

# Health Matters

*What Matters to Your Health, Matters to Us*

April 2019

Visit UT Health RGV

## Message from the Dean



Recently, the UTRGV School of Medicine celebrated National Physicians' Week and National Doctors' Day by having some of our faculty visit local secondary schools and share their stories of why and how they became physicians. Hearing the feedback from our faculty on how eager the students were to learn about the medical profession made me optimistic for the future of health care in the Rio Grande Valley. It also reminds me of how hard our faculty physicians work to train our students and provide care to patients throughout the Valley. I am grateful for their service and dedication.

One of the missions of the School of Medicine is to train the next generation of physicians who are committed to providing compassionate, culturally competent and patient-centered care and biomedical scientists who are dedicated to engaging in research that will lead to innovations in treating patients with illnesses such as diabetes, chronic heart failure, cancer and neurodegenerative diseases that affect so many in the Rio Grande Valley, the U.S. and the world.

We are fulfilling that mission and delivering our promise to the Rio Grande Valley to improve the health and well-being of its residents. In this latest issue of *Health Matters*, you can read about our medical students participating in an interprofessional training activity with students from other health professions and presenting their research at national conferences.

You can also read about the opening of our biomedical research building in McAllen, which will house researchers from the departments of Neuroscience, Human Genetics, Immunology and Microbiology, and Molecular Science. It also will be the home of the School of Medicine's new cancer immunology institute--a first for the region. This new facility allows us to continue our work together to build an academic health center, a place where the next generation of healthcare professionals and scientists train, where medical breakthroughs happen, and where patients receive the world's best care.

This is just the beginning of the transformation of health care in the Valley. In the coming months and years, we will be expanding academic programs, clinical operations, and research endeavors to provide more opportunities for students throughout the Valley, expand access to health care and enhance the quality of care patients receive.

The future of health care in the Valley is bright, and I look forward to share with you the progress we make on delivering on our promise.

Kind Regards,

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

About the Dean

## News and Events

### **UTRGV School of Medicine celebrates opening of its Biomedical Research building in McAllen**

The University of Texas School of Medicine is expanding its research endeavors – and taking UTRGV one step closer to becoming an Emerging Research university – with the opening of its new biomedical research building in McAllen.



[Read more](#)

### **SOM, Nursing, PA students participate in interprofessional team-building event**

The School of Medicine hosted the first Team-Centric Friday event March 1, where more than 160 students – nurse

practitioner students, physician assistant students and first-year medical students – collaborated on how to treat a patient with vision problems.

[Read more](#)



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## UTRGV SOM, College of Education and P-16 Integration offer behavioral health course

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine has teamed up with the College of Education and P-16 Integration to equip students with behavioral health skills to transform the future of medical care in the Valley.

[Read more](#)



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## UTRGV School of Medicine named "Top Innovative Medical Professional" by RGVision Magazine

*RGVision Magazine* has named The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley's School of Medicine as the "Top Innovative Medical Professional" of the Rio Grande Valley in its March/April 2019 issue.

The School of Medicine was included in *RGVision Magazine's* "Trade Professionals of the RGV" business feature, which highlights the area's leaders from different industries. Each category's winner is selected by a popular vote.



The magazine writes, "Providing the latest in innovative medical learning technology, UTRGV's nearly three-year-old School of Medicine has made a name for itself in preparing a highly skilled medical workforce for the Valley and beyond."

Read the magazine's full article [here](#).

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## UTRGV School of Medicine gains 66 new residents

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley will welcome 66 new medical residents this year to begin their post-graduate residency training at 10 programs and in seven specialties. With this new cohort, the UTRGV School of Medicine will have 174 residents training at four hospitals and other health care institutions throughout the Valley.

The 66 residents in training were selected through a computer-based selection process generated by the National Resident Matching Program (**NRMP**), which matched each medical student with a hospital with a residency program. The day residents find out where they will complete their training is called Match Day, and normally occurs the third Friday of March. This year, Match Day occurred on March 15.

Of the 66 new residents, 29 are from U.S. medical schools and 16 of those are joining UTRGV from other medical schools throughout Texas. The residents will begin their training July 1.

The School of Medicine also plans to begin two new fellowship programs—in sports medicine, to be housed within the Family Medicine Residency Program, and hospice and palliative care medicine, to be housed within the Internal Medicine Program. Recruitment for those fellowship programs is ongoing and the School of Medicine hopes to have a total of four fellows begin their training in July as well.



## Save the Date: 2nd Annual Family Medicine Research Symposium May 17 at Knapp Convention Center

Come hear our Family Medicine residents present their plans to enhance patient care in the Rio Grande Valley at the second annual Family Medicine Research Symposium from noon to 5 p.m. Friday, May 17, at the Knapp Convention Center.

This event will feature quality improvement research poster presentations from residents from all three of the UTRGV School of Medicine's Family Medicine Residency programs.

## Accolades

### Five School of Medicine students have been selected to present their research posters at national conferences

**SOM students also selected to present their posters at national conferences are:**

- Patrick Ojeaga: New England Science Symposium, April 6; Boston, Massachusetts; Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America, May 15-18, Charlotte, North Carolina
- Sarah Miller: The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology, April 28-May 2, Vancouver, Canada
- David Goldblatt: Association of American Physicians/American



The American College of Physicians (ACP) has selected UTRGV School of Medicine students Michael LaPelusa and Daniella Concha's poster, "Pumping Iron: Heart Failure and Anemia in the Rio Grande Valley", as a finalist to present at the National ACP Internal Medicine Meeting April 11-14 in Philadelphia.

Society of Clinical Investigation/American Physician-Scientists Association joint meeting, April 5-7, Chicago, Illinois; American Thoracic Society annual conference, May 17-22, Dallas, Texas; Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center's Third symposium on Infectious Diseases in the Immunocompromised Host, June 10-11, Seattle, Washington

The two will present their findings to a panel of judges on a retrospective chart review they conducted on patients who had heart failure and anemia. LaPelusa and Concha, both third-year medical students, last fall reviewed 320 charts of patients who had been admitted to a hospital in the Rio Grande Valley in 2017 for heart failure exacerbations.

They found that patients who were admitted for heart failure and who also had anemia were more likely to have worse outcomes, such as more frequent readmissions to the hospital or even death.

The medical students also looked at what risk factors could be associated with patients developing heart failure and anemia.

### **National Hispanic Medical Association names Dr. Minerva Romero Arenas as 2019 Young Physician of the Year**

Minerva Romero Arenas, MD, MPH, the director of the Medical Student Surgery Clerkship and assistant professor who specializes in endocrine surgery, has received the 2019 Young Physician of the Year Award from the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA).

This award goes to individuals who have made a significant contribution to Hispanic health through their continued work as young physicians of NHMA.

She is expected to receive her award at the 2019 NHMA 23rd Annual Conference in Arlington, Virginia, April 11-14.

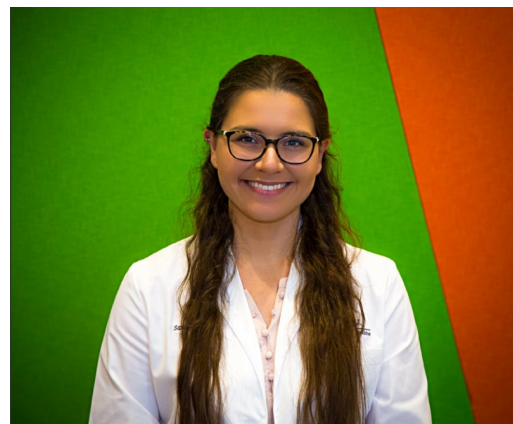


## **In the Spotlight**

### **Sarah Miller, Class of 2021**

Sarah Miller, a second-year medical student at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine, graduated from The University of Rhode Island with a Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology. Before coming to medical school, Sarah worked as an EMT in Fort Worth, Texas, and received her Master of Public Health in Global Health Epidemiology at the University of Michigan.

Though she has lived all over the country, Sarah considers Grapevine, Texas, her hometown. She currently serves as the Student Government Association Treasurer, a Student Ambassador, and the Immediate Past President of the Texas Medical Association/American Medical Association chapter.



Sarah's research interests include global health and the ways in which barriers to healthcare can be addressed in underserved communities both in the U.S. and abroad.

[Read more](#)

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## 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](#).

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

[UTRGV SOM Strategic Plan](#)

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[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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