very highly of me, and I have received this amazing award for the second year

in a row," Casida said. "I am honored and thrilled that the students took time out of their schedules to think of me and vote for me."

Casida was also recognized as a member of the nursing team that received an SGA Team Teaching Award for its work in developing the VBSN track. Other team members include Deborah Sikes, DNP, RN, CNE; Patricia Frances-Johnson, DNP, RN, CNE; Melinda Mitchell-Jones, MSN, JD, RN; and Laura Opton, DHSc, RN, CNE.

"I work with an incredible group of women, and I have learned a ton from each of them," Casida said. "It is because of their leadership, team building and their mentoring and support of me that I am able to receive such an award. The credit goes to these incredible women, and I am thankful that they have considered me as part of their team."

In addition to her recognition at TTUHSC, the Amarillo ISD Bowie Middle School Junior Achievers named Casida their Volunteer of the Year. Casida said she has met with the group of seventh graders for the past three years to teach them about the college and financial responsibilities. She said she enjoys spending time with the students because they are so eager to learn.

"These children do not have much, so talking with them and teaching them the many possibilities that come with gaining a college degree and a career has blessed me in so many ways," Casida added. "I keep my crystal candy dish on my desk as a reminder of those students. I am in awe that I could even be considered and to receive these awards is all by the grace of God."

This article was originally posted on TTUHSC's Daily Dose. It is reprinted here with permission.



Culinary Medicine Elective Teaches Medical Students About Nutrition

BY SUZANNA CISNEROS

Studying in a clinical or classroom setting is normal for medical students. For this class however, instead of stethoscopes and classrooms, students trade their white coats for aprons, medical equipment for stoves and cooking utensils, and a chef becomes the professor.

This is Culinary Medicine, a new fall elective established by Sarah Jaroudi and Bill Sessions, both medical students.

“We saw a need for education about nutrition that was not in the curriculum,” Sessions said. “The lectures explored various nutritional concepts and the labs were taught by chefs where medical students applied their knowledge and learned how to prepare healthy meals.”

“The mission of the elective,” said Jaroudi, “is to educate and train medical students to develop and maintain healthy habits and perspectives that will benefit themselves, their communities and most importantly their patients.”

The School of Medicine students studied culinary medicine at the HEB Culinary Laboratories at the Texas Tech University (TTU) College of Human Sciences. Dewey McMurray, CEC, executive chef of operations, taught the students cooking techniques, answered questions and wrote the recipes for the program.

Katherine Chauncey, PhD, RDN, course director and a nutritionist in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, said this course was organized and driven by medical students.

“With the first class, the students were given a recipe and made it in a normal fashion with any



ingredients necessary. As the classes progressed, the students took the same recipe and began to incorporate healthier options for foods such as brown rice for white rice, healthier lower carbs or enhance nutrients by adding other items.

“Each student also was given a scenario with a patient who has been diagnosed with an illness such as diabetes, renal disease, etc. The students not only began to think about how to make the meal healthier, but also think of how to cook the meal for the prognosis each patient has.”

Taylor Lindgren was assigned a recipe that included garlic chicken Parmesan and sweet potato wedges and carrots. Lindgren was surprised by how many different options patients with certain dietary needs have through simple changes in their meal choices.

“One group cooked a delicious, Caribbean-inspired meal catered to renal patients who have dietary restrictions on protein, phosphorus and other nutrients,” Lindgren said. “Without being told about these restrictions, I wouldn’t have been able to tell.”

“I loved learning about how to apply concepts from the Culinary Medicine elective not only to my own life, but also to the lives of my future patients.”

This article was originally published on TTUHSC’s Daily Dose.

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New Online Programs to Address Shortage in Mental Health Counselors

This spring, Texas Tech University System Board of Regents approved establishment of the Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Master of Science in Addiction Counseling.

The online programs will be offered through the School of Health Professions and the F. Marie Hall Institute of Rural and Community Health. Graduate students from both programs will be eligible for a certificate in telemedicine through the institute, creating the first counseling programs in the U.S. to train practitioners in clinical counseling skills and distance service provision techniques.

TTUHSC’s model will help fill a shortage in mental health counselors by allowing the School of Health Professions to recruit students from areas with limited access to traditional educational methods. Additionally, the program offers students the academic and clinical foundations needed to pursue employment in clinical services in rural areas.

More than 72 percent of counties in the state are missing a psychiatrist, said TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects the need for addiction counselors to increase 30 percent by 2024.

Wright Family's Gift Establishes Coveted Scholarship Endowment

With the high cost of a health career education, students search for ways to offset some of the debt. Thanks to a generous gift from the Bill and Corinne Wright family, TTUHSC now has an endowment to provide scholarships to qualified recruits and current students.

Scholarship support is invaluable, Cheyenne Mangold, 2016-2017 Student Government Association president, told the Wright family and those gathered in February for the announcement of the Wright ASCO Foundation Endowed Presidential Scholarship.

Last year, TTUHSC students borrowed \$67 million in loans to help pay for school. The cost of tuition alone varies by field; as example, one semester for a traditional bachelor's degree in nursing can cost more than \$12,000 for residents and four years of medical school come with a bill of more than \$210,000.

"One of the best ways to combat rising student costs is scholarships," said Mangold, who recently completed her third year of medical school. "It provides students with the opportunity to focus more on academics and less on how to pay for an education.

"Without families like you, the dreams of students such as myself could never happen. From the bottom of my heart, on behalf of all students here, thank you."

"The Wright ASCO Foundation Endowed Presidential Scholarship is a game changer," said TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD. "It is not often that we receive a gift with such few strings attached. This scholarship gives us great leeway in using these funds on any campus for any student. I couldn't be more thankful to this family for that."

Mitchell also commended the family on its legacy—one of family relationships, working in unity and philanthropy.

"It was because of their parenting and relationship with one another growing up that they are able to do this and impact so many beyond their own family," he said. "With their thoughtful assistance, our university will continue to educate students in all health care fields and help lessen the burden of debt."

Bill and Corinne Wright's philanthropic legacy is one passed on to their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well as to their employees at ASCO Equipment, said Steve Wright, one of the couple's three children. He and his siblings, Brax Wright and Paula Wright Key established the ASCO Foundation, which supports the scholarship gift.

"When you leave this world it's not bricks and mortar that last, it's your legacy. I can think of no better legacy to leave than one of giving," Steve said.



Texas Tech System Chancellor Robert Duncan, Student Government President Cheyenne Mangold, TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, Steve Wright, Brax Wright, and Paula Wright Key



Paula Wright Key visits with a student following the announcement of the Wright ASCO Foundation Presidential Endowed Scholarship.

Philanthropy such as that exhibited by the Wright family's gift is the lifeblood of university excellence, said Texas Tech University (TTU) System Chancellor Robert Duncan. "The state does a great job in supporting institutions like (TTUHSC) but state appropriations alone just won't get the job done. The way we will continue to achieve excellence depends on philanthropy."

This scholarship gift is the Wright family's second major gift of support to TTUHSC. In 2005, they established the Corinne Payne Wright Endowed Chair in Alzheimer's Disease in the School of Medicine's Department of Neurology. TTU and the TTU System also benefit from the family's generosity.

Awards & Accolades



MARJORIE JENKINS, MD, professor in the School of Medicine and chief scientific officer in the Laura W. Bush Institute for Women's Health, received the American Medical Women's Association Elizabeth Blackwell Award. Jenkins is the founding director of the TTUHSC Sex and Gender-Based Health Curriculum and co-chairs

the President's Task Force on Sex and Gender-Based Medicine. Jenkins founded the Laura W. Bush Institute for Women's Health in 2007. The institute now has a presence in Abilene, Amarillo, Dallas, Lubbock, Permian Basin and San Angelo.



In March, Gov. Greg Abbot appointed **ANNIE L. SOBEL, MD**, to a six-year term on the Texas Military Preparedness Commission. Sobel holds joint appointments as an associate professor in the School of Medicine Department of Medical Education and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. Her term expires in February 2023.



JAYARAM NAIDU, MD, is serving a four-year term on the Texas Medical Board. Naidu is an assistant clinical professor at TTUHSC at the Permian Basin. He was appointed in January. The Odessa Chamber of Commerce also named Naidu an Entrepreneur of the Year. He is president of Naidu Clinic and has been

in private practice for more than 40 years as an internist. He also has recruited more than 20 physicians to the area.

In April, 15 TTUHSC faculty members were inducted in the inaugural class of the local Texas Tech University System Chapter of the National Academy of Inventors. The academy recognizes individuals whose research has moved out of the laboratory and is transitioning to applied use through the patent process. This year's awardees were:

Associate Members – provisional patents: **ROGER SUTTON, PHD**, professor, Department of Cell Physiology and Molecular Biophysics.

Members – one U.S. issued patent: **ULRICH BICKEL, PHD**, professor and director, Center for Blood-Brain Barrier Research; **ROBERT BRIGHT, PHD**, professor, Department of Immunology and Molecular Microbiology; **MATTHEW GRISHAM, PHD**, (Biomedical Sciences '82) professor and chair, Department of Immunology and Molecular Microbiology; **DANIEL HARDY, PHD**, associate professor, Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry; **JAOU-CHEN HUANG, MD**, professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology; **LINGKUN KONG, MD, PHD**, associate professor, Department of Ophthalmology; **DEVIN LOWE, PHD**, (Biomedical Sciences '10) assistant professor, Department of Immunotherapeutics and Biotechnology, Abilene; **CLAUDIA MEEK, PHD**, research associate professor, School of Pharmacy, Dallas; **LINDSAY PENROSE, PHD**, assistant professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology; **AFZAL SIDDIQUI, PHD**, Grover E. Murray Professor and vice president for Institutional Collaborations; and **THOMAS TENNER, PHD**, assistant dean, Faculty Affairs and Development, professor, Department of Medical Education.

Senior Chapter Members – three or more U.S. issued patents: **SAM PRIEN, PHD**, director, Clinical and Research Laboratory and professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Animal and Food Science in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources; Texas Tech **TED REID, PHD**, professor, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences; **PATRICK REYNOLDS, MD, PhD**, director, School of Medicine Cancer Center and professor, Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry.



Four of the six chair positions established in 2014 with the generous gift from the J.T. and Margaret Talkington Charitable Foundation to the School of Medicine Department of Internal Medicine have been filled. Chair holders had the opportunity this spring to personally thank foundation board members for the gift, which helps supplement incomes for the academic physicians working in a field not as well-compensated as other medical specialties. Pictured with TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, far left, are chair holders Michael Phy, DO, MS (Resident '00), associate professor; John Pixley, MD, professor; Cynthia Jumper, MD, MPH, (Medicine '88), TTUHSC vice president of health policy and associate dean for Health Services Management and professor; Alan Henry and Norton Baker, Talkington Charitable Foundation board members; and chair holder Alan Peiris, MD, PhD, executive director of the TTUHSC Clinical Research Institute and attending physician. Jumper's relationship with the late Margaret Talkington, her patient, played a key role in securing the foundation's gift. Read more about this gift in the winter 2015 issue of PULSE.

MATTERS

of the heart

By Holly Leger

Nursing Alumna Helps Parents Through Infant Loss



Beth Uszynski, BSN, RN, (Nursing '06) was unprepared for the grief she felt after losing her first baby to a miscarriage in June 2015.

“As a nurse, you kind of know medically what you’re going to expect,” said Uszynski, a staff nurse at Hospice of South Texas in Victoria, “but it was a lot more graphic than I ever thought. It’s physically painful and emotionally heart wrenching.”

After the miscarriage, Uszynski remembers returning home from the hospital exhausted. Her emotions were high, and the hormonal changes occurring in her body made the loss feel even more intense. She was grateful when a friend brought food, because in the days that followed, she and her husband, Adam, just wanted to stay at home to mourn their baby, who died at 10 weeks and two days.

“It’s one of those things where you learn, ‘Well how in the world can you grieve a baby you haven’t met yet?’ But what you’re grieving is their future. You’re grieving all these dreams you had and all these plans you had,” Uszynski said.

About 10 to 20 percent of known pregnancies end in miscarriage, and more than 80 percent of these losses happen before 12 weeks. Knowing how common the issue was and feeling overwhelmed with her grief, Uszynski searched for a support group. She found some in Austin, San Antonio and Houston, but nothing in Victoria, a town with a population of about 60,000.

Uszynski shared her grief with a co-worker, who had also experienced miscarriage. Uszynski talked about her fears of what the miscarriage might do to her marriage and the immense sense of failure she felt with her body. Her co-worker was able to relate, and the two quickly found encouragement in one another, realizing there was power in their conversations.

“The only thing that really helps you to get through something like that is to see that other people have done it,” Uszynski said. “They’ve experienced it, and they’ve gotten through it.”

In the fall of 2015, the pair created a local support group. They call their group Angel Babies Victoria, welcoming all


parents who have experienced loss of an infant from miscarriage, abortion, stillbirth or SIDS.

Uszynski and her co-worker facilitate group discussions and allow mothers and fathers to voice their concerns and share their grief. About five people attend the monthly meetings, but over 100 people are members of the Angel Babies Victoria Facebook group. Uszynski said they use the online platform to post motivational stories and inspirational quotes. The closed group is also a private place for parents to post encouraging words or seek help, like when a woman is anxious about attending a baby shower after experiencing a miscarriage.

“We’re not counselors or therapists or psychiatrists,” Uszynski said, “but we’re just trying to get that group discussion going to allow people to heal.”

A year after her miscarriage, Uszynski gave birth to a healthy boy, John Wyatt. She describes their 10 month old as a light for her and her husband, a joyful baby who loves the outdoors, swimming and their yellow Labrador.

After having her son, Uszynski went back to Hospice of South Texas as a part-time staff nurse. She manages symptoms at the end of life, helping to provide comfort and dignity to patients and their families. Working in hospice for seven years has given her the opportunity to see the importance of guiding loved ones through grief. Pulling from professional and personal experiences, she continues to encourage fellow parents that while the loss of an infant is incredibly painful, it’s possible to get through it with the support of others.

“Death is really taboo in our society, and a lot of times people shy away from actually addressing the loss, which completely alienates the person who is grieving and makes it harder for them,” Uszynski said. “If somebody is experiencing a loss, say something to them. Be there for them. Don’t let them be alone.” 

GGHSON Assistant Professor Represents Texas Nurse Practitioners

Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing Assistant Professor Christina Blanco, DNP, has been elected as the North Texas state representative for the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). In this role, Blanco represents all nurse practitioners in the Panhandle, West Texas and Dallas-Fort Worth regions.

“The AANP is the largest national organization for nurse practitioners, so it’s important to play an active role with them,” Blanco said. “Assisting regional directors with state events and initiatives is part of my role, but as a state rep, it is also crucial for me to help in developing legislative priorities.”

Since 2010, Blanco has provided testimony to various Texas State Senate committees, advocating for such issues as women’s and indigent health care. In addition to advocating for important issues in health care, one of the AANP’s goals is improving access to nurse practitioners while improving their presence in health care.

Blanco’s one-year term began at the close of the AANP 2017 National Conference in Philadelphia June 25. She is one of two Texas representatives. Blanco joined TTUHSC El Paso in 2016.



Faculty Member Elected to Texas e-Health Advisory Committee

Ogechika Alozie, MD, MPH, CPHIMS, has been elected to the Texas Health and Human Services e-Health Advisory Committee. As a committee member, Alozie serves as a key adviser on state initiatives related to health information technology. Duties of the committee members include strategic planning and advising on policy, rules and services related to the use of health information technology, health information exchange systems, telemedicine, telehealth and home telemonitoring services.

In addition to his new role on the e-Health Advisory Committee, Alozie also serves as the chief medical informatics officer in TTUHSC El Paso’s Office of Clinical Informatics.



Vice President for Research Joins CPRIT Higher Ed Committee

Earlier this year, Peter Rotwein, MD, was appointed to the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) University Advisory Committee.

“Dr. Peter Rotwein’s appointment to the CPRIT’s UAC is a testament to his professional success and commitment to others,” said Texas Tech University (TTU) System Chancellor Robert Duncan. “He will be a tremendous resource for CPRIT and the state of Texas.”

As the TTU System representative, Rotwein will help advise the organization’s oversight committee on the role of higher education in cancer research.

“CPRIT plays a critical role in improving the health of Texans by investing in the highest quality fundamental and clinical cancer research,” said Rotwein, TTUHSC El Paso’s vice president for research.

He added, “This role comes with the twin goals of more effective treatments now and enhanced progress toward cures in the future.”

In addition to helping advise the institute’s oversight committee—a committee of nine Texans appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor and speaker of the House—Rotwein will advise CPRIT on how Texas universities and other institutions of higher education can assist in furthering the organization’s goals.

“I look forward to participating in this important task and in representing our university, the citizens of West Texas and the entire state in helping our scientists and clinicians make cancer disappear,” said Rotwein.

Rotwein joined TTUHSC El Paso in 2014.

New Degree Positions Nurses for Leadership Roles

In April, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) at TTUHSC El Paso. The seven-semester hybrid program will prepare nurses for positions in management and administration in the health care field.

“Traditional on-campus programs may be difficult for working nurses, and while entirely online programs are flexible, they are not always effective in fully engaging students,” said Penny Cooper, DNP, RN, assistant dean for graduate programs at the Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing (GGHSON). “That’s why we’re giving students the opportunity to experience and benefit from both learning environments.”

The program was developed in response to several national reports, including a 2010 report issued by the Institute of Medicine. The report emphasized the importance of nurses being full partners alongside physicians and other health care professionals, encouraging nurses to achieve higher levels of education.

The MSN will include leadership-focused courses in business, finance and policy. Students will also learn from the faculty of TTUHSC El Paso’s medical and biomedical science schools, preparing them to communicate effectively with a variety of professionals in future health care settings—an opportunity that can only be provided at a health sciences center.

“We provide our graduate students with a unique environment in which to study and a framework for them to be valuable contributors to any community or health care system, no matter where they decide to practice,” explained GGHSON Dean Jeanne Novotny, PhD, RN, FAAN.

The first class of graduate students begins in spring 2018.



Karinn Chambers, MD, (center), director of the Texas Tech Physicians El Paso Breast Care Center, poses with a patient and breast cancer survivor (left) and her daughter.

Bubbles & Brunch Raises \$33,000 for Breast Care Center

Support for the Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso (TTP El Paso) Breast Care Center came to light this March when the El Paso community raised more than \$33,000 at the inaugural Bubbles & Brunch event.

The signature event brought together over 200 El Pasoans for brunch, Champagne and trivia in support of the TTP El Paso Breast Care Center. The sold-out occasion celebrated breast cancer survivors and inspired hope for those battling the disease while raising awareness about the organization’s work in the community.

“Philanthropy is at the core of everything we do at TTUHSC El Paso, and it’s critical that we support one of the community resources designed specifically for women and men of our region,” TTUHSC El Paso Associate Vice Chancellor Victoria Pineda said.

Event attendees had a firsthand opportunity to hear from former patients of the TTP El Paso Breast Care Center about how the treatment they received positively impacted their lives. They also enjoyed six rounds of exciting trivia and competed for exclusive prizes sponsored by El Paso businesses, including GECU, this year’s gold sponsor.

The Breast Care Center was featured in the Summer 2016 issue of PULSE.



Visit <http://bit.ly/2vFUIi9> to read the article or the center’s website at elpaso.ttuhs.edu/bubblesandbrunch to learn more



Leadership from two Vietnamese institutions visited TTUHSC El Paso for the first time this spring, touring the campus and meeting with TTUHSC El Paso officials.

New International Partnership to Enhance Medicine in Vietnam

BY NADIA M. WHITEHEAD

To advance medical training and education in Vietnam, TTUHSC El Paso recently partnered with the University of Medicine and Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City and Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine, both in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

As part of the collaboration, Hoi Ho, MD, TTUHSC El Paso clinical professor of medicine and director of the Collaborative Educational Program, will spearhead the creation of a Faculty Development Program to train Vietnamese faculty at their respective institutions. Faculty members will attend regular sessions with Ho in Vietnam to learn how to integrate medical education and clinical simulation in undergraduate curricula. Ho, a consultant for the Center for Advanced Teaching and Assessment in Clinical Simulation (ATACS) at TTUHSC El Paso, will also

assist the universities in establishing clinical simulation centers of their own to facilitate more effective medical education.

The ATACS is an integral component of medical education at TTUHSC El Paso. The center uses both mannequins and standardized patients—live people trained to act out clinical scenarios—to facilitate clinical practice. The lab's lifelike animatronic mannequins are designed to replicate the full spectrum of medical conditions, from childbirth to respiratory distress and diabetic symptoms. This unique environment gives trainees a chance to refine their clinical skills and see the effects of clinical decisions that they may encounter in real-life situations.

“Clinical simulation is not only very important for nursing and medical training, but it is also important for performing high-quality services and increasing patient safety,” said Ho. “Simulation centers can decrease errors that happen in everyday practice and improve collaboration and communication; I look forward to helping these universities strengthen their medical education by creating a simulation center and faculty development program for each to utilize.”

Teddy Bears Help Students Practice Medicine

BY NADIA M. WHITEHEAD



A distressed patient is lying down in pain. He has a broken foot and needs immediate medical care. A stern-looking man in a white coat stands over him, assessing the grave situation.

“All right, so what we’re going to do next is set the bone back in place,” he tells a group of curious, gaping onlookers. But these are not medical students in training, or even high schoolers shadowing a physician. They’re 10-year-olds, and their patient is a giant, human-sized teddy bear.

The students are experiencing their first Teddy Bear Clinic, a mock health clinic where kids take care of teddy bears as stand-ins for real patients. Organized by the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) at TTUHSC El Paso, the event is intended to spark interest in health care careers at an early age.

“I pretended that the bear’s foot was broken to an extreme degree, to the point that all the kids gasped,” said volunteer and first-year TTUHSC El Paso medical student Benjamin Chang, aka, the somber man in the white coat. “We realigned the teddy bear’s leg and pretended to put a cast on it, explaining that it was needed to protect the wound.”

\$1.5 Million Grant Funds Cervical Cancer Prevention in West Texas

Navkiran Shokar, MD, MPH, MA, has received nearly \$1.5 million from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) to reduce the burden of cervical cancer in West Texas.

“Hispanic women in our region have a 30 percent higher risk of dying from cervical cancer,” said Shokar, a physician and professor at TTUHSC El Paso. “They also have a higher incidence of cervical cancer and are typically diagnosed at later stages.”

Shokar will use the grant to expand De Casa en Casa, a program that helps uninsured or underinsured Latinas access free cervical cancer screenings. Since its establishment in 2013, De Casa en Casa has provided more than 1,500 pap smears to women in El Paso and Hudspeth counties.

The new funds will help the program expand its service area to 105 additional rural U.S.-Mexico border counties in Texas, stretching from the Big Bend Country to the Panhandle Plains. Cervical cancer test rates in this region lag far behind the national average of 82 percent; only 63 to 71 percent of qualifying residents in these counties have been screened.

“The region has high rates of poverty, low education and low rates of health care coverage, making it the ideal location for health education and free diagnostic screenings to save more lives,” said Shokar.

Shokar and her team will begin the effort by organizing a convoy to visit a 19-county area by the end of the year. The team will offer cervical cancer prevention education, including



A \$1.5 million grant will help expand TTUHSC El Paso's program De Casa en Casa.

a bilingual educational video, and free cervical cancer screenings to qualifying residents. During the visit, the team will also provide training for local nurses and community health workers to increase awareness of cervical cancer, its symptoms and common barriers that women in these communities face to get access to cancer screening and care.

Shokar's ultimate goal is not only to have more women screened but also to educate Hispanics about the importance of regular pap smears for early diagnosis—when cervical cancer is most curable.

Chang's demonstration pulled out all the stops. Before yanking the bear's leg back into place, he and the students dramatically counted down to prep the teddy for the pain of resetting his bone. Afterward, they experimented with stethoscopes by listening to each other's heartbeats, breathing sounds and gurgling stomachs.

“We try to make it as interactive and fun as possible,” Chang said.

In addition to learning about what physicians do, the fifth-graders toured a variety of medical stations. They had the opportunity to play the role of a nurse, take vital signs, conduct a dental checkup and prescribe medications as a pharmacist.

“We try to plant a seed in these students at an early age so that they can eventually enter the health care field,” said Daniel Camacho, director of the AHEC at TTUHSC El Paso. “There is a real health care provider shortage in El Paso and the surrounding region, and with this event we hope to interest more of our talented youth in choosing a health career.”

The Teddy Bear Clinic is traditionally held once a year at an El Paso high school; this year, the center decided to branch out and add a second trip.

With teddy bears in tow, AHEC hit the road in March for Van Horn, Texas, a small, rural community with a population of 2,000. Like El Paso, the city suffers from a health professional shortage—but to an even greater degree. The community does not have a dentist or orthodontist, and its hospital is extremely small, accommodating only 14 beds.

“We have some services offered at our local hospital, but it's not anything close to what's offered in the city (of El Paso),” said Sandra McCoy, district counselor for Van Horn schools. “(Van Horn) really struggles with being able to service patients.”

This limits the exposure Van Horn students have to medical specialists, and in turn, considering a career in the medical field doesn't easily come to mind for most. The shortage also affects school attendance because students must commute to a bigger city to see a specialist.

“In our community, if students need to go to the doctor they miss a whole day of school and education,” McCoy explains.

For this reason, she eagerly welcomes visiting medical programs like the Teddy Bear Clinic. If students are inspired to become health care professionals, perhaps they will one day return to their hometown and help curtail this shortage.

For now, that's a waiting game; a career decision for these children is probably another 10 years away. McCoy, however, is certain the Teddy Bear Clinic's first road trip was a success.

She says, “Who wouldn't love learning with teddy bears?”



Watch a video of the Teddy Bear Clinic's first road trip online at elpaso.ttuhscc.edu/teddy-bear-clinic

JUST *the facts*



14 OURHSC

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

14 Projects have been funded by Our HSC programs on **Amarillo, Abilene, Lubbock and Permian Basin campuses**. Employees at each campus have contributed a combined \$110,000 since the program launched in 2015 to enhance the workplace at their respective campuses. To learn about the funded projects, visit www.ttuhscc.edu/ourhsc



82M

Views on a children's educational YouTube channel produced and scripted by Marie Leiner, PhD, associate professor of research in the **TTUHSC El Paso** Paul L. Foster School of Medicine Department of Pediatrics. Leiner recently received YouTube's Silver Creator Award for her cartoons promoting social learning and mental health in preschoolers.

7

Students comprised first class of graduates to complete the Veteran to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (VBSN) program. They graduated in December. All seven are employed as registered nurses in Texas.

\$6.06M

Amount of public grant funding **TTUHSC El Paso** received in 2016.



1,500

Number of volunteer hours logged by members of the **TTUHSC** Student Occupational Therapy Association during the fall and spring semesters. Association members volunteer at several organizations in Lubbock, focusing on children and adults with special needs.



\$24,000

Amount projected to be raised in the first year of the **TTUHSC El Paso** Employee Giving Campaign. Employees are encouraged to give back to the university through payroll deductions to support the university's three schools and campus research.

RESEARCH & SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

DISCOVERIES

NEAL HINKLE



ON THE FRONT LINES of battle

The photograph of a single chromosome that hung on a wall at the Los Alamos National Laboratory captivated Kevin Pruitt's attention. One particular gene on this chromosome, he learned, had the ability to repair damaged DNA. The concept fascinated Pruitt and became the game changer in his career.

It was the summer of 1994, and Pruitt was at Los Alamos for an undergraduate research internship. The experience, he said, radically changed his career trajectory from chemical engineering to biomedical science. "I discovered that, for me, engineering was a challenging and safe career choice, but personally not intriguing.

"The idea of becoming a biomedical research scientist, on the other hand, was an allure that could not be resisted because you get to peer into what is hidden and, in most cases, open that up and study it; and then when you see a connection between two things no one has described before, it's just absolutely fascinating."

Pruitt now leads a team of researchers in the School of Medicine Department of Immunology and Molecular Microbiology. They investigate molecular pathways that contribute to tumor growth and look for novel therapies to stop it. Their research is grounded in epigenetics—an area Pruitt studied initially toward the end of his Ph.D. studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and continued during his postdoctoral studies at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. This line of investigation was continued later at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center-Shreveport, where he established his first lab.

Cancer epigenetics is the research of the future, Pruitt said, "Advances in this field are now bringing to light concepts that were really only glimpsed in the previous decade. For example, the causes of cancer have become clearer now that we realize that there are both genetic and epigenetic alterations contributing to the etiology."



BY DANETTE BAKER | PHOTOS BY NEAL HINKLE

PRUITT LEADS RESEARCH TEAM EYEING BIOLOGICAL MECHANISM TO COMBAT CANCER GROWTH

Epigenetics, in simplified terms, is the study of biological mechanism(s) that cause the thousands of genes in every cell in your body to switch on and off. Even if cells in the human body have the same genome, depending on the organ in which the cell resides, they do not express the same genes, which is a good thing, Pruitt said. A distinct pattern of gene expression is what makes tissues, organs, and ultimately, each of us unique.

The process of controlling gene expression, however, doesn't always occur as it should. For example, small modifications to DNA, known as DNA methylation, can control which genes get expressed. In cancer, this DNA modification may be acquired by genes where it shouldn't. This mark can then serve as a docking site for proteins that bind to them and inappropriately turn off the gene even though the genetic sequence is normal.

By identifying how cancer alters those marks, Pruitt said, they can then use a variety of therapies—molecular inhibitors or other medications known to have anticancer properties—to counteract them.

Success stories from this work have produced clinical therapies that reverse DNA methylation and thereby enable the expression of diverse genes that suppress tumor growth. However, continued investigation is important because many therapies don't just target rogue cancer cells; they affect the normal ones as well.

“One of our newest research projects aims to understand how epigenetic therapies impact the body's immune system which is the ultimate way to fight cancer. If epigenetic therapies can help cancer cells become less resistant to the defense of the body's immune system and become subject to apoptosis, or

programmed cell death, while not harming the normal cells, this would be a major breakthrough.”

In addition to DNA methylation, Pruitt's team also studies epigenetic enzymes, whose role is to modify histone proteins. These histone proteins help package the immense quantity of DNA into the cell, similar to how wrapping paper is packaged on its cardboard tube. These histone proteins, however, can be modified, causing that neatly wrapped roll to look more like the discarded wrapping paper on Christmas morning.

“When a cell tries to turn on a gene that blocks its ability to invade surrounding tissue, when it should stay put, depending on the nature of the packaging or wrapping of this gene, it may or may not adhere to cellular instructions. The packaging of DNA, which is controlled by DNA methylation and histones marks, will either enable or disable the cell to respond to growth control cues. If the “wrapping” of the DNA is all wrong, certain tumor suppressor genes may be turned off incorrectly, and the cell will be deaf to the signals that tell it to halt its growth.”

Pruitt's work in cancer epigenetics took on a new meaning when his mother died from breast cancer around the time he was establishing his lab at LSU. “Purely from a scientific standpoint, you can't help but be intrigued by something that defies all kinds of normal biological controls,” Pruitt said. “My mom was diagnosed with cancer when I was in graduate school, and she put up a good fight for a while, so when you experience something like that, you become even more devoted to understanding the molecular basis of cancer,” Pruitt said. Other family members including his father and brother also died from cancer.



Researchers working with Kevin Pruitt, PhD, are, from left: David Vartak, research assistant; Deborah Molehin and Monica Sharma, research technicians; Pulak Manna, research associate professor; Isabel Castro-Piedras, PhD, postdoc research associate; and Megan Waterman, research technician.



TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD; Wendy Pruitt, PhD; Kevin Pruitt, PhD, associate professor of immunology and molecular microbiology; Celeste and Joe Fralick, donors; and Steven L. Berk, TTUHSC vice president and provost and School of Medicine dean


that can then be used to submit for larger extramural grants, such as from the National Institutes of Health or Department of Defense.

Currently, Pruitt's team has multiple investigations, primarily focused on breast and colon cancers, each with ties to cancer epigenetics. They are studying the overproduction of estrogen within tumors and have gathered evidence of surprising ways breast cancer cells increase estrogen production using a mechanism typically employed by the placenta. "This means of estrogen production should only be activated by the placenta during pregnancy, but we are deciphering how tumor cells gain the capacity to ramp up estrogen production in this unexpected way," Pruitt said. "It's like you have a combination that should only work on one lock, yet to your surprise you find it works on several others as well."

"We have some really cool insights that might be causing this. Once those factors are identified, some of them will be druggable targets, amenable to therapy. This is one of our newest, most exciting findings that we think will make a major impact on cancer treatment."

Members of Pruitt's lab also study a specific protein that impacts the epigenetic function when physiological stresses attack cells and the role this protein plays in the immune system's signaling structure to sustain cell growth or initiate cell death.

Information uncovered in each study, Pruitt said, has the potential to provide targeted novel therapies for treating cancer with increased responses and fewer negative side effects.

"The studies are all novel, cutting edge and hopefully we think we are going to make a nice splash both in scientific terms of new discoveries but also from a translational standpoint in at least laying the foundations for what might be new strategies to combat cancer resistance or some type of clinical relevance." 

It's a story that could be told by many, and one Celeste and Joe Fralick know all too well. She is a survivor of stage 4 breast cancer; her mother and her cousin, Diane Childers, died from cancer, lung and breast, respectively. In fact, almost 40 percent of all men and women in the U.S. will be diagnosed with cancer at some point during their lifetimes, according to data published by the National Cancer Institute.

The Fralicks are scientists—she has a PhD in biomedical engineering, and he is a professor of immunology and molecular microbiology—and know the invaluable role of research in medical maladies. They wanted to honor Childers' desire for her trust bequest to support cancer research and chose TTUHSC at which to establish an endowed chair position in cancer research. Pruitt was named to the position. (Read more about the Childers-Fralick Basic Cancer Research Endowed Chair on Page 4 of this issue).

"Celeste and Joe gave us a choice to recruit someone new or find someone within the institution to hold the chair position. When they described their ideal candidate, Kevin immediately came to mind," said Matthew Grisham, PhD, chair of the Department of Immunology and Molecular Biology. "They said the investigator should be a rising star, someone whose career was continuing to progress in leaps and bounds."

"Their hope was through his or her investigations, the possibility of new drug therapies for the treatment of these devastating disorders could greatly be increased."

Pruitt has received numerous research awards during his career, some of which include the Hoechst-Celanese Corporation Research Scholarship Award, Graduate School Excellence Award, American Association for Cancer Research Scholar in Training Award, National Science Foundation pre-doctoral fellowship and American Cancer Society postdoctoral fellowship.

His lab, supported by National Institutes of Health R01 funding, is focused on out-of-the-box approaches to finding novel therapies for treating cancer. In fact, the Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) recognized his work with the Rising Star Award, as part of a recruitment effort for Pruitt to relocate his lab to TTUHSC in 2014. When Pruitt, a native Texan, was presented with the opportunity to return to his home state, he was thrilled.

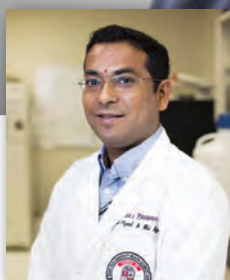
Pruitt said he is honored to hold the newly endowed chair position. Having the Fralick's generous support, he said, allows for the aggressive investigation toward significant, novel discoveries and allows his team to generate preliminary data

RESEARCH TARGETS MEDICATIONS FOR DEPRESSION

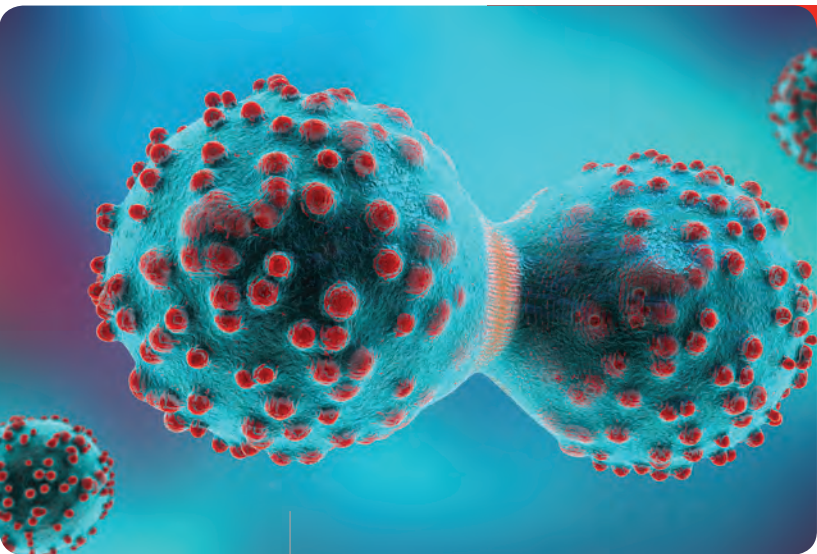
The World Health Organization estimates 350 million people suffer from depression. While there are a number of prescription medications on the market to treat the condition, many cause multiple side effects.

The work of researchers in the Department of Cell Physiology and Molecular Biophysics has identified that FDA-approved bupropion (Wellbutrin® and Zyban®) blocks the function of the serotonin type 3A receptors. The receptors are responsible for and contribute to psychiatric disorders such as anxiety and depression as well as schizophrenia, irritable bowel syndrome, addiction and substance abuse, and cognitive dysfunction.

Their work, supported in part by a seed grant from the South Plains Foundation and extramural funding from the National Institutes of Health National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, provides a foundation for developing improved pharmacological interventions for both addiction and depression. Additionally, the research findings will now be part of medical and pharmacy textbooks.



Akash Pandhare, MD, PhD, senior research associate in the School of Medicine Department of Cell Physiology and Molecular Biophysics, is the first author of the study. He works in the lab of Michaela Jansen, PharmD, PhD, associate professor. Other members of the research team were Aneesh Satya Pappu; Henrik Wilms, MD, PhD, associate professor, Department of Neurology; and Michael Blanton, PhD, professor and vice-chair, Pharmacology.



PROTEIN DISCOVERY COULD PROVIDE NEW IMMUNOTHERAPIES FOR CANCER

Researchers in the School of Pharmacy have discovered that the ribosomal protein s19 (RPS19), a naturally occurring protein in the body, can shield cancerous cells from the body's immune system in cancer patients.

This discovery is one of the beauty's of research, said Maciej Markiewski, MD, PhD, who with his wife and research partner, Magdalena Karbowniczek, MD, PhD, were part of a team that identified this new function of the protein which occurs when it is released from dying cancer cells and interacts with cells of the immune system.

The researchers were not specifically looking for this function of the protein, that's just where their inquiry took them. Their discovery, however, could pave the way for new immunotherapies to fight cancer.

The Journal of Immunology published their study in the February issue. Their work is sponsored in part by grants from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, Department of Defense Tuberos Sclerosis Research Program Grant and the National Institutes of Health Grant.

Their recent work provides evidence that blocking RPS19 impairs growth and delays development of tumors in a breast cancer model.

Maciej Markiewski, MD, PhD, and Magdalena Karbowniczek, MD, PhD, are associate professors in the School of Pharmacy. Additional authors of the study were from the University of Queensland in Brisbane and the University of Pennsylvania.



Markiewski



Karbowniczek



EXPANSION EFFORTS CONTINUE

BY NADIA M. WHITEHEAD



President Richard Lange, MD, MBA, playfully pretends to start up a tractor after the Medical Sciences Building II groundbreaking ceremony.

TTUHSC El Paso's New Building to Triple Research Space by 2019

In May, TTUHSC El Paso broke ground on the Medical Sciences Building (MSB) II, an \$83 million, 219,900-square-foot facility. The highly anticipated five-story building will add crucial resources to the campus, including more instructional space, a dining and food services area, and the campus' largest teaching auditorium yet.

Most importantly, the building will allow TTUHSC El Paso to significantly increase its hand in research.

"The MSB II will house 50 new medical scientists at full capacity and triple the amount of laboratory space currently on campus," said Peter Rotwein, MD, vice president for research.

This research expansion won't just benefit the institution, but the greater Paso del Norte region as a whole. As TTUHSC El Paso continues to grow, it has prioritized research programs that will improve public health in El Paso's unique border population.

That means focusing on prevalent health issues like diabetes and obesity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 12 percent of El Pasoans have diabetes, while the national average is just 9.3 percent. The county also has a higher percentage of overweight adults compared to state and national averages, putting residents at a higher risk for health problems like diabetes and high blood pressure.

Cancer—also prevalent in the Borderland—is another growing research focus for TTUHSC El Paso. Cervical cancer rates in El Paso women are higher than the national average. Prostate cancer rates are also a problem. According to the Paso del



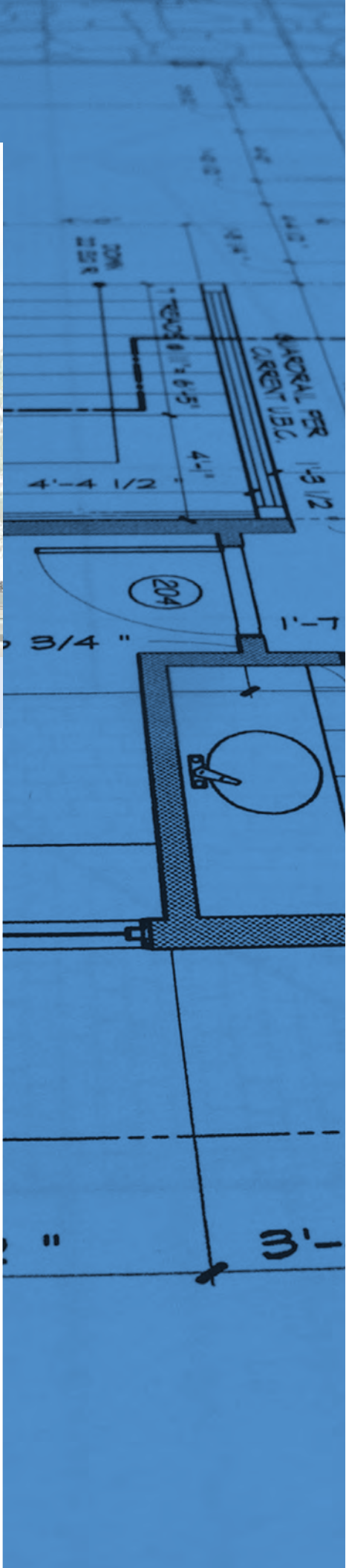
Key community members and TTUHSC El Paso leadership gathered for a ceremonial groundbreaking of the Medical Sciences Building II in May.

"This new building is another step toward advancing health research for the region we serve," TTUHSC El Paso President Richard Lange, MD, MBA, explained. "Here, we will build the scientists that will help cure AIDs, address Alzheimer's and fight cancer in the Borderland."



PROVIDED BY PERKINS + WILL

Nearly half of the square footage in the Medical Sciences Building II will be dedicated to laboratory space.



Norte Institute for Healthy Living, about 134 of every 100,000 men in El Paso will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime, compared to the state average of 106.

“This new building is another step toward advancing health research for the region we serve,” TTUHSC El Paso President Richard Lange, MD, MBA, explained. “Here, we will build the scientists that will help cure AIDs, address Alzheimer’s and fight cancer in the Borderland.”

TTUHSC El Paso’s research undertakings may even go beyond the Borderland, eventually impacting individuals throughout the U.S.

With an 81 percent Hispanic population, El Paso is a glimpse of what the nation will soon resemble. By 2060, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that Hispanics will comprise more than 28 percent of the U.S. population.

Now, more than ever, research on Hispanic individuals and the health issues they face is imperative, Rotwein said.

The institution already boasts an impressive track record when it comes to research. In 2016, TTUHSC El Paso obtained more than \$6 million in public research funding from agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Much of that funding went to research on health issues that affect people in El Paso—even those that are not as well-known, such as how bipolar disorder and Alzheimer’s disease may manifest differently in Latinos and how certain breast cancer gene mutations are more prevalent in Latinas than other groups of women.

More lab space and research scientists on campus will only increase the number of medically-important projects like these.

“This building is integral to our vision for TTUHSC El Paso,” Rotwein said. “We have the opportunity to grow our faculty and provide them with the resources not only to become the most successful scientists and physician-scientists that they can be but also to play key roles in improving health in our region.”

Construction of the MSB II is expected to be complete in 2019. 

\$1.1 MILLION GRANT FUNDS STUDY ON HOW EARLY PREGNANCY PREVENTS BREAST CANCER

Rajkumar Lakshmanaswamy, PhD, has received a \$1.1 million research grant from the U.S. Department of Defense to study how early pregnancy reduces a woman's lifetime risk of breast cancer.

"We've known for centuries that women who don't have children run a high risk of breast cancer," said Lakshmanaswamy. "So what is it about pregnancy—particularly early pregnancy—that reduces a woman's lifetime risk of breast cancer?"

Studies have shown that if a woman gives birth to her first child before the age of 20, her risk of developing breast cancer is half that of a woman who never had full-term pregnancy or a woman who had her first child after the age of 35. The biological processes that cause this protective effect, however, are not well understood.

Lakshmanaswamy hopes to better understand the natural processes behind the phenomenon, which could lead to new prevention and treatment strategies for breast cancer.

His team will specifically study growth hormone and prolactin, two hormones known for stimulating breast cancer growth but that dramatically dip in women after pregnancy. Lakshmanaswamy believes this hormonal reduction in postpartum women affects tissue within the breast, causing it to alter and become resistant to mammary cancer permanently.

"If you think about it, by design, mammals are wired to make babies as soon as they achieve puberty—except humans, who choose to have babies at later ages," he explained. "So when a woman opts to hold off on children, she may be delaying an important natural process."

Lakshmanaswamy does not recommend that women get pregnant early to avoid breast cancer; he only hopes to gain more knowledge on the protective phenomenon so that it can be translated into a new therapy for breast cancer.



Rajkumar Lakshmanaswamy, PhD, is dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at TTUHSC El Paso.

CARDIOLOGIST WARNS AGAINST DISSOLVABLE STENTS

In a recent New England Journal of Medicine article, Debabrata Mukherjee, MD, provides expert commentary on bioresorbable stents, an alternative to the traditional stents used in patients with cardiac conditions. Mukherjee encourages cardiologists to continue using conventional options instead of the newer bioresorbable stent.

Conventional stents have had their drawbacks for years. While they open up narrowed arteries and improve blood flow, blood clots and scar tissue are more likely to form where a stent has been placed. There's also a possibility that the stent will fail and the artery will become blocked again at the same location.

"That's why bioresorbable stents were invented," Mukherjee said. "The premise is that you want to put in a stent that will go away completely after a few years, fixing the problem of potential side effects."

Bioresorbable stents, approved for use in the U.S. in 2016, naturally dissolve in the body three years after implant.

In its most recent clinical trial, published in the journal's March issue, the stent was tied to an increased risk of device thrombosis—a dangerous side effect where a blood clot forms on the stent itself.

In his review of the study, Mukherjee writes, "Because the current generation of metallic drug-eluting stents is associated with excellent outcomes, there is little rationale to use bioresorbable vascular scaffolds at this time.

"Bioresorbable stents cost more than the typical metallic stent, and they take longer for cardiologists to insert," he further explains. "They are also no more effective and less safe. As a physician, why I am going to use something that costs me more if it can cause risk or harm to my patients?"

Mukherjee admits that bioresorbable stents are a good idea in theory and hopes that the next generation of the device will have improved results.



Debabrata Mukherjee, MD, is the chief of cardiovascular medicine and chair of the Department of Internal Medicine at TTUHSC El Paso's Paul L. Foster School of Medicine.





Changing the **LANDSCAPE** *of Health Care*

NEW CONSTRUCTION WILL
'TRANSFORM' TTUHSC'S
LUBBOCK CAMPUS



TTUHSC celebrated a ceremonial groundbreaking in June for construction of three new buildings on the Lubbock campus, marking the second expansion to the campus since completion of the initial building in 1977.

The \$85.9 million project will support two new buildings and west expansion that will connect the current building to the Preston Smith Library of the Health Sciences. The construction will provide much-needed space for additional opportunities in education and research and bring a more seamless campus experience for students and visitors.

"This construction will quite literally transform the health sciences center on the Lubbock campus," TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, told the crowd of about 200 gathered for the momentous occasion.

By Danette Baker / Photos by Artie Limmer

"New and expanded spaces will bind our campus together in ways that encourage interaction and promote collaboration."



Combined, the buildings will add close to 200,000 square feet to the campus. To the north of the existing facility, TTUHSC will add the University Center and a conference center for academic, professional and research affairs. The University Center will have 60,000 gross square feet (GSF) to support institutional initiatives, program growth and academic changes. The building will house state-of-the-art research laboratories, translational research facilities, classrooms and a new alumni suite, all complete with new technology and equipment and other infrastructure upgrades. A first-floor welcome center will become the hub of the campus.

The second building will be a freestanding conference center with 12,500 GSF, which will provide daily, on-site conferencing space for the adjacent University Center and the existing Academic Classroom Building.

A 125,000 GSF addition will supplement the existing TTUHSC building by connecting it on the west end to the Preston Smith Library of the Health Sciences. The space will provide educational and research facilities for anatomical sciences and will include an expansive, state-of-the-art gross anatomy laboratory and facilities for the Willed Body program as well as administrative suites and classrooms.

To provide for the campus growth, the project will also include creation of a "true" campus entrance from Fourth Street with a signalized intersection.


The Texas Tech University System Board of Regents Facilities Committee approved the project in October 2016. Tuition Revenue Bonds approved by the 84th

Legislature and funds from TTUHSC will support construction costs. The last, and only other time, TTUHSC received TRB for construction was in 1971 to build the original building. TTUHSC has added to its overall footprint twice since then, funding projects with budgeted monies and donor support. The Academic Classroom Building was completed in 2003 and the Texas Tech Physicians Medical Pavilion was added in 2007.

"The 84th legislative session was really good to the Texas Tech System overall," said Chancellor Robert Duncan. "Texas is probably one of the best states to support higher education, and West Texas has some of the strongest delegates who were a core part of the Legislature that made this possible."

Having the state support construction costs, also gives TTUHSC the opportunity to leverage donor gifts for scholarship and research initiatives, which are funding priorities for The Campaign for Your Life, Our Purpose, said Mitchell. "New and expanded spaces will bind our campus together in ways that encourage interaction and promote collaboration. The years to come will be ones of transformation and growth, distinguished by the creativity and vision of our academic community. I look forward to all that we will accomplish together as we approach our 50th anniversary as an institution."

Lubbock Mayor Dan Pope stressed the importance of TTUHSC and its growth to the region. "Health care and higher education, along with agriculture, are the pillars of Lubbock's economy. The space that health care education occupies and the function that the Health Sciences Center serves in this market is critical," Pope said at the groundbreaking. "The fact that the Health Sciences Center educates health professionals who stay and practice in this part of the world is something we cannot put a value on."

Construction on the University Center and West Expansion began in July and is expected to take approximately two years. Work on the Conference Center will begin at a later date. 



Visit **PULSE** online to view more photos of the groundbreaking



mandatory miracles

BY HOLLY LEGER

Bill and Kerry Scribner of Chalfont, Pennsylvania, walked away from their pediatrician's office on a Thursday last August, proud parents of their second son, James. Just 11 days old, James had passed his weight check in a follow-up to his newborn exam. Despite having jaundice in the hospital, a common condition among newborns, James appeared in good health, and the pediatrician said she would see him again in two months for his routine checkup.

The following day, the Scribners noticed they had missed multiple calls from their pediatrician. Confused, they returned her call, learning the full results from their son's newborn screenings. James' thyroid levels were outside the normal range. She wanted the Scribners to start James on medication right away and take him to the lab the next morning for more blood work.

"It was like a whirlwind," Kerry Scribner said. "We thought it was a little jaundice, and then all of the sudden, I'm like 'What? You want us to start him on medicine? And you're calling the head of endocrinology?' I remember telling my husband, 'This isn't good.'"

Pennsylvania, like Texas, has mandatory testing for newborns requiring a heel stick blood sample in the first 24-48 hours of life. The samples, preserved on special filter paper, are then sent to a lab and tested for genetic disorders. Texas currently screens for 55 conditions, and Pennsylvania screens for 33.

James' second blood test confirmed he had congenital hypothyroidism, a hormone deficiency in which there is partial or complete loss of function of the thyroid gland. Left untreated, it can lead to developmental issues such as mental retardation, learning disabilities and stunted growth. It affects an estimated 1 in 3,000 to 4,000 newborns each year in the U.S.

Knowing nothing about the condition, the Scribners researched it online and started connecting the dots. Infants with hypothyroidism often have jaundice and are sometimes described as "good babies" for how well they sleep.

TTUHSC professor's efforts in health outcomes continues to impact newborns worldwide more than 40 years later

"Those first two weeks of (James') life, my husband and I were saying to ourselves, 'Oh my gosh! He's a newborn, and he's sleeping like five or six hours at night,'" Kerry recalled. "We just thought that was awesome, not realizing that was all part of the congenital hypothyroidism."

Because it is so difficult to detect congenital hypothyroidism before irreversible damage has been done, all states in the U.S. now require screening for the condition. Pennsylvania began screening for it in the early 2000s. In Texas, efforts for mandatory congenital hypothyroidism screenings were led in 1976 by Surendra K. Varma, MD, DSc (Hon), vice chair of pediatrics at TTUHSC and a pediatric endocrinologist. He also holds the Ted Hartman Chair in Medical Education and is executive associate dean for Graduate Medical Education and Resident Affairs.



Surendra K. Varma, MD, DSc (Hon), a pediatric endocrinologist at TTUHSC, led efforts for mandatory newborn screenings in Texas.

After recognizing symptoms in a Lubbock patient, Varma, worked with then Lubbock Mayor Alan Henry and Texas Sen. Kent Hance, now Texas Tech University System chancellor emeritus, to draft the bill for mandatory newborn screenings. Varma testified in legislative hearings, and in 1977, the bill was passed. Funding was provided during the 1979 legislative session, and by February 1980, screenings began.

Samples were sent to TTUHSC as Varma established the program. After educating others on how to screen and diagnose specimens, he handed the reins to the state a few years later.

Because of Varma's efforts, congenital hypothyroidism can be detected early, and medication quickly administered giving babies like James the chance to live healthy lives.

"Once we diagnose and get the treatment started, I would say 95 percent of them do very good or excellent," Varma said. "As a matter of fact when I follow these patients, and I see them and they are making straight A's and everything is all right, I joke with them that maybe I should start taking the medication."

Beverly Sadler, for one, is thankful for physicians like Varma. Sadler, Bill Scribner's mother, was at a dermatology appointment in Lubbock when she received the phone call about her grandson's diagnosis. Through conversation with her physician, Ashley Sturgeon, MD, assistant professor of dermatology, Sadler learned that Varma was one of her dermatologist's TTUHSC professors.

Sadler contacted Varma to personally thank him for his research and efforts here in Texas.

"I was blown away by that," Sadler said. "They have some of the best doctors in the world in Lubbock. It was very comforting to know they do that kind of research and can get those things passed. I know it took a lot of time and work."

According to the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, the Texas program is now the largest in the world regarding the total number of specimens processed. Between 120 and 150 newborns are identified annually in Texas with congenital hypothyroidism, which means since the program started in 1980, approximately 4,000 to 6,000 babies have received early detection and treatment.

"We saved medical care, we saved medical costs, and we gave each baby a chance to have a full and healthy life."

“It makes me feel great when I look back and see the number of babies this applied to,” Hance said. “We saved medical care, we saved medical costs, and we gave each baby a chance to have a full and healthy life.”

TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, said seeing the difference the screening program has made for Texans shows how far the university has come over the last 50 years.

“The impact TTUHSC has on our West Texas communities is profound, and our reach now extends nationwide,” Mitchell said. “Not bad for what started as just a little school out in Lubbock.”

While much of the developed world requires mandatory screening, other countries lack the technology or government funding for such practices. Varma said he would like to see the benefits of congenital hypothyroidism screening spread to the developing countries as well. In addition to serving children in West Texas and the state, Varma also provides care to children in Vietnam and India as a global health liaison in exchange programs.

“Our problem is the developing countries because access to health care is not good,” said Varma, who is a Grover E. Murray Professor and a University Distinguished Professor. “Many of them are delivered at home or in a rural area, and they have not reached screening. So that has been my frustration.”

Varma said he was pleasantly surprised to receive Sadler’s letter and feels gratified hearing success stories like James’. “Anytime you can make a difference in anybody’s life,” he said, “it makes you feel very grateful.”

Varma responded to Sadler’s letter, and Sadler was thrilled to share it with her daughter-in-law in Pennsylvania. Despite living



James Scribner is now a healthy toddler thanks to the newborn screening that detected his congenital hypothyroidism.




The Scribner family: Thomas, Kerry, Bill and James

miles from Texas, Kerry Scribner said she felt incredibly grateful to Varma for understanding the severity of congenital hypothyroidism.

“I feel like he gets it,” she said. “It’s huge that they’re able to diagnosis this at birth and then these children can live normal lives.”

Kerry gives her son a thyroid replacement pill every day and will take him to a lab for blood work every six weeks. His treatment will continue throughout his life. She admits the journey has not always been easy. But from month to month, James has continued to hit the milestones expected of babies his age, leaving Bill and Kerry optimistic and grateful.

“Yesterday, I was playing with James on the floor, and I just looked at him. I know I’m his mother, but he’s so smart, and he’s so beautiful,” she said. “I’m just so thankful that we were able to treat his condition. He’s going to now get to contribute to the world in a really special way.” 



OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Gala Celebrates Nation's Newest Teaching Hospital

By Nadia M. Whitehead Photos by Tommie Morelos

On a chilly evening in January, hundreds of El Pasoans — and residents from across Texas — braved the cold to catch a glimpse of the nation's newest teaching hospital. The Hospitals of Providence Transmountain Campus shined brightly as guests toured the hallways of the brand-new facility, which promises to serve the communities of El Paso and southern New Mexico, and provide cutting-edge treatment options.

Unlike most medical centers, the 106-bed, full service community hospital serves as both a treatment center for patients and a training site for budding health care professionals. Only 7 percent of hospitals in the U.S. receive this special teaching hospital designation. It means that physicians serving in the hospital are constantly learning about the most specialized and up-to-date services for illnesses and injuries. This academic environment is made possible through a special collaboration between TTUHSC El Paso and Tenet, the parent company of The Hospitals of Providence.

"Teaching hospitals are typically associated with the highest quality of care," explained Richard Lange, MD, MBA, president of TTUHSC El Paso. "We can bring state-of-the-art teaching, which is state-of-the-art knowledge, and often times that means state-of-the-art research as well."

Nicholas Tejeda, FACHE, the hospital's chief executive officer, added, "Certainly, this beautiful new hospital will have the latest technology and equipment, but what makes this hospital truly unique is the classroom. Because we're teaching the next generation of providers, our hospital will incorporate the latest evidence-based medicine—taught by world-class faculty and dedicated community physicians working elbow-to-elbow with students and residents."

Medical students are already reaping the benefits of the new training hospital; rotations for TTUHSC El Paso students began in mid-May.

What's even more exciting for West Texas is the draw the hospital is expected to have on future physicians. It's no secret that the Paso del Norte region is woefully underserved when it comes to medical care and specialists. But with the opening of the teaching hospital, up to 100 new residency slots will be created in El Paso.



Leadership from TTUHSC El Paso, The Hospitals of Providence and the El Paso community held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the entrance of the nation's newest teaching hospital.

Residency is the final stage of training after medical school where a physician develops the knowledge and experience to practice in a specific specialty, like surgery or pediatrics. Residency placement often has lasting impacts on where the nation's medical talent is concentrated. Data show that doctors often stay and practice medicine in the community where they completed their residency. By expanding the number of residency slots available in El Paso, the number of doctors who learn and stay in the community to practice will increase.

"By offering a state-of-the-art facility right here in El Paso, the Paso del Norte region will not only retain, but also attract skilled health care professionals from across the U.S.," Lange said. "Once we train them here, they are far more likely to stay here and practice as well."

Adding to this improved outlook for the Paso del Norte region, the gala also celebrated a historic collaboration between two organizations with a common goal of community service.

"We have two organizations coming together to do something that this community desperately needs—and that's to improve access to well-trained physicians and nurses that serve our community," said Tejada.

The evening culminated in a ribbon cutting at the entrance of the hospital. Key players gathered together, each taking a hold of the long, gleaming white ribbon. Giant ceremonial red scissors took center stage as the ribbon was cut, gracefully gliding to the ground as onlookers cheered.

The next generation of health care has begun, and El Paso is leading the way. 



To learn more about the new hospital and meet the doctors at Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso at Transmountain, visit elpaso.ttuhsu.edu/teaching-hospital

New Opportunities for Nurses

Medical students aren't the only beneficiaries of the new teaching hospital at Transmountain. Students in the Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing began conducting clinical rotations in the hospital in July.

Fledgling nurses are assigned a patient and for two consecutive days assume total patient care under the supervision of a care team. That means they review the patient's disease process, charts, medications and potential side effects, and directly communicate with the patient to address their needs and concerns.

In addition, because of the close collaboration between TTUHSC El Paso and The Hospitals of Providence, nursing students may even catch a class or two taught by a leader from the Transmountain Campus. Nicholas Tejada, FACHE, the hospital's chief executive officer, has taken an earnest interest in TTUHSC El Paso nursing students and has offered to teach several classes that focus on addressing the unique patient characteristics and needs to improve the quality of care.

Tejada said, "Every day, lives are profoundly changed due to the incredibly compassionate care delivered by nurses. With this in mind, it is an honor for The Hospitals of Providence Transmountain Campus—and its leaders—to play a part in the training of the next generation of nurses. We face a significant shortage of nurses in our community, but together, we can create a unique learning environment that strengthens the nursing profession within our community and across our region."

What We Offer Our Patients

The Hospitals of Providence Transmountain Campus is just that—a campus of medical buildings equipped with El Paso's first state-of-the-art teaching hospital. The new hospital is complemented by Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso (TTP El Paso)'s latest clinic location, TTP El Paso at Transmountain—a 110,000-square-foot clinical space for physicians to treat patients.

Thus far, TTP El Paso at Transmountain provides health care services in pediatrics, psychiatry, internal medicine, family medicine, surgery and obstetrics and gynecology. In the future, TTP El Paso at Transmountain is expected to expand and offer more health care specialties.

with
Highest Honors



In 2016, TTUHSC recognized its first-ever Presidential Distinguished Alumni Award recipient. This will be the highest honor bestowed to an alumna/alumnus by the university, recognizing and honoring alumni who have made significant contributions to the health care profession. To be eligible for this award, an individual will have earned a degree or completed a residency at TTUHSC and demonstrated service to the community, profession and this institution. The awardee will be a person that faculty, staff, students and alumni take pride in and are inspired by his/her accomplishments and endeavors.



CAROLYN CRUZ

PRESIDENTIAL DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

Richard C. Johnston, MD, FACP, '75
CEO, President and Chief Physician Officer
USMD Health System, Irving, Texas

Richard C. Johnston, MD, FACP, began his practice in Dallas in 1978 and has been in private practice in the Dallas-Fort Worth area since. He has an internal medicine practice in Las Colinas, where he was the first chief of staff at Las Colinas Medical Center.

In 2004, Johnston's physician group joined Medical Clinic of North Texas (MCNT), which was a predominantly primary care health care group comprised of 135 providers. In 2006, he became president of MCNT and served in that capacity until the 2012 merger that created USMD Health System.

USMD is a physician-led, integrated health system committed to providing value to patients through high-quality and cost-effective care. Headquartered in Irving, Texas, USMD serves the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area with more than 250 physicians and associate practitioners and provides health care services to patients in nearly 20 different specialties at its two hospitals, cancer treatment center and nearly 60 physician clinics. In 2016, USMD became a part of OptumCare, one of the nation's largest health and wellness organizations, which aims to give patients the care they need at the right time and in the right place.

Johnston is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine. He completed his residency in internal medicine at Austin Breckenridge Hospital in 1978. Johnston is a member of the American College of Physicians, Texas Medical Association, Dallas County Medical Society and American Medical Group Association, where he serves on the CEO Council. His other interests include travel and tropical medicine.

SCHOOL OF NURSING
Community Advocacy Award



Melanie Ann Richburg,
DNP, '13

Family Nurse Practitioner

Lynn County Hospital District
Tahoka, Texas

Love what you do, and do what you love. That's what drives Melanie Ann Richburg, DNP. She loves rural America and feels blessed every day she is able to give and share with her rural community. Since 2005, Richburg has served residents of Lynn County through the hospital district's Family Wellness Clinic as well as its emergency and inpatient departments. She is a member of the Lynn County Hospital District's medical staff and a corporate compliance officer. In 2012, Richburg led a team that converted the Family Wellness Clinic to a Rural Health Clinic.

Richburg also served the Tahoka community as president of the Tahoka Rotary board of directors in 2015, following membership from 2012- 2014. She has been recognized as a Medicare Rural Health Clinic Surveyor through the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities. The South Plains Nurse Practitioner Association also named her Nurse Practitioner of the Year in 2013. This year, Richburg completes a two-year service to the Texas Nurse Practitioners board as a regional representative from the South Plains. She also served a one-year term on the Region Medicaid Advisory Council for Texas and was a part-time instructor for TTUHSC School of Nursing from 2008-2010.

Before serving Lynn County residents, Richburg worked at the Community Health Center of Lubbock North Clinic, where she was the clinic supervisor. There, she was instrumental in establishing a clinic at Mathews Alternative High School and a primary care clinic at Women's Protective Services.

Richburg earned a bachelor's in nursing from Hardin Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. After graduation she worked as a staff registered nurse for Hendrick Medical Center in Women and Children's Services. She earned her master's in nursing and certification as a family nurse practitioner from Abilene Christian University. Afterward, Richburg worked for Hendrick Medical Center, now Hendrick Health System, as a family nurse practitioner in Albany Texas.

SCHOOL OF NURSING
Leadership in Health Care Award



Sylvain Trepanier,
DNP, RN, CENP, '11

Chief Clinical Executive

Providence St. Joseph Health
Torrance, California

Assistant Professor, TTUHSC School
of Nursing, Master of Nursing Administration

Sylvain Trepanier, DNP, RN, CENP, is a seasoned nurse executive with health care system experience in executive leadership, nursing management, quality improvement study, and organizational transformation and system standardization.

He has sustained national and international impact in two key areas. The first is pioneering population health management strategies with a focus on improving quality and reducing costs of care. Trepanier's trailblazing contributions in population health began in Canada more than 20 years ago when population health initiatives were rare.

His second area of impact is in the development of innovative onboarding initiatives and cost justification of nurse residency programs. Trepanier's work on the cost benefit analysis of residency programs for new graduate nurses has enabled the spread and sustainability of these efforts nationally.

Trepanier has received prestigious national and state recognitions for outstanding leadership and outcomes, including the Richard Hader Visionary Leader Award selected by Nursing Management's editorial board. The Texas Organization of Nurse Executives also named Trepanier as a Nurse Leader to Watch and recipient of the Excellence in Leadership Award.

He is a member of the American Organization of Nursing Executives and serves on several advisory boards: Nurse Leader, Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing, Western Governors University, National Nursing Program and Versant LLC's, a national provider of nursing residency for new graduate nurses. Additionally, Trepanier serves on the audit committee for CGFNS International. He was the first registered nurse appointed board chair of Fidelity Healthcare, Southwest Ohio's largest home health agency, and Premier Health Community.

Trepanier earned his bachelor and master's degrees in nursing from the University of Montreal Canada. Before Trepanier's appointment at Providence St. Joseph's in May, he served as the first system vice-president and chief nursing officer for Premier Health.

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH
PROFESSIONS**
Department of Clinic Counseling
and Mental Health Award



**Matt Berend, MRC, LBSW,
CRC, '15**

Unit Program Specialist

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Texas Workforce Solutions,
Abilene, Texas

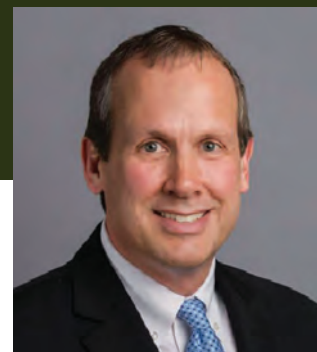
Matt Berend, MRC, LBSW, CRC, was working two jobs and studying to become a veterinarian before a bull-riding accident in 2007 left him a quadriplegic and gave him a new career goal: to help fellow Texans with disabilities find and obtain careers through vocational rehabilitation.

Berend, through vocational rehabilitation services, was able to access financial assistance for living and college expenses as well as a power wheelchair and assistive technologies that would help him regain his independence. He completed a bachelor's degree in social work from Tarleton State University and then accepted his first job working at two nursing homes. He also decided to pursue a graduate degree and shortly thereafter landed a job as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. In 2016, Berend was promoted to his current position, in which he assists with unit operations and quality and compliance issues. In addition, he has mentoring responsibilities and still manages a few cases to help fellow Texans receive vocational rehabilitation services.

In 2015, Gov. Greg Abbott appointed Berend to a three-year term on the Rehabilitation Council of Texas. The council partners with the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services to advocate for people with disabilities in the vocational rehabilitation process.

Berend also is a member of the National Association of Social Workers and the Texas Rehab Action Network. He served as a member and risk management officer of the Tarleton State University Student Social Work Organization.

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH
PROFESSIONS**
Department of Healthcare
Management and
Leadership Award



**Jeffery Barnhart, MSCPM,
FACHE, '13**

CEO and Hospital Administrator

Deaf Smith County Hospital District
Hereford, Texas

Adjunct Professor, TTUHSC Master of Science in Healthcare Administration

For more than 30 years, Jeffery Barnhart, MSCPM, FACHE, has been making an impact in rural health care. His experiences in leading hospital districts in rural areas of South and West Texas and the Panhandle Plains also has led Barnhart to advocate for rural health care at the state and federal level.

In 2016, Gov. Greg Abbott appointed Barnhart to a four-year term on the Governors EMS and Trauma Advisory Council. The council makes recommendations regarding the EMS/trauma system to ensure communities receive comprehensive efficient emergency care.

Barnhart also serves on the foundation board of Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals and is a member of the Coalition of Health Services. He has dedicated several years to the Texas Hospital Association, presently serving on the HealthShare board. Barnhart also served on the association's magazine editorial board and Council on Policy Development Committee. He has been a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives since 2009 and obtained fellow status in 2017. Barnhart is also past vice president of the Northwest Texas Hospital Association.

His home community of Canyon, Texas, also benefits from Barnhart's volunteerism. He is a member of the Golden Spread Council of the Boy Scouts of America board of directors and a Lions Club member. In other communities where Barnhart has worked and lived, he served on the board of directors for the Perryton Chamber of Commerce and Perryton Country Club as well as the Waka Christian Center and the Hereford YMCA. Barnhart also was on the community advisory boards for 4-H in Ochiltree and Lynn counties.



**SCHOOL OF HEALTH
PROFESSIONS**
Department of Speech, Language
and Hearing Sciences

Karen Copple, PhD, '11

Assistant Professor

Communication Disorder,
Speech Language Pathologist

Eastern New Mexico University
Main Campus, Portales, New Mexico

Throughout her professional life, Karen Copple, PhD, has been "paying-it-forward" whenever possible. Born in Michigan, her early college education included degrees in theater and music education from Hasting College, Hastings, Nebraska. However, after teaching music for several years, and being a singer herself, children who could not match pitches or sing on pitch frustrated her.

Nevertheless, Copple began her master's studies in music but changed to speech, language pathology after becoming intrigued by what she learned regarding the mechanics of the voice. She graduated from the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Nebraska, with her master's degree in speech pathology.

Copple and her family moved to Lubbock, Texas, in 1986 where she and her husband, Tom, were both employed by Lubbock ISD. She began additional graduate studies at TTUHSC as one of the first

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH
PROFESSIONS**
Department of Laboratory
Sciences and Primary Care Award



**Sissy Ann Hinojos,
MPAS, PA-C, '12**

Physician Assistant

Texas Tech Physicians
of the Permian Basin

Family Medicine Clinic, Midland, Texas

Born and raised in Odessa, Sissy Ann Hinojos, MPAS, PA-C, earned a Bachelor of Secondary Education from Texas Tech in 1986. She taught science and coached in Midland before moving to the Austin area. She earned a master's in science education from the University of Texas at Austin while teaching and coaching in Round Rock and Pflugerville.

After six years of teaching and coaching, Hinojos hung up her whistle and became a pharmaceutical representative for Pfizer Inc. Through this exposure to doctors, physician assistants and other medical professionals, Hinojos gained a desire to practice medicine. After 17 years and a companywide layoff, where she and 8,000 employees lost their jobs, Hinojos had the opportunity to pursue a third career.

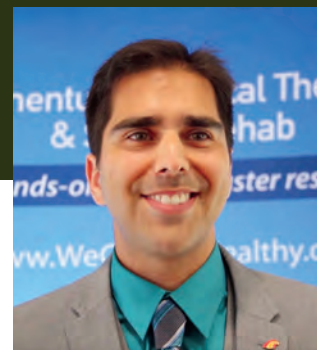
Being a physician assistant incorporates her first two careers of teaching and sales. Hinojos teaches every patient about their medical conditions, and she has to sell them on the plan to improve their health. She considers it a true honor to have the opportunity to serve others and have a third career as a physician assistant.

Hinojos also serves her profession and community. She is president and founder of the Permian Basin Physician Assistant Society and serves on the board of the Permian Basin Hispanic Medical Society. She plans to use involvement in these organizations as an avenue to increase awareness about the role of physician assistants in health care for those living in the Permian Basin.

students in the doctoral program. Having been a nontraditional student throughout her studies in speech pathology, Copple and her husband began a joint endowed scholarship in the communications disorders department for those like her.

This fall will mark her sixth year as an assistant professor at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU). She teaches in the areas of voice disorders, craniofacial anomalies, and augmentative and alternative communication. Copple also supervises graduate and undergraduate students in clinical and school placements and has supervised research and independent study projects. Her students' research projects have won their division at the ENMU Student Research Conference. She is most proud, however, of her ability to work with other faculty, bringing in respected professionals

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH
PROFESSIONS**
Department of Rehabilitation
Sciences Award



Steve Alaniz, MPT, '07

CEO

Momentum Physical Therapy and
Sports Rehab, San Antonio, Texas

Following graduation, Steve Alaniz, MPT, began working as a staff physical therapist at Momentum Physical Therapy & Sports Rehab. Within three months, he had promoted to clinic director and helped expand services by adding three new therapists. In March 2009, Alaniz was named CEO of the company, which was comprised of two clinics and 25 employees. Since then, Momentum has grown by more than 425 percent and expanded to 15 clinics across four states.

In 2015, Alaniz became an ownership partner at Momentum, which continues to grow at an amazing pace, more than 35 percent from 2015 to 2016, and has received numerous awards. Momentum was recognized in 2013, 2014 and 2015 by Inc5000 as one of the 5,000 fastest growing companies in the U.S. and named a Top Workplace by the San Antonio Express-News. In 2014, the company also garnered honors from San Antonio Business Journal as a Best Places to Work and named Practice of the Year by Advance Rehab Magazine; the latter award recognizes the top private physical therapy practice in the U.S.

Alaniz has also gained attention for his successes. He was named as one of San Antonio Business Journal's top 40-under-40 in 2015, and was a runner-up the previous year. He is an alumnus of the Alex Briseno Leadership Development Program and Leadership San Antonio. He has remained active in Leadership San Antonio serving as chair of its alumni association since inception in 2016.

Alaniz is a member of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, serving on the Leadership Development, Government Affairs and Health and Bioscience committees. He was vice chair and chair of the board of directors, and remains a member, of Transplants for Children, a local charity benefiting children and families before, during and after pediatric transplant.

from whom graduate students can gain real-world knowledge in the field. Individuals such as her mentors, Rajinder Koul, PhD, former TTUHSC associate dean for research, and Sherry Sancibrian, (Health Professions '78, '77) professor and program director for Speech-Language Pathology,

Copple's experience as a speech, language pathologist has spanned early childhood, public schools, nursing homes, private companies and private practice. She has supervised numerous graduate students, provided in-service training and her research has been presented at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association National Schools Conference in 2011 and 2008. Copple was active on the Disabilities Committee for Palo Duro Presbytery and has donated time as a parent advocate for children with disabilities.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Community Outreach Award



Roger Wolcott, MD, '92
Private Practice Physician
Lubbock, Texas

Roger Wolcott, MD, is a Lubbock native. He graduated from Coronado High School and joined the Navy as a hospital corpsman assigned to a Marine Corps hospital unit. Wolcott received his Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry from Texas Tech University and his Doctor of Medicine from TTUHSC. He became a diplomat of the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation after completing a residency at the University of Utah.

Since completing his residency, Wolcott has been in private practice in Lubbock, Texas. His outpatient practice encompasses both children and adults, treating catastrophic injury such as brain and spinal cord injury as well as cerebral palsy. He began TrustPoint, an acute inpatient rehabilitation hospital, in 2007, and that same year established a Lubbock campus for the Transitional Learning Center, a post-acute brain injury rehabilitation program. He is the medical director for both facilities.

Wolcott is an advocate for the Americans with Disabilities Act and champions causes that remove obstacles and promote accessibility for everyone. He has built an accessible boat, which can accommodate up to eight wheelchairs at a time, and has had several excursions with patients, including a fishing trip. Wolcott also established an accessible aquatic center that includes a therapy pool. This facility can accommodate SCUBA training for patients with disabilities. Wolcott's future goals include establishing an accessible ranch for riding, hunting and fishing. His greatest enjoyment is spending time with his wife and three children.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Distinguished Alumni Award



Craig D. Rhyne, MD FACS,
Resident '86

Regional Chief Medical Officer
Covenant Health, Lubbock, Texas

Lubbock native Craig D. Rhyne, MD, FACS, has served for the past six years as the regional chief medical officer for Covenant Health. He trained as a general and trauma surgeon and has served the Lubbock community as a resident physician and a faculty surgeon at TTUHSC and has been on the medical staff at Covenant since 1991.

Following his residency at TTUHSC, he completed a research fellowship at Cornell University Medical College in New York City and then returned to Lubbock, joining the clinical faculty in the School of Medicine Department of Surgery. While on the faculty, Rhyne received the Clinical Teaching Award from the Class 1990. He also wrote the first chapter on the lymphocyte and monocyte response in *Principles and Management of Surgical Infections*, published in 1991.

Rhyne's influence in trauma care spans the region, having been involved in trauma system development in Texas and New Mexico. He served one term on the New Mexico State Trauma Advisory Council and two terms on the Texas Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council. Rhyne also has been a member of the board of directors of Texas EMS Trauma and Acute Care Foundation since 2010. He was president and chairman of the Lubbock Methodist Hospital board of directors from 1999 until 2003 and a charter member of the Covenant Health board of directors from 1998 to 2003.

Becker's Hospital Review has recognized him nationally as one of the "100 Hospital CMOs to Know" five times in the last six years. Rhyne has also served as medical director for EMS services in Texas and New Mexico, including the last 25 years for AeroCare, an air medical transport service. In 2002, he received the Timothy Fleming EMS Medical Director Award for the State of New Mexico.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Research Scientist Award



Sharmila Dissanaiké, MD,
Resident '06

Peter C. Canizaro Chair of Surgery

School of Medicine
Department of Surgery

TTUHSC, Lubbock, Texas

Sharmila Dissanaiké, MD has received numerous awards from national and international institutes honoring her work at TTUHSC in research, education, patient care, community service and academic performance. She is the author of more than 70 peer-reviewed publications has presented more than 150 competitive national and international presentations and invited lectureships on topics including breast cancer, physician burnout and novel innovations in abdominal surgery.

Her primary focus, however, is in the care of the injured patient; this includes the pre-hospital care of burn and trauma patients, emergency room management including timeliness of care, and specifically the intensive care of these critically ill patients. Dissanaiké has published important work on nutritional deficits and gender differences in outcomes after burns and is currently exploring novel techniques to combat severe infection, which is the leading source of death in both burn and trauma patients after the immediate post-injury period.

Additionally, Dissanaiké has collaborated with other clinicians as well as basic scientist researchers to develop a translational research program and establishment of the Burn Center of Research Excellence. It is the first clinical research program to be listed as a Center of Excellence at TTUHSC. In addition to her research efforts, she has also served as a mentor to more than 150 students, residents, nurses and fellows at TTUHSC, ensuring that this essential skill set continues to be transmitted to the next generation of clinical scientists.

In addition to her work at TTUHSC, Dissanaiké holds national roles in multiple surgical organizations. She serves on the Ethics Committee of the American College of Surgeons and is chair of the Ethics Committee and chair-elect of the Verification Committee of the American Burn Association. She also is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, the International College of Surgeons and the Academy of Critical Care Medicine.

Dissanaiké has pushed the bar academically from graduating valedictorian at Methodist College in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and second in her class at the University of Sydney, Australia, the oldest and most prestigious medical school in Australia, to becoming the youngest person in the country to lead a department of academic surgery. She started her surgical training in the United States at the Albert Einstein Medical College at Beth Israel in Manhattan and transferred to TTUHSC in her second year to live closer to her husband. The friendly environment of West Texas grew on her, and she chose to return to TTUHSC after completing a Trauma Critical Care Fellowship at the University of Washington.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**
Doctorate of Philosophy Award



Kendra Rumbaugh, PhD, '01

Associate Professor

Department of Surgery
School of Medicine

TTUHSC, Lubbock, Texas

Kendra Rumbaugh, PhD, began her research career as a TTUHSC graduate student where her doctoral work focused on the role of quorum sensing in the pathogenesis of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. Today, she is a tenured associate professor in the School of Medicine with joint appointments in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences departments of Cell Biology and Biochemistry and Immunology and Molecular Microbiology.

Specifically, her research focuses on understanding and treating wound infections. Rumbaugh is especially interested in how biofilms, polymicrobial interactions and cell-to-cell signaling contribute to infection. Her research has been consistently funded, receiving approximately \$2.5 million in extramural awards over the last 10 years. Additionally, Rumbaugh has been a co-author on 70 papers and book chapters, edited two books, and served on study sections for more than 15 different organizations, including the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Veterans Affairs, American Diabetes Association and several military agencies. She has also served as a reviewer for more than 35 different journals including Science, Nature and PNAS. She also has been invited to write editorials and commentaries for the latter two.

Rumbaugh has served on organizing committees or as a session chair for multiple national and international conferences and has given invited seminars worldwide. Her leadership roles include serving as president of the Texas Branch of American Society for Microbiology and the West Texas Chapter of the Association for Women in Science, as well as many TTUHSC committees. Rumbaugh also takes great pride in her role as a mentor. She has mentored more than 40 graduate, undergraduate and medical students and was recognized as an Outstanding Faculty Mentor by the Texas Tech University Center for Undergraduate Research. She has also been awarded an Outstanding Faculty Teaching Award from the TTUHSC Student Government Association and was the 2006 TTUHSC President's Young Investigator Award Recipient.

Her academic career began at the University of Texas at El Paso, where Rumbaugh received her undergraduate degree in microbiology in 1996. After receiving her PhD in medical microbiology in 2001, Rumbaugh completed postdoctoral training at the University of California at San Francisco and then returned to TTUHSC.

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY
Excellence in Practice Award



Steve Rodriguez, PharmD, '01

Owner

MedPro Pharmacy,
Melissa, Texas

Shortly after graduation, Steve Rodriguez, PharmD, opened MedPro Pharmacy. He recently marked his 11th year as owner of the full-service pharmacy. Rodriguez's work focuses on compounding to provide individualized medications for patients such as bio-identical hormone therapy, as well as for veterinary medicine. He also manages the pharmaceutical care for several Bio-identical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT) patients, and many providers seek his recommendations for their patients' BHRT needs.

Rodriguez and his staff of 10 also serve the assisted living communities throughout Texas by managing the pharmaceutical care and operations. As such, BHRT, assisted living and sexual wellness have become Rodriguez's practice specialties.

Through MedPro Pharmacy, Rodriguez also offers a range of in-house services including prevention and wellness programs, respiratory therapy and immunizations. Their customer-focused service also provides amenities such as prescription delivery and a full line of diabetic supplies and medical equipment.

Rodriguez is actively involved in advocating at the local, state and national levels for his profession and encourages his colleagues to do so as well. He also has been asked to speak on various national panels, including one where he advised an audience of more than 500 from the pharmaceutical industry about medication accessibility.

He also supports his profession through professional associations. Rodriguez is a board member of the Texas Pharmacy Association's (TPA) PharmPAC and holds memberships in the TPA, Pharmacists Association, American Pharmacies and Association of Independent Pharmacists.

Rodriguez studied biochemistry at Angelo State University before acceptance to the pharmacy program. He and his wife, Amy, (Nursing '98) are the parents of three children. Rodriguez volunteers in the Melissa community, located in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, and is involved in family and community events. He also is a drummer, by hobby, and has played onstage in Las Vegas with Bret Michaels, lead singer for Poison.

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY
Pharmacy Leadership Award



Lyndsi White, PharmD, '06


Consultant Pharmacist

Manage Meds, LLC
Sulphur Springs, Texas

After working for about three years in hospital and retail pharmacy settings, Lyndsi White, PharmD, transitioned into long-term care in 2009. She then worked two years in operations before teaming up with Gina Cole, PharmD, (Pharmacy '07) to establish Intellicare Pharmacy Consultants Inc. Intellicare was modeled to be an independent pharmacy consultant company and grew quickly throughout Dallas and East Texas. In 2014, Intellicare merged with Medication Mangers, LLC, to form Manage Meds, LLC, and expanded services throughout Texas with a continued focus on quality consultant pharmacist services for the at-risk geriatric population.

White is also involved in the Texas chapter of the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists and serves as president-elect. She speaks to health care professionals in longer-term care settings on behalf of various pharmaceutical companies.

Additionally, White is a preceptor for fourth-year students in TTUHSC School of Pharmacy's geriatric rotation.

White is married to Randy White, PharmD, (Pharmacy '06) who currently practices in an independent pharmacy setting at Scott's Pharmacy in Quitman, Texas. They have three boys: Luke, 10, Jude, 8 and Jake, 3, who keep them very busy. 



TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, Texas Sen. Donna Campbell, MD, (Medicine '89) and TTU System Chancellor Robert Duncan

TTUHSC Well-Represented at TTU System Day in Austin

TTUHSC alumni, administration and students joined their counterparts from TTUHSC El Paso, Texas Tech University (TTU) and Angelo State University in March for the biennial TTU System Day in Austin.

The event, organized by the TTU Alumni Association, rallies TTU System supporters to the Capitol to endorse funding for higher education.

An evening reception prior to TTU System Day gave attendees a chance to learn more about each university. The following day's activities included a welcome from each of the system's four presidents, recognition of the TTU System in the House and Senate chambers, and distributing personalized gifts to legislators.



Watch a video from the day at https://youtu.be/QdNFDWR_Dlg



School of Nursing Professor Receives Texas Leadership Award

Barbara Cherry, DNSc, RN, (Nursing '97) was named earlier this year as recipient of the Texas Organization of Nurse Executives (TONE) 2016 Excellence in Leadership Award.

The Excellence in Leadership Award is given to nursing executives who demonstrate the ability to relate and connect with nurses in innovative and

effective ways. As a co-author of *Contemporary Nursing: Issues, Trends, and Management*, Cherry made substantive contributions to nursing by enriching the lives of thousands of new nurses with knowledge of the most current nursing and health care issues.

She has also developed more than 150 leaders in nursing through the DNP program at TTUHSC. Cherry and Kathy Baker, associate professor and division director of Graduate Nursing Studies and Scholarship at Texas Christian University, established the Texas Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program Directors consortium, which is focused on creating opportunities for DNP leadership and advanced practice registered nursing students to become involved in policy initiatives.

Cherry serves on the inaugural Texas Nurses Association Policy Council and is chair of the council's Workplace Advocacy Subcommittee while advising on policy initiatives for the 2017 legislative session.



Alumnus Named to Health Care Leaders List

Walt Cathey, OT, ('02) was named to Becker's Healthcare 2017 Rising Stars list of health care leaders under 40.

Cathey is president of Covenant Medical Center in Lubbock. He oversees more than 2,500 employees and works extensively with Covenant Medical Center's 650 medical staff to develop performance improvement

initiatives as well as strategies to improve quality of care within the system. Cathey also serves as leadership development vice chair of the Texas Hospital Association.

He joined Covenant in 1997—then Methodist Hospital—as an occupational therapist aide. After finishing his bachelor's degree at TTUHSC, he became an occupational therapist. He also earned master's degrees in occupational therapy at TTUHSC and in business administration at Texas Tech University. His path through administration and leadership led him to serve as vice president and then chief operating officer at Covenant Medical Center before attaining the president post.

Becker's accepted nominations for the 2017 Rising Stars list and selected leaders through an editorial review process. Individuals on the list have achieved executive positions at hospitals and health systems across the country, founded health IT companies and reached prominence within their organizations.

ALUMNI + FUTURE ALUMNI

Tailgate

TEXAS TECH VS IOWA STATE

OCT. 21, 2017

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 **TTUHSC Alumni Association**



Baxter



Mobley

Alumni Commissioned into Military Service

Congratulations to Ryan Baxter, MD, (Medicine '17, Biomedical Sciences '13) and Sheryse D. Mobley (Health Professions '15) who were commissioned this spring in the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force, respectively.

Baxter received the rank of lieutenant. He is an active duty officer pursuing his training as a flight surgeon at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, California.

Mobley is a second-year medical student at Kent State University School of Podiatry Medicine in Independence, Ohio. She was commissioned as a second lieutenant and awarded the Air Force's Health Profession Scholarship for her final two years of medical school. After she graduates, Mobley will be promoted to captain, become an active duty officer and complete her residency at Air Force hospitals.



Matthew Grisham, PhD, (Biomedical Sciences '82), and his wife, Rhonda; Cynthia Jumper, MD, MPH, (Medicine '88); Chris Schwab, PhD, (Biomedical Sciences '02); Julie Doss, JD, senior director of Alumni Relations, and Danette Weller, TTUHSC Alumni Association membership coordinator.



Chris Schwab, PhD, (Biomedical Sciences '02); Cynthia Jumper, MD, MPH, (Medicine '88); National Advisory Board Chairman Greg Thompson, MBA, (Health Professions '02); Sara Robison, PharmD, (Pharmacy '04); and Matthew Grisham, PhD, (Biomedical Sciences '82)

TTUHSC Alumni Board Visits El Paso

The TTUHSC Alumni Association National Advisory Board made its first visit to TTUHSC El Paso in April for their biannual meeting. Board members toured the university's three schools and then concluded their visit with friends and family at the El Paso Chihuahuas baseball game. The board's next meeting will be held Oct. 20 in Lubbock.



Visit <http://www.ttuhs.edu/alumni/alumniadvisoryboard.aspx> to meet your school's board representative or contact Julie Doss, senior director for alumni relations, at julie.doss@ttuhsc.edu for information about serving on the board.



friends we'll miss

Bake Thomas Bannister, PA, (Health Professions '15) died Feb. 5, 2017. He was a physician assistant at High Plains Family Medical Center in Amarillo.

Stephen Joseph Buchok, MD, (Medicine Resident '05) died Nov. 21, 2016. He was an instructor in the School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry. Memorials are suggested to the department.

Laura (Mason) Davies, DPT, (Health Professions '10) died July 10, 2017. She was in the first DPT graduating class. Davies had physical therapist practices in Austin, Texas, and Denver, Colorado.

B.R. "Rip" Griffin died June 12, 2017. He was friend of the Texas Tech University System and a member of the Chancellor's Council and Spur Society.

David T. Kidwell, MD, (Medicine '11) died May 18, 2017. He completed an internal medicine residency and cardiovascular fellowship at Baylor Scott & White Health.

Jerry Dewayne McLaughlin II, MD, (Ob/Gyn Resident '95) died Jan. 20, 2017. During his career, McLaughlin delivered more than 6,000 babies and served as a delegate to the American Medical Association, representing Texas and New Mexico.

James "Jim" Henry Purvis died May 29, 2016. He was a friend of TTUHSC at the Permian Basin and the Texas Tech University System.

Bob Watson died Dec. 17, 2016. He was a friend of TTUHSC School of Medicine.

Gifts in memory of or in honor of are routed to the desired location of the donor through the TTUHSC Office of Institutional Advancement, 3601 Fourth Street, Stop 6238, Lubbock, Texas 79430.

March Madness Medical Students learn where they'll go for residencies

On March 17, medical students at all TTUHSC campuses waited with intrepidness until the 11 o'clock hour when they could finally open the coveted sealed envelopes that held the much-anticipated news of where the soon-to-be doctors would go for their residencies.

This event, known as Match Day is celebrated at the 141 U.S. medical schools nationwide accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. The day culminates the weeklong wait. Starting the Monday of Match Week, applicants are informed if they have been matched to a residency program of their choice, but not told which one; they then must wait until the end of the week for the reveal.

"The Class of 2017 has a record of excellence in course work, patient care and community service," said Steven L. Berk, MD, dean of the School of Medicine and TTUHSC executive vice president and provost. "We are proud of our students' accomplishments and share their excitement as they pursue their careers at outstanding teaching programs around the country."

The students began their residencies this summer at prestigious programs including Duke University Medical Center, Mayo Clinic and The Ohio State University Medical Center; approximately 15 percent will remain with TTUHSC.



Visit <http://bit.ly/2tPco9S> for more details on where TTUHSC students matched for their residencies



PLFSOM Student Residencies Revealed

By Nadia M. Whitehead

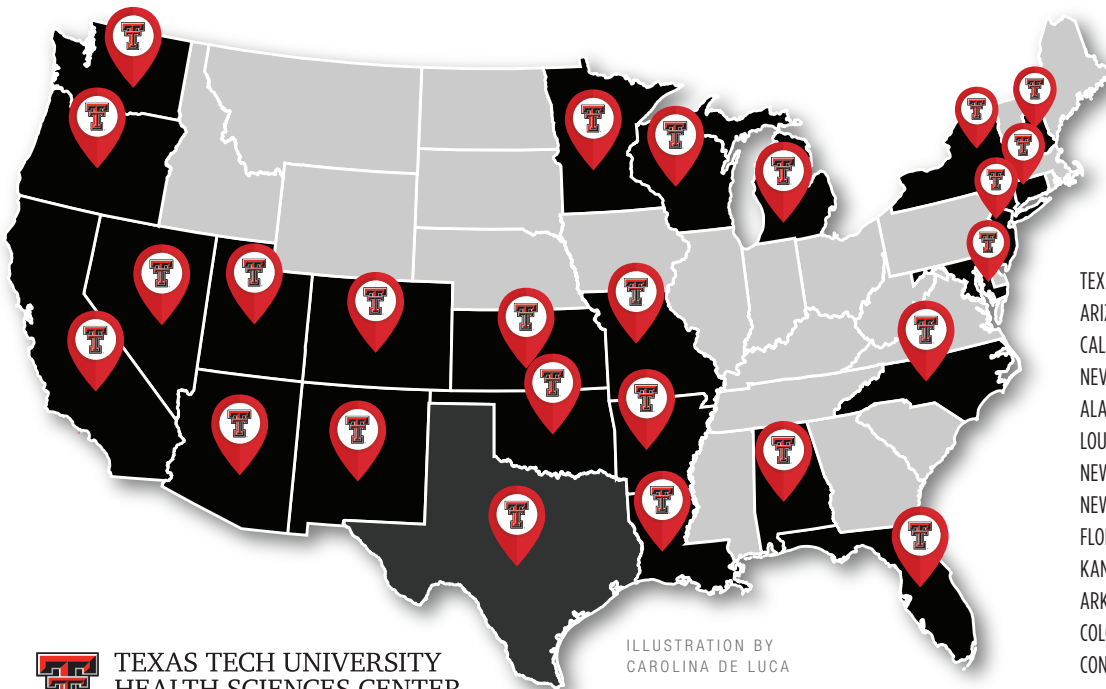
Surrounded by classmates, family and friends, graduating students of the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine (PLFSOM) shifted nervously in their seats. A pot of gold stuffed with gold streamers was placed before each of them, with a tightly sealed envelope gleaming at the center.

The countdown commenced precisely 10 seconds before 10 a.m. Students fumbled with their envelopes while onlookers whistled and cheered. The second the clock struck the appointed hour, 85 students simultaneously ripped open the envelopes that would forever impact their futures.

It was Match Day 2017, and coincidentally, also St. Patrick's Day—hence, the leprechaun theme. Thousands of graduating medical students across the country were gathered in similar ceremonious unveilings of their “match” results. The celebration represents more than a culmination of four arduous years of medical school; it reveals where the students placed for medical residencies and the next place they will call home.

“Today is a pivotal moment not only for our PLFSOM graduates but also for El Paso and the greater border region,” said Richard Lange, MD, MBA, president of TTUHSC El Paso and dean of the PLFSOM. “Our students have been uniquely trained to become culturally competent health care professionals, and I could not be more proud to see them take this philosophy to so many revered institutions throughout the country.”

MATCH DAY ★ 2017 ★



Residency placements for the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine class of 2017

TEXAS	46	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	1
ARIZONA	6	MICHIGAN	1
CALIFORNIA	6	MINNESOTA	1
NEVADA	4	MISSOURI	1
ALABAMA	3	NORTH CAROLINA	1
LOUISIANA	3	NEW HAMPSHIRE	1
NEW MEXICO	3	NEW JERSEY	1
NEW YORK	3	OKLAHOMA	1
FLORIDA	2	OREGON	1
KANSAS	2	UTAH	1
ARKANSAS	1	WASHINGTON	1
COLORADO	1	WISCONSIN	1
CONNECTICUT	1		

T TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER
EL PASO

ILLUSTRATION BY
CAROLINA DE LUCA



To view the complete list of placements, visit <http://bit.ly/2vjpXPQ>



Lorenz Lutherer, MD, PhD (Medicine '77), far right, was an assistant professor of physiology when he began medical school at TTUHSC.



Lorenz Lutherer, MD, PhD, (Medicine '77) director of the Clinical Research Institute, celebrates at his retirement reception with Guillermo Altenberg, MD, PhD, chair, School of Medicine Department of Cell Physiology and Molecular Biophysics.

TTUHSC Celebrates Lutherer's Career Concentrated on Success of Others

On the School of Medicine's 35th anniversary, Lorenz Lutherer, MD, PhD, (Medicine '77) spoke about his intentions of staying just a short time before moving on when he joined the school's faculty in 1972.

After 45 years, Lutherer's "short time" came to an end, marked with a retirement reception in February in his honor where administrators, colleagues and a former student lamented his work and took good-natured jibs at the man whose professional career was dedicated to advancing research at TTUHSC and mentoring others in theirs.

Lutherer joined the School of Medicine as an assistant professor in the Department of Physiology. Five years later, he earned his medical degree from TTUHSC, graduating in the School of Medicine's third class.

Louis Roddy, MD, (Medicine '76) was Lutherer's physiology student and his colleague in medical school. Roddy, reminisced with Luther about classes in the women's dormitory, Drane Hall, the School of Medicine's first home, and bowling down the hallways.

"There are not many of us left who still remember Drane Hall," Lutherer responded. "These past few years have been a fun time and an exciting time for me."

An accomplished researcher himself, Lutherer said he gained great satisfaction in helping budding physician researchers and junior faculty members – many of whom he has continued associations with through the years.

Tom Tenner, PhD, said Lutherer has been his mentor for about 35 years. They have served on numerous committees together within TTUHSC and externally.

"What impressed me about him was that Lori always gives honest, direct, sometimes almost too direct, but meaningful advice," said Tenner, interim director in the Office of Continuing Education and professor of medical education and pharmacology. "The key to mentorship is someone with knowledge, wisdom and experience who shares it with the mentee for the mentee's benefit. That's something hard to come by, but something Lori was consistent with.

"I've watched him over the years be this consummate mentor and seen how important it was to him guiding young faculty in their careers. I'm particularly grateful to him for that."

Tenner also serves as a director for the Clinical Research Institute, an entity Lutherer established in 2010 from a center within the School of Medicine.

During the past five years with Lutherer as the institute's director, research activity significantly increased, said TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, who supported Lutherer in expanding his work to an institute. Manuscripts went from five to 19; projects increased from three to 70 and participation in the annual Student Research Week, sponsored by the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, jumped from 30 posters to 120, with representation from all schools.

Lutherer himself has an extensive list of published work and awards to reflect his expertise in research as well as teaching. "There are a lot of faculty who retire with outstanding achievements but no one with a record of helping others the way Dr. Lutherer has done," said Steven L. Berk, MD, School of Medicine dean and TTUHSC executive vice president and provost.

To honor Lutherer and his contributions to advancing research, the School of Medicine, in collaboration with the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, established the Lori Lutherer Clinical Research Award. The award will be presented annually during Student Research Week to the medical student or resident who has completed the best research project with the collaboration of the Clinical Research Institute.

BY DANETTE BAKER



Watch a Facebook Live video from the retirement reception for Lorenz Lutherer, MD, PhD, (Medicine '77).

<http://bit.ly/2uVFIFf>



TOMMIE MORELOS

NANCY PLAZA, BSN, RN

University Medical Center of El Paso

Nurse Residency Program, El Paso, Texas

Graduate: 2016

FROM BLUE TO RED: Nancy Plaza, BSN, RN, submitted her admissions application for the second time; she was not giving up. The nursing school wanted to see more community service hours on her resume.

The now-retired police officer of 15 years was ready for the career change she'd been dreaming of—attending nursing school at TTUHSC El Paso.

"I used to say that after I got out of the police training academy, I could do anything," Plaza said. "And when I was accepted to the Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing (GGHSON) I told (student affairs manager) Gretchen Ruiz, 'They're going to have to carry me out of here kicking and screaming! There's no way I won't graduate.'"

LEARNING FROM LEARNERS: As the determined mother of two adult sons was getting ready to begin her nursing education, she quickly realized that her classmates would teach her just as much as the faculty.

"The women in my class became my role models," Plaza said. "As a police officer, I was always paired with a male officer—someone I became as close to as a brother. But being in a group with women is different, especially for those younger. To see them with their struggles—some with three, four or five kids—inspired me. They're my heroes."

When the going got tough, Plaza got tougher and her goals got shorter. Plaza used to tell her female classmates to just "get through today." She knew tomorrow would bring its own challenges.

For Plaza, and most of her colleagues, challenges came and went so quickly that she didn't realize when it was time to graduate. As recent as a week before the December commencement, Plaza was taking exit exams.

"I put my head in my hands as tears rolled down my face. I thanked the Lord," Plaza said. "Nursing school is tougher than the police academy; it took so much. All I wanted to do was scream, 'I'm graduating!'"

THE PAYOFF: Now, Plaza realizes her efforts were not in vain. She's enjoying every moment of her first nursing job. The stress of school has been replaced with a love of caring for others.

BY SERGIO RAMIREZ



TOMMIE MORELOS

SARAH SEPULVEDA, MD

Chief Resident

TTUHSC El Paso, El Paso, Texas

Graduate: 2015

SURVIVE AND THRIVE: Sarah Sepulveda, MD, knows how to juggle 80-hour workweeks and 24-hour weekend calls. As a resident in the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine Department of Family and Community Medicine, at times she earns a mere four days off a month.

But even with that hectic schedule, her resume is sprinkled with volunteer projects, professional memberships and research experiences that she has somehow managed to squeeze in. Perhaps that's why Sepulveda was elected as chief resident of her department.

"Residency has been the toughest job of my life," Sepulveda said. "So the fact that I have been successful—and am actually doing well as a resident—is a huge accomplishment for me."

JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES: Sepulveda has seen a little bit of everything. During her first year of residency, she rotated through a number of specialties, including surgery, psychiatry, ophthalmology, and obstetrics and gynecology.

"We're typically the first physician a patient sees," she said. "I need to be able to recognize a number of problems so that I can adequately care for my patients."

Family medicine physicians have another advantage that Sepulveda loves; they get to build relationships with their patients. Primary care physicians can see their patients two or three times a year and oftentimes even get to treat their patients' entire families.

HERE TO STAY: Born in El Paso and raised in Fabens, Texas, a small town in El Paso County, Sepulveda has no plans to leave. Surrounded by her family, an excellent medical education system, and extraordinary peers and mentors, the doctor said she doesn't need much else.

"I grew up in El Paso; I know the culture; I know the language," Sepulveda said. "It makes sense for me to stay here and serve the population that I know and love best."

Charmaine Martin, MD, a TTUHSC El Paso family medicine physician, is one of Sepulveda's role models. Known for her caring personality and outstanding reputation among her patients, Martin helped guide Sepulveda as a fledgling medical student.

Now, Sepulveda wants to give back to the community just like she watched Martin do.

She said, "I know that this is somewhere I can make a difference."

BY NADIA M. WHITEHEAD

JOHN DODGE, MPH

Systems Analyst

Baylor Scott & White, Dallas, Texas

Member of first Master of Public Health program, TTUHSC at Abilene

Graduate: 2016

JOHN WEAST

EFFORTS REWARDED: John Dodge, MPH, received the 2016 Texas Rural Health Student Award, which recognizes a student who, through studies and activities, made a significant effort to improve rural health care in Texas.

Dodge's award was the result of his efforts to assist the Big Country Area Health Education Center (AHEC) track participants in their Abilene program. AHEC, a program of the F. Marie Hall Institute for Rural and Community Health, supports a pipeline to bring young people into health careers, crucial to ensuring the future health care workforce for rural West Texas.

He created a Microsoft Excel platform to study participant data and produce statistics and graphs for AHEC management to present to the Texas Legislature for future funding. He also created a training video for the tracking tool.

HIS MATHEMATICAL MIND: "I have a very analytical math mind," Dodge said. "I see how to use that in public health. Math lets us see the data behind every public health issue. It helps me see where health is going."

Dodge's passion is data analysis of health-related issues, and he is especially interested in how that data can be used in workplace safety environments.

ALL IT TOOK WAS A DARE: As a high school sophomore, Dodge had his light bulb moment. "I was registering for a heavy AP (Advance Placement) class load in history, biology and English (he also took AP calculus). An adviser told me this would be a stretch. I said 'Watch me.'"

Of the four students accepting that challenge, Dodge was one of two who finished; they were co-valedictorians. "We pushed each other and it paid off," he said.

BY JO GRANT LANGSTON

SARA ROBISON, PHARM.D

Director of Pharmacy, Health South Rehabilitation Hospital of Fort Worth, Texas

Preceptor for University of North Texas

TTUHSC Alumni Association National Advisory Board Member

Graduate: 2004



JOHN WEAST

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: When Sara Robison, PharmD, was a child, severe asthma made hospital visits and trips to the pharmacy a routine part of life. And just as she grew up associating the hospital with being sick, she associated the pharmacy with getting better. "Our pharmacist would come out from behind the counter to greet us," she recalls. "He truly cared about his patients, and I loved that."

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: Those early encounters are what led Robison to a career in pharmacy. She enjoys working in a small hospital, and she spends as much time as possible interacting with patients. "I love helping people understand their medications and how to best use medications to improve their health," she adds.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE: At HealthSouth, Robison has implemented a transition of care/discharge counseling program, an anticoagulation safety committee and an antibiotic stewardship committee. She also enjoys being a preceptor, and the University of North Texas pharmacy students selected her as their 2015 Preceptor of the Year. Away from work, she serves on a steering committee for Foodie Philanthropy and works with 100 Women Who Care, a pair of nonprofits that raise funds for local charities. She also recently began a three-year term on the TCU Wesley Foundation board and is a member of the Tarrant County Pharmacy Association and the Texas Pharmacy Association. Robison also makes time for her husband, Matt, and their three dachshunds, Viagra, Levitra and Juno. Her hobbies include hot-air ballooning; she is captain of a team and is working to obtain her pilot's license.

TEAMWORK AND CHOICES: Robison works closely with an interprofessional team of nurses, physicians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, dieticians and case managers. "As a team, we help our patients to grow stronger, regain independence and decrease caregiver burden." She says the well-rounded School of Pharmacy curriculum helped her pare down career options. She thought she would be a retail pharmacist; geriatrics and pharmacy management were never her plan. "Within four years of graduating I was doing both," she said. "I was so grateful for those pesky management classes and my geriatrics rotation."

BY MARK HENDRICKS



KEN KOSUB/LIMEIGHTFILMS.TV

WADIE WILLIAMS JR., RRT, RCP, MEMS(S)

Manager, Respiratory Care Department and Dermatology Therapeutics Services

Houston Methodist Hospital, Texas Medical Center, Houston, Texas

Lieutenant Colonel, Texas State Guard Medical Brigade

Graduate: 2010, 2007

EXPERIENCE THAT COUNTS: A 1970 graduate of Ball High School in Galveston, Texas, Wadie Williams Jr., RRT, RCP, MEMS(S), attended Galveston Community College where he earned an Associate of Applied Science in Respiratory Therapy in 1972. After serving as a respiratory therapist for nearly two decades, he opted to augment his skills and experience by enrolling in the distance-based Clinical Service Management (CSM) program through TTUHSC and then continued his education in the Clinical Practice Management (CPM) program.

TRAINED TO SERVE: Williams opted to apply his skill set while transitioning his career trajectory slightly toward the management side of health care. Although he has remained active as a practicing therapist, his additional education has enabled him to move into management and leadership midcareer. He says his training through TTUHSC was instrumental in preparing him for the opportunities and challenges in his current position. "Though I had many years of experience, the CSM and CPM programs filled in the gaps in some of my experience and learning," he said. "I developed a greater understanding of the 'whys' and 'hows' that come into play when working in a highly progressive and innovative health care environment."

NOW AND THE FUTURE: Williams has been with Houston Methodist Hospital, Texas Medical Center in Houston, Texas, since 2006. There he serves as manager of the Respiratory Care Department, overseeing all operational activities, staffing, budgeting, financial reporting, operational metrics, emergency preparedness, patient satisfaction and other duties in the large and growing health care center. That same year also marked the start of his service to the Texas State Guard. His work in the Medical Brigade as a medical service officer has led to a recent promotion to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

RAIDER INSPIRATION: "That high school graduation year isn't a typo, but perhaps it may inspire someone else to pursue their dreams at (TTUHSC)," he said. Williams is quick to credit TTUHSC for helping him pursue his. "My professors had real-world experiences that made sense of the learning rather than simple didactic, static opinions that allowed us as students to bring our real-world issues to class and work through them. The result for me was a solid working knowledge of the processes and application of solutions to those problems."

BY TOBY BROOKS

JESSICA SPIEGELBERG, FNP-C

Nurse Practitioner, Outpatient Adult Psychiatry

TTUHSC School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Covenant Health, Lubbock, Texas

Graduate: 2012

NEAL HINKLE

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS: When Jessica Spiegelberg, FNP-C, completed the coursework for a minor in addiction and substance abuse at Texas Tech University while working on her prerequisites for nursing school, she didn't know what opportunities were ahead.

Yet, as a student at Covenant School of Nursing, Spiegelberg said she felt right at home among the staff when she did her rotation through the hospital's psychiatric unit. There should have been bells and whistles telling her this was a sign of things to come; instead, Spiegelberg saw it as the perfect part-time job. "I was looking for a supportive environment while I was going through school."

After becoming a registered nurse, Spiegelberg took a full-time position in the unit and worked for four years, promoting to charge nurse, until she graduated with her master's degree. But even then, Spiegelberg said she still had not really considered psychiatric care as a long-term career field.

ADVOCATE FOR HER PATIENTS AND PEERS: Fast forward five years, and Spiegelberg says she can't imagine doing anything else.

"I've always been drawn to populations that are underserved. These are fields that need a bigger voice and one where I feel I can make a greater impact."

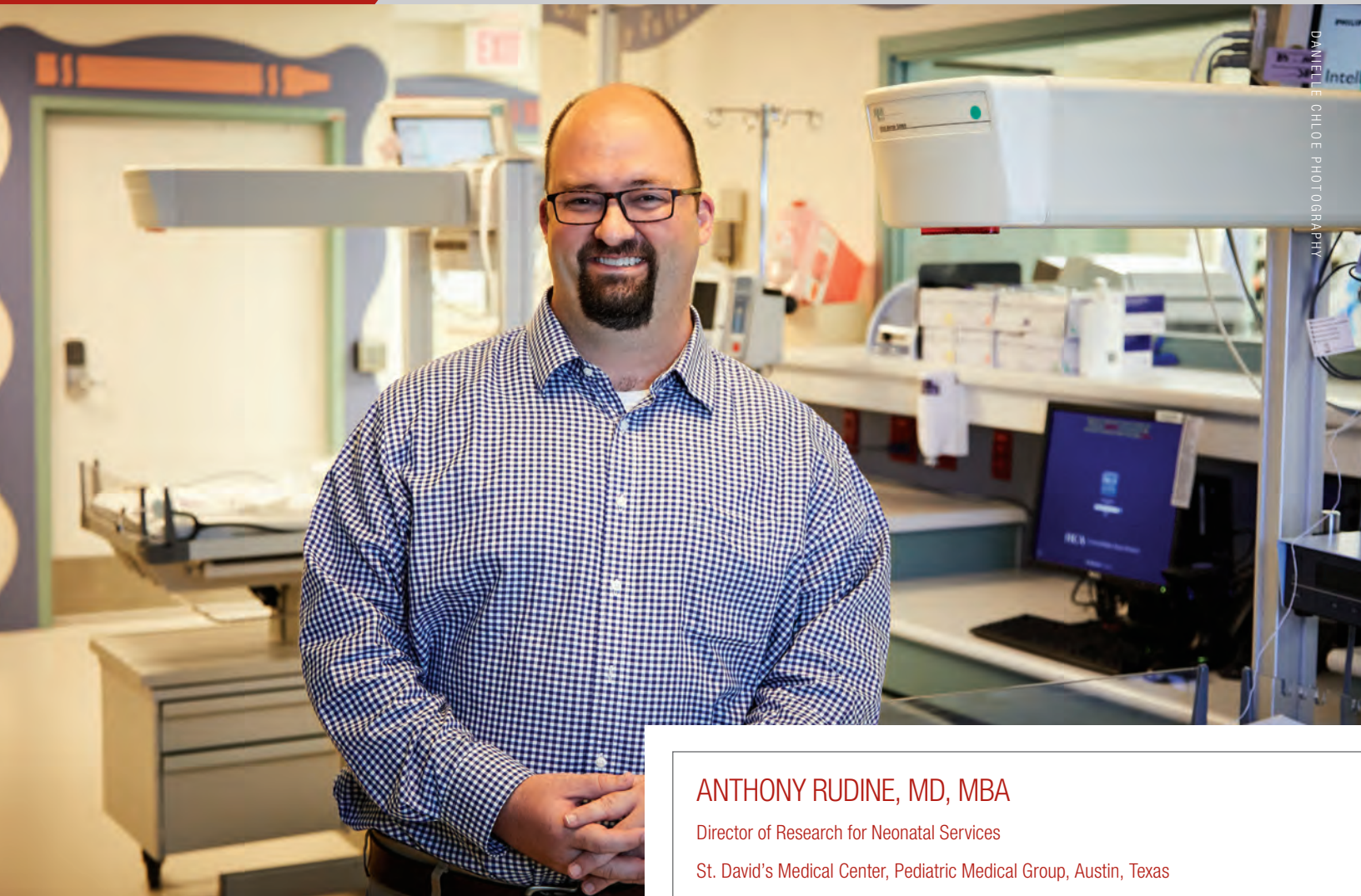
As a clinician and educator, Spiegelberg said she is bridging the gap for those battling mental health issues and those who are caring for them. Access is a huge obstacle for patients, and many are not getting the help they need because there is not enough funds nor providers adequately trained to meet the need.

She also believes the path to change for both patients and providers is through advocacy. She is currently pursuing a Doctor in Nursing Practice through TTUHSC, which she believes will open additional doors and lead to new opportunities for her professionally and as an advocate.

'IF NOT ME, WHO?': "I never really saw myself as being the type of person to lobby, but the more I'm in this field I see there just never could be enough people to advocate for needs.

"I have enough experience at this level to know where we are lacking with mental health both locally and statewide, and even on the national level. I have the experience so I thought, 'If not me, who?'"

BY DANETTE BAKER



ANTHONY RUDINE, MD, MBA

Director of Research for Neonatal Services

St. David's Medical Center, Pediatric Medical Group, Austin, Texas

Graduate: 2008

HOLY GRAIL OF THE HUMAN BODY: There's not an organ in the body more beautiful, more prone to injury and more adept at repairing itself than an infant's brain. And to Anthony Rudine, MD, MBA, there also is no other organ so incompletely explored.

"Right now, we are not able to prevent a lot of brain injury at birth, but we can recognize and deal with what happens after," he said.

BACK IN THE LONE STAR STATE: Rudine moved to Austin about four months ago, bringing with him a background in neonatology research and a network of experts from his fellowship and faculty appointment in neonatology-perinatal medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. While there, he pursued research interests centered on the developing fetal brain and how maternal exposures affect neurodevelopment.

At St. David's, Rudine's goal is to develop interventions and expand treatment options for babies with birth injuries and strokes similar and complementary to the work being done in Pittsburgh. The second part of Rudine's work is to standardize the protocol used for treating brain injuries or infant stroke and educate those in the medical community about importance of neonatal brain protection.

OFFERING HOPE: In the meantime, Rudine is helping create a medical home to meet the specialized needs of children with these compromised health issues. His office is at Austin's First Steps, where health care services and resources help fill the gaps in caring for babies with disabilities and providing parents and caregivers a community that understands the challenges—and one in which they can participate in the search for answers.

"In whatever small way we can, we want to lessen the burden now and help these babies become the fullest individuals they can be and ultimately move the needle in prevention and care."

BY DANETTE BAKER





1 As part of the 17th Annual Rio Grande Trauma Conference and Pediatric Update and in conjunction with the White House's "Stop the Bleed" initiative, TTUHSC El Paso hosted a Bleeding Control for the Injured (B-Con) course, which taught participants how to react quickly to keep the injured alive by applying pressure and a tourniquet to a wound. **2** In observance of Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, TTUHSC El Paso and the Southwest Coalition for Colorectal Cancer organized the first boxer march to build awareness about a disease that's often not taken seriously. **3** Three and four-year-olds from St. Mark's School visited TTUHSC El Paso's Gross Anatomy Lab to get their first peek at the world of health science. The program helps spark interest in health care careers at a young age. **4** About 700 El Pasoans participated in educational booths and free health screenings at the 7th Annual Students United Para Nuestra Salud (SUNS) Health Fair, hosted by TTUHSC El Paso students, volunteer physicians and community health care professionals. **5** TTUHSC at Lubbock celebrated the generosity of its donors with an honorary dinner in March. Philanthropic support has helped TTUHSC award more than \$9.1 million in grants and scholarships this year as well as provide support for faculty appointments and research initiatives. **6** Alumni gatherings were held throughout the spring in conjunction with professional association conferences and meetings statewide. Follow the TTUHSC Alumni Association on Facebook for dates and locations of 2018 events. **7** Thirty-six students from TTUHSC received their class rings during the 2017 Official Ring Ceremony. TTUHSC administrators, alumni family and friends were on hand for the celebration. **8** Annual poster competitions highlight the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Student Research Week held in March and the School of Pharmacy Research Days held in June. Both events also feature invited speakers and celebration dinners.

A Change of Heart

Why Audra Tapperson replanted roots in Lubbock



Audra Tapperson cares for 15-year-old patient Cassidy.

When Audra Tapperson talks about her decision to go into the health care field, she likens it to going into the family business. Nurses, administrators and medical professionals mark her lineage, but it was a personal experience that ultimately led her into the world of home health.

“I had an accident when I was 16 years old, and I was told I wouldn’t walk again. It took two years, but I walked again,” Tapperson said. “It’s hard to find hope in certain situations, and I was determined to make an impact in the nursing field.”

Tapperson became a licensed vocational nurse (LVN) and was working toward becoming a registered nurse (RN) when her family felt a calling to leave Lubbock and move out-of-state to do ministry work. While in Virginia, Tapperson continued her work in health care, but found it to be very different from her Texas beginnings.

“The world of LVN doesn’t get as much honor there as it does in Texas,” she said. “It was very hard to request a certain amount of money for my skill. I was not considered a skilled nurse, and that was alarming when it came to my career. It was a very different experience than what I experienced in the Lubbock community.”

Because of this, Tapperson and her growing family replanted roots in Lubbock a short time later.

“The main goal was to go back to school,” she said. “We have very highly accredited schools here with the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, South Plains College and Covenant School of Nursing. I felt comfortable being back with some of the people that formed the foundations of nursing in me.”

Aside from familiarity, there were other factors that played into the Tapperson family’s decision to return to Lubbock.

“The cost of living on the East Coast is probably twice what it is here, and the income for a middle-class family is not sufficient without two jobs,” Tapperson said. “I also drove 55 minutes to work one way, every day, five days a week. It did get taxing. For the cost of living and the pay, Lubbock is a very comfortable place to live.”

Tapperson now works as a private duty nurse for BrightStar Care, taking care of a 15-year-old patient, Cassidy, and going to school with her each day.

“It’s my goal to give her the best experience she can have when she’s with me,” Tapperson said. “We have a one-stop shop at BrightStar. We have a whole team that coordinates with your home for optimal care. There’s a certain tone, a sign and the look on a patient’s face when you know you’ve gotten it just perfect. I get to be a part of that.”

ADVERTORIAL



Audra Tapperson visits with co-worker Charlene Hack at the BrightStar Care office.

“In Lubbock, you can truly work in just about every area of nursing you can think of.”

Easily navigated and boasting an average commute time of just 17 minutes, from a logistics standpoint, Lubbock is ideal for home health care.

“Practically, the homes are easy to find,” Tapperson said. “And Lubbock has completed some of the highways they were working on when we left. You start having this feeling of ‘I’m here in the city.’ It’s incredible what’s happened here.”

Aside from the growth within the Lubbock community, the city’s low cost of living is something that Adrienne Cozart, senior vice president of human resources at University Medical Center Health System, touts to prospective employees.

“If you want a great place to live and place to raise your kids, come to Lubbock,” Cozart said. “It’s not a metropolitan city, but it offers a lot of the same amenities as a large city. It has a low cost of living, a family friendly community and opportunities for all age groups.”

Perhaps that’s why more and more Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center alumni and former Lubbock residents are finding that it’s the right time to give Lubbock another look.

“With top-rated schools, more house for your dollar, great restaurants, a growing art scene and a variety of entertainment options, Lubbock has become one of the top cities for opportunities according to Forbes,” said John Osborne, president and CEO of the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA).

One area of particular opportunity is in the health care field.

“The wages are very competitive,” said Lonny Kane, owner of BrightStar Care. “For the cost of living here, the wages are very good and a nurse can live comfortably. Yes, we have several nursing schools in this area, but as with the rest of the country, we still have a need for nurses. In Lubbock, you can truly work in just about every area of nursing you can think of.”

And to make it easier for professionals to discover available positions, LEDA has stepped in to act as a conduit between job seekers and businesses.

“One way we’re doing this is through a web portal—return2lbbk.org—that serves as a one-stop shop featuring concentrated, valuable job openings,” said Christine Allen, director of workforce development for LEDA.

Not only does LEDA provide information and links to a large number of health care-focused openings, they also provide links to other jobs available in the Lubbock community.

“Fortune.com recently listed Lubbock as one of the top 10 cities to find a job,” Osborne said. “In the six years that my wife, Sunni, and I have lived in Lubbock, we’ve come across so many wonderful people who moved back because they wanted not only to find a good job, but a good community. That’s why we’re in Lubbock.”

As for the Tappersons, they have no plans to leave any time soon.

“For me it’s just that feeling of being home,” she said. “I understand the regulations, and I connect with the company. Lubbock isn’t like you remember it if you’ve been gone for a while. It hasn’t lost that home feeling, but it’s gotten a facelift.”

For more available health care positions and other employment opportunities in Lubbock, please visit www.return2lbbk.org or call 800.687.5330.



The Tapperson family enjoys dining at a local restaurant.



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EL PASO

When Monzer Hourani first arrived in Texas 50 years ago, he was sorely disappointed. Where were all the cowboys and Indians? Not to mention the pistol-wielding bandits and defenseless damsels of the frontier.

This was not the same Texas that John Wayne and Hollywood portrayed.

Despite this initial shock, Hourani stayed in the Lone Star State and today proudly calls himself a full-fledged Texan. It didn't take long for the Lebanese immigrant to fall in love with the state's abundance of warm and welcoming personalities, including those at TTUHSC El Paso.

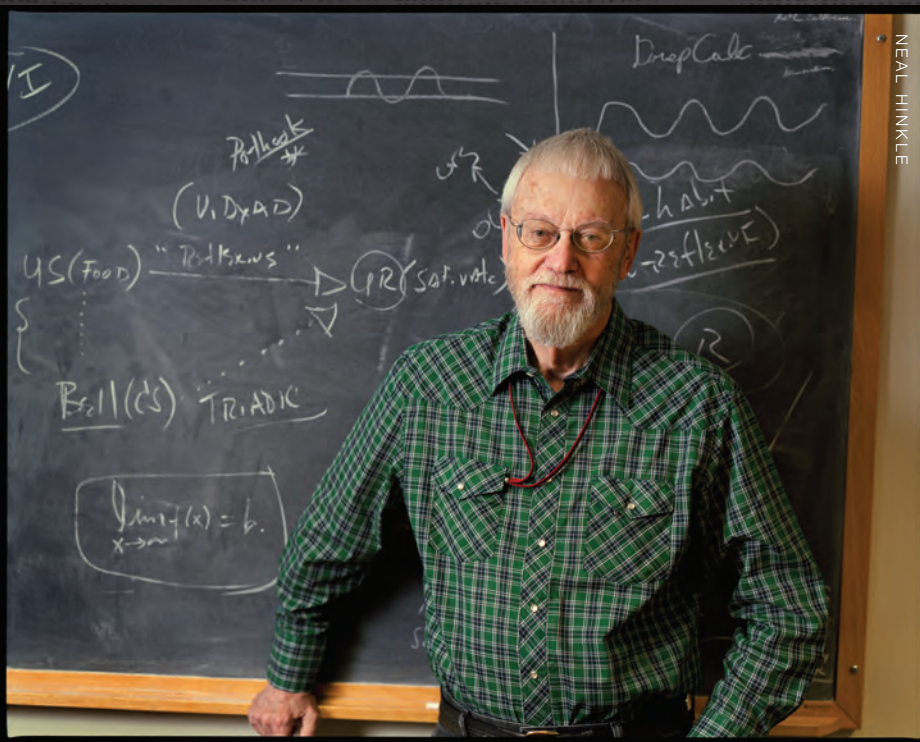
Hourani first took an interest in TTUHSC El Paso in 2013 and a strong bond was quickly formed. That friendship recently culminated in a generous \$1 million gift to the university.



*Monzer Hourani and TTUHSC El Paso
President Richard Lange, MD, MBA*



Learn more about Monzer Hourani's generous support
[and how your gift can impact health care]
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KEN KETNER, PHD

Loyal donor for 25 consecutive years

There is not a lot of theology or deep thinking behind Ken Ketner's giving - just the simple principle that if you feel it in your heart to do something, do it in whatever way you can.

Ketner, a Paul Whitfield Horn Professor and director of the Institute for Studies in Pragmatism at Texas Tech University's College of Arts and Sciences, has given 25 years consecutively to the School of Nursing. His generosity now supports two endowments - one for student scholarships and the other for faculty sabbaticals.

**READ MORE ABOUT DR. KEN KETNER'S
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