

Health Matters

What Matters to Your Health, Matters to Us

December 2018

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Message from the Dean



As we celebrate the end of 2018, I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone for their hard work and dedication toward moving the UTRGV School of Medicine forward in its mission to train the next generation of physicians, expand access to care in the Rio Grande Valley and engage in research that is relevant to the health needs of the community and beyond.

This year has been eventful for the School of Medicine. Among our accomplishments are:

- Launching our clinical practice, UT Health RGV, which will expand access to primary and specialty care to patients throughout Valley. No longer will patients have to leave the area to receive the care they need. So far, we've opened a primary care site in Laguna Vista, a pediatric specialty site in Edinburg, employee health sites in Edinburg and Harlingen and three Area Health Education Centers

throughout the Valley.

- Expanding educational opportunities for our medical students by forming a partnership with UTHealth to offer dual degree programs. Our students, starting with the class of 2022, can earn their medical degree and a master's degree in either Public Health or Biomedical Informatics within four years.
- Receiving millions of dollars from the National Institutes of Health to advance research into diabetes-related illnesses as well Alzheimer's.

More achievements are to be expected in the coming year. We will celebrate the expansion of health care access with the openings of new clinical sites, and of research endeavors with the openings of our research center in McAllen, as well as the institutes for Neurosciences and Cancer Immunology. We will welcome our fourth class of medical students and continue to build relationships with the College of Health Professions and Schools of Nursing and Social Work and offer more educational opportunities for all students under the Division of Health Affairs.

I wish everyone a wonderful holiday season and a healthy and happy New Year. We have done well, but there is much more work to do in 2019.

Kind Regards,

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

About the Dean

News and Events

[SOM celebrates AHEC opening in Hidalgo County](#)

The UTRGV School of Medicine celebrated the opening of its third **Area Health Education Center** (AHEC) Wednesday, Nov. 14, in San Carlos in Hidalgo County.

The AHECs support the School of Medicine's mission to close gaps in access to healthcare and expand educational opportunities for its students.



[Get out and go running: UTRGV's South Texas Diabetes and Obesity Institute working to bring attention to diabetes](#)

By Amanda Alaniz, UTRGV News & Internal Communications

Diabetes is one of the most common and complex diseases in the United States, and according to the **International Diabetes Federation**, the number of people with diabetes is expected to rise to 522 million by 2030.



Two UTRGV School of Medicine faculty appointed to UT System's Shine Academy



Dr. Arden Dingle serves as a professor of Psychiatry and the program director of the Psychiatry residency program at the School of Medicine. She earned her medical degree from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and completed her residency and fellowship training from Mount Sinai Medical Center, in New York, New York. She is board certified in Pediatrics, General Psychiatry and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Prior to joining UTRGV in September 2015, Dr. Dingle served at UT Health San Antonio, Emory University School of Medicine and the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia.



Dr. Andrew Neal Dentino joined The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in 2017 and currently serves as assistant vice president for the Division of Health Affairs at UTRGV, as well as associate dean for Interprofessional Education, professor and chair for the Department of Internal Medicine of the School of Medicine and interim chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Neurology.

He is board certified in internal medicine, general psychiatry and geriatric psychiatry. He also is fellowship-trained in geriatric medicine and completed his training in Internal Medicine and Psychiatry from West Virginia University.

SOM faculty member has research on Kaposi sarcoma published

Dr. Wendy Innis-Whitehouse, an assistant professor at the UTRGV School of Medicine, has had her paper, "**Kaposi sarcoma incidence in females is nearly four-fold higher in the Lower Rio Grande Valley compared to the Texas average**," published in the journal Cancer Treatment and Research Communications.

Medical students collecting toys for children in Peñitas

Medical students are collecting toys through Dec. 14 at the Medical Education Building in Edinburg and the Clinical Education Building in Harlingen. The toys will

be given to children in Peñitas, where the medical students operate the UTRGV Student-run clinic.

The UTRGV Student-Run Clinic
presents



Nov. 16
Thru
Dec. 14

Donations will go towards children
in the Peñitas community and
adjoining colonias.



See attached flyer for wish list



W I S H L I S T

The following items are our items
of greatest need:

- Lego kits
- Fisher Price "Little People"
- Action figures
- Plastic dinosaurs
- Plastic animals
- Baby dolls
- Trains
- Playing Cards
- Uno Card Games
- Handheld rattles
- Wrist rattles
- Handheld toys
- Light-up toys
- Musical toys
- WubbaNubs
- Board books
- Fisher Price Med Kit
- Headphones/earbuds
- Teen craft kits

All other donated items are welcome
and can include:

- Barbie Dolls
- Mickey Mouse
- Minnie Mouse
- Kitchen play food
- "I spy" books
- Polly Pocket
- Hot Wheels
- Littlest Pet Shop
- Family board games
- "Look & Find" books

Please note, all items must be NEW

Summer research opportunities available for medical students and residents

The Office of the Associate Dean of Research has added tabs on its website for [medical students](#) and [residents](#) to seek out 2019 extramural research opportunities and funding.

Students and residents are encouraged to read each opportunity carefully, as they have different eligibility requirements and deadlines. For any questions regarding [Research Training Opportunities](#) and finding a mentor, contact the Office of the Associate Dean of Research at (956)296-1926 or visit the office's [webpage](#).

In the Spotlight

Meet Chelsea Peterson, Class of 2021

Meet Chelsea Peterson, a second-year medical student from Littleton, Colorado. Peterson attended Baylor University and has an interest in researching public health and how it is used to reduce health disparities. Peterson recently was elected to serve as president of the Student Government Association.



Dr. Leonel Vela presents research

on mental health at conference in Austin

Leonel Vela, MD, MPH, associate vice president for Education—Division of Health Affairs, senior associate dean for Education and Academic Affairs, chair for the Department of Medical Education and professor for the Department of Family Medicine, presented research he and fellow faculty members conducted, “Mental Health on the Texas-Mexico Border,” at the 2018 Healthier Texas Summit recently in Austin. They performed field and telephone surveys with Rio Grande Valley residents, including those who live in colonias, with help from community health workers, known as *promotoras*. The team’s research was focused on assessing the mental health needs of the Valley, an underserved area with exceptionally high rates of untreated anxiety and depression.



The power of giving: [Dr. Leonel Vela establishes scholarship for School of Medicine students](#)

Dr. Leonel Vela fondly recalls a Spanish saying his father and grandfather often used to encourage him when he was a medical student on the long journey toward becoming a physician: *Nunca es tarde para recibir el bien de mañana*. It’s never too late to receive the good tomorrow will bring. Those words reminded him to be patient and reassured him his hard work as a medical student would pay off.

If you’d like to support the School of Medicine and make an end of year gift this holiday season, you can donate online at <https://give.utrgv.edu/som> by December 31, 2018. Your gift will have an immediate impact and may provide you with tax benefits. For more information about supporting the School of Medicine, please call Jay Zambrano at (956) 665-4031 or email javier.zambrano@utrgv.edu.

AAMC Survey

StandPoint™ Surveys

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

The staff survey closes December 14.

Thanks to all faculty who completed the faculty survey, which closed November 30.

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/>.



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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