

# Health Matters

*What Matters to Your Health, Matters to Us*

October 2018

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## Message from the Dean



The most important purpose of a school of medicine is to contribute toward reducing health disparities. The UTRGV School of Medicine is committed to accomplishing this goal through the "creation" of doctors who provide exemplary and compassionate care to patients of diverse cultures, and are dedicated to improving health outcomes in the community. The Rio Grande Valley has among the highest rates of diabetes, liver disease, cervical cancer and other chronic diseases in the nation. This higher burden of illness is the reason our faculty, staff and students are engaged in efforts to address and eliminate disparities in health.

The Research Symposium held in McAllen focused on closing the gap in health disparities and served to highlight the work done by researchers here in the Valley to improve the health and well-being of the community. What's more, the continued success of the South Texas Diabetes Institute in attracting funds to support its research in the genetics of diabetes is critical to our ability to create a foundation for translating any

findings into clinical interventions that will benefit patients of the Valley and beyond.

Our participation in community events like HESTEC helps to promote greater workforce diversity by inspiring young students from diverse backgrounds to pursue careers in the health professions. It was truly exciting to spend time with 1,000 of the brightest students in the Valley earlier this month, and for our medical students to have an opportunity to share with them lessons learned in their journeys toward becoming physicians. The most important message from our medical students is for students to find something they love doing, and if their passion is to serve the underserved, then UTRGV School of Medicine is the right place for them!

The learners who come to study here to learn are outstanding, and many of them are already working on a variety of initiatives to address health disparities. That said, I want to take this opportunity to applaud our students for their achievement in the statewide SHIFT Competition. Our students presented a patient case for addressing health disparities in rural areas and were recognized for the community-relevance and cultural competence of their approach. They placed ahead of medical student teams from Baylor, Texas A&M and UT Dell in the competition.

Thank you to all our students, faculty and staff for your many contributions!

John H. Krouse, MD, PhD, MBA  
Executive Vice President, Health Affairs  
Dean, School of Medicine

About the Dean

## AAMC Survey

# StandPoint™ Surveys

The School of Medicine is encouraging all faculty to participate in the [AAMC StandPoint Engagement Survey](#). This survey is specific to the needs and issues of medical school faculty, and has been used by almost 50 medical schools in the U.S. and Canada. The survey **opens Tuesday, Oct. 16**.

The advantage of such a survey is that it focuses on the unique attributes of medical schools. It therefore allows benchmarking in a variety of areas that can be used for comparison across schools, as well as to evaluate changes over time. It is currently used by three Texas Schools: UTSouthwestern, UT Medical Branch at Galveston, and UTHealth San Antonio.

To learn more about the survey, visit <https://www.aamc.org/services/standpointsurveys/>.

## News and Events

### School of Medicine celebrates AHEC openings



The School of Medicine celebrated the opening of its Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Sept. 20 in the [La Victoria](#) community of Starr County.



The School of Medicine celebrated the opening of its AHEC Oct. 4 at the [Bob Clark Social Service Center](#) in Cameron County.

## School of Medicine, UTRGV Human Resources offer free flu shots to benefits-eligible employees



### Video by Malena Hernandez, UTRGV News & Internal Communications

The School of Medicine and UTRGV Human Resources have teamed up to provide free flu shots to all employees who show their UT SELECT health insurance cards to providers.

Flu shots will be offered on the Brownsville campus via the university's mobile clinical site, UniMóvil, which will be parked at the Vaquero Plaza (BVAQP) from **9 a.m. to 3 p.m.** on the following days: **October 15 and 18** and **November 5 and 19**.

Flu shots also will be offered at the Edinburg and Harlingen employee health sites, which operate from **8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday**.

#### Locations:

Edinburg  
Research Education Building (EREBL)  
First floor  
1214 W. Schunior St.  
(956) 296-1731

Harlingen  
2106 Treasure Hills Blvd. #1.326  
(Entrance from Coastal Bend VA or Internal Medicine & Neurology clinical site)  
(956) 296-1519

# SOM participates in HESTEC 2018



The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine and Division of Health Affairs **welcomed more than 1,000 middle and high school students** Oct. 1 during the university's Hispanic Engineering Science and Technology (HESTEC) week.

Students heard from Executive Vice President for Health Affairs and SOM Dean Dr. John H. Krouse and current medical students about what to expect when entering medical school and how to prepare for a career in the health professions. Students also visited tables staffed with faculty, students and staff who provided information on the various health professions programs offered at UTRGV.



The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine **hosted Workforce Solutions' quarterly Healthcare Industry Taskforce** Tuesday, Oct. 2, during the Hispanic Engineering, Science and Technology (HESTEC) week at UTRGV.

Taskforce members received updates on the College of Health Professions, School of Medicine and School of Nursing and took a tour of the Medical Education Building on the Edinburg campus.

The taskforce, composed of leaders in the Rio Grande Valley's healthcare industry, meet quarterly to discuss challenges they face and develop best practices in recruiting and maintaining employees.



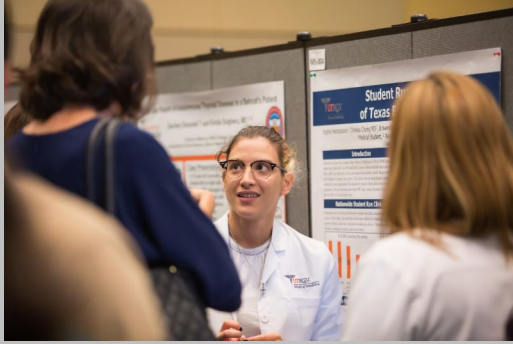
## **STDOI receives \$3.27M NIH grant for brain research**

The South Texas Diabetes and Obesity Institute has received a five-year, \$3.27 million grant from the National Institute of Aging of the National Institutes of Health to study environmental and genetic influences on how the brain ages.

The project, "Imaging Genomics of the Aging Brain," is led by STDOI Professor Dr. John Blangero and Dr. David Glahn from Yale University. The main goal is to characterize the genetic and environmental influences on normal aging-related changes in neuroanatomic, neurophysiologic and neurocognitive indices.

## **UTRGV SOM second annual Research Symposium tackles health disparities**





Researchers from across the country and world gathered recently at the UTRGV School of Medicine's second annual Research Symposium to discuss how they are addressing disparities in health care.



### Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation establishes scholarship for SOM students

The Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation has established a \$50,000 endowed scholarship in honor of the foundation's former executive director, Randall "Randy" Baker, who retired from his post this past summer.



### City of Edinburg gives \$1 million to UTRGV SOM

The City of Edinburg continued its support of the UTRGV School of Medicine by presenting a check to School of Medicine officials Friday, Sept. 28 at the lobby of the Performing Arts Center on the UTRGV Edinburg campus.

## Student Success

School of Medicine students **Kaitlyn Hall, Mario Aguilar, Michael Rotko, Annalisa Lopez, and Sahar Panjwani** participated in the **SHIFT 2018 – Texas Health Challenges Case Competition** hosted by the Texas A&M University College of Medicine Sept. 22-23. The two-day competition involves medical students reviewing case studies that highlight health care challenges in rural communities. The competition provides students an opportunity to work in teams to develop innovative ways to address health disparities.

School of Medicine students **Michael LaPelusa, Leah Bryan, Vania Nwokolo, Sarah Miller, Lauren Roddy, D'Andrea Ceaser, Christine Loftis, Kat Longoria, Julien Mahler, Joy Alvarado, and Shea-Lynn Hopson** had their posters accepted for presentation at the **AAMC annual meeting**, to be held Nov. 2-6 in Austin. The following posters will be presented:

- A Podcast in Your Ear
- Safe MD
- Big Sib Lil Sib
- Minority Advancement in Medicine
- Student Run Clinic

## In the Spotlight

**Student Spotlight: Shea-Lynn Hopson, Class of 2021**



Shea-Lynn Hopson is a second-year student at the University of Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine. She is a career changer and started her journey into medicine by becoming an EMT-basic in Austin, Texas. Though she was born in Detroit, Michigan, she considers Evansville, Indiana her hometown. Shea-Lynn attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois and has an interest in emergency medicine and urology.

## Tsin paper among top 50 most viewed on Journal of Biological Chemistry website

Dr. Andrew Tsin, associate dean for Research at the School of Medicine, received accolades from the Journal of Biological Chemistry for the success of his paper recently published in the journal, "[Visual cycle proteins: Structure, function, and roles in human retinal disease.](#)"

His paper was viewed 520 times on the [JBC website](#) in July and August, putting it among the top 50 most viewed papers for the month, according to the journal.



Great things are happening at the UTRGV School of Medicine. Learn more about the SOM Strategic Plan.

[UTRGV SOM Strategic Plan](#)

[Make a Gift](#)

Your gift to the School of Medicine supports our mission to educate a diverse group of medical students and future scientists to benefit the Rio Grande Valley and the world.

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Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine

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