

# Health Matters

*What Matters to Your Health, Matters to Us*

September 2020

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## Message from the Dean



As the new academic year unfolds, the UTRGV School of Medicine is committed to providing students, staff, and faculty with a safe learning and working environment.

We look forward to welcoming our first and second year students back on October 1 for both online and in-person instruction. The rest of our students are continuing with their clinical training out in the community.

UT Health RGV and the UTRGV School of Medicine are still working diligently to provide the Rio Grande Valley with COVID-19 resources as well.

We have maintained our testing capacities to service the residents of the Rio Grande Valley, in addition to successfully initiating contact tracing and antibody testing efforts. I am proud of our healthcare professionals and entire UT Health RGV team for working

around the clock, leading these response efforts in the community.

We would like to remind everyone of the potential dangers that may still be present in the time of Coronavirus. We encourage everyone to continue to stay vigilant, practice social distancing, and wear face masks to protect yourselves and those around you.

In addition to our front line efforts in combating the spread of COVID-19, the school of medicine has officially welcomed 55 new medical students for our class of 2024 and 5 new students to our new early assurance program, Vaqueros MD. We look forward to their journey with our institution.

We would also like to congratulate the School of Medicine's Healthy Families group on receiving the 2020 Team Excellence Award. The Healthy Families Project creates initiatives which address inequalities in prenatal care access and birth outcomes in Hidalgo County with the overarching goal of improving infant morbidity and mortality. We thank them for their dedication to this important work.

Furthermore, our UT Health RGV Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Michael Dobbs has been named the Vice Dean for Clinical Affairs. We thank Dr. Dobbs for his dedication and commitment to the university and the region it serves, especially during this pandemic.

Sincerely,

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

About the  
Dean

## News and Events

### UTRGV implements safety protocols and guidelines for fall 2020



As UTRGV starts the 2020-2021 academic year, the university wants its community to know it remains committed to their safety and success.

Based on CDC guidelines, UTRGV has made changes and implemented safety measures to protect everyone accessing the campuses. UTRGV continues to ask its Vaqueros to do their part to keep themselves and others healthy and safe.

Visit [utrgv.edu/commitment](http://utrgv.edu/commitment) to read more about the protocols and changes UTRGV has made.

[Watch Video Here](#)

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## **UTRGV Division of Health Affairs welcomes inaugural students to Early- Assurance Program**

The UTRGV's School of Medicine and College of Health Professions in partnership with the Honors College are welcoming their inaugural Early Assurance Program students (EAP) this summer.

Early in 2020, high-achieving incoming freshmen applied for one of the two new highly competitive EAP programs, Vaqueros MD and Physician Assistant Career Track (PACT). After a review and selection process, eleven students were selected for the inaugural cohorts.

[Read More Here](#)

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## **UTRGV School of Medicine matches with 55 students for Class of 2024**



The UTRGV School of Medicine has matched with 55 prospective students for its Class of 2024.

The new cohort is comprised of 53 Texas residents who have matched, including 27 students from the Rio Grande Valley, further strengthening ties to the community. Two candidates are from outside of Texas.

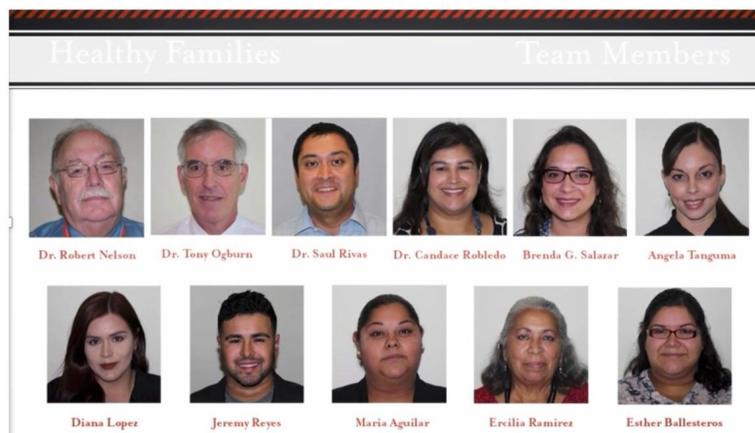
Of the 27 from the Valley, 15 are from Hidalgo County and 12 are from Cameron County. Of the 27 Valley students, 17 are from UTRGV.

Dr. John H. Krouse, dean of the UTRGV School of Medicine and executive vice president for the Division of Health Affairs, said the School of Medicine is continuing its commitment to educating top quality physicians, especially in these uncertain times.

“We are dedicated to training a diverse group of medical students who are passionate about treating and advocating for patients in underserved communities,” Krouse said. “I am confident that the Class of 2024 will bring pride to this institution, as they become the next generation of talented and dedicated providers serving the Valley and beyond.”

[Read More Here](#)

## School of Medicine's Healthy Families receives 2020 Team Excellence Award



During the 2020 UTRGV Employee Service Recognition Awards, The School of Medicine's Healthy Family members received the 2020 Team Excellence Award.

The Healthy Families Project creates initiatives which address inequalities in prenatal care access and birth outcomes in Hidalgo County with the overarching goal of improving infant morbidity and mortality.

This project is an example of the collaboration happening at the institution and the School of Medicine.

## Dr. Dobbs named Vice Dean for Clinical Affairs



Dr. Michael Dobbs, an internationally recognized neurologist and UTRGV neurology department chair, has been named Vice Dean for Clinical Affairs for the UTRGV School of Medicine.

Since coming to UTRGV in 2019, Dr. Dobbs says he has been inspired by what UT Health RGV and the School of Medicine mean for the region. “Our core missions of education, patient care, and research drive everything that I do,” he says. “Developed together, fulfillment of these mission areas will make the vision of full-spectrum advanced academic health care for the region into a reality that everyone can be proud of.”

Among his priorities is working with Mike Patriarca, executive vice-dean and executive director of UT Health RGV, to engage the clinical chairs in expanding clinical services and advancing the mission of our school to provide high-quality patient care across the Rio Grande Valley.

“The region has substantial gaps in advanced care, with ratios of key specialists per person at extremely low levels. This results in the unacceptable situation of many patients in the region having to travel far to seek care, or sometimes going without the care they need. We must strategically expand our practice to meet regional needs.”

We thank Dr. Dobbs for his dedication and commitment to the university and the region it serves, please join me in congratulating him in his role as Vice Dean for Clinical Affairs.

## SPOTLIGHT

# UTRGV School of Medicine SGA President, Sonia Wadekar

This month we would like to recognize Sonia Wadekar as our Student Spotlight. Sonia is a second year medical student originally from Plano, TX.

As a Texas Medical Association (TMA) delegate and Student Government Association President, she leads efforts that are intended to improve and impact the student experience at the School of Medicine.

While Sonia has not decided what she will specialize in she has interests in sports medicine and women's health.



# 2020-2021 TMA Leadership Appointments

**UTRGV**  
UT Health  
Rio Grande Valley  
School of Medicine

**2020-2021**  
TMA Leadership  
Appointments

Texas Medical  
Association

**Elif Duran, MS3**  
TEXPAC  
Board of Directors

**Shea-Lynn Hopson, MS4**  
Delegate, Committee on  
Child & Adolescent Health

**Sarah Miller, MS4**  
Chair of the TMA  
MSS Executive Council

**\* Rachael Turner, MS2**  
Alternate Delegate  
Committee on Maternal and  
Perinatal Health

**\* Rouzbeh Kotaki, MS4**  
Alternate Delegate  
Committee on Health  
Information and Technology

**Patrick Ojeaga, MS4**  
TEXPAC  
Executive Committee

**Jared Sperling, MS4**  
Delegate  
Committee on Cancer

\* Photos not available

We would like to congratulate our students that have been appointed for various leadership positions in the Texas Medical Association for the 2020-2021 year.

The UTRGV School of Medicine is proud of the dedication and commitment these students have demonstrated through these appointments and wish them the best of luck in their leadership roles.

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