

NOW LIVE!

The University of Texas System Health Biobank (UTSHB)

www.utsystem.edu/utshbc

*To request samples and/or data, or to become a
collaborative contributing investigator, contact:*

utshb@utsystem.edu



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Virtual biobank connects investigators across 8 University of Texas institutions

A new resource is now available to connect investigators across 8 UT Institutions. Through [The University of Texas System Health Biobank \(UTSHB\) Consortium](#), investigators can view information related to participants and biospecimens collected by participating investigators at member institutions. Once studies of interest are identified, investigators begin the request process through the UTSHB Consortium.

Major goals of the initiative are to enable sharing collection inventories, standardizing future biospecimens and data collection, and creating cost-effective and automated best-practices for biobank operations across all participating UTSHB Consortium institutions.

The new virtual biobank is an online platform connecting researchers with biospecimens and related data consented for sharing to other researchers seeking biospecimens and related data for use in their research. The biobank is restricted to institutions within UT System, including: UT Health Science Center - Health, UT Health Science Center - San Antonio, UT Southwestern Medical Center, UT Medical Branch - Galveston, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, UT Rio Grande Valley, UT Health Science Center – Tyler, UT Austin.

Key individuals involved in the initiative include Dr. Raymond Greenberg, original UT System sponsor, Dr. Eric Boerwinkle, Dr. Jennifer E. Sanner Beauchamp, Dr. Benjamin Greenberg, Dr. Robin Leach, Dr. Michael Laposata, Dr. Zhongming Zhao, Dr. Victor Prieto, Dr. Anna Kurdowska, and Dr. Andrew Tsin.

“The UTSHB network will speed scientific discovery and translation of these findings into patient care, and will make the research of UT faculty more competitive for grant funding,” said Ray Greenberg, M.D., Ph.D., former UT System executive vice chancellor for health affairs.

“This UT System-wide biobank is not only a great resource for biomedical researchers at the UTSHB institutions, but it positions Texas as a top leader in discovery research across the country,” Boerwinkle, Ph.D, Dean of the UTHealth School of Public Health, said. “Texas is a big state and a diverse state, so that the potential of this new initiative is enormous.”

“By transforming multiple local biobanks into a cohesive and consistent system, researchers will be able to conduct research using larger sample sizes and data sets,” Beauchamp said. “The end result will be improved research effectiveness and quality, and faster translation of discoveries to directly benefit patients.”

“This effort is not only about infrastructure, but also about *science*,” said Beauchamp, who is an Associate Professor in the Department of Research at the UTHealth Cizik School of Nursing. “By researchers more efficiently communicating and sharing biospecimens, related data and ideas, we can foster discoveries in translational science and ultimately provide patients with better management and treatment of common and rare diseases.”

Michael Laposata, M.D., Ph.D., Professor and Chairman of the Department of Pathology at UT Medical Branch, noted that the UTSHB initiative will help make samples from patients with even the rarest diseases available to multiple institutions.

“UTMB, for example, can build and share a sample collection of rare infectious diseases while expanding new areas of research excellence by using samples from diseases, such as cancer, that are collected largely from other UT institutions,” Laposata said.

The platform is open to all faculty, students, and staff at participating UT institutions, with the expectation it will be most useful to faculty and graduate students.

Other resources available through the UTSHB Consortium include:

- Standard operating procedures for collecting / processing various biospecimens
- Common Data Elements definition as used in the UTSHB Consortium
- A template for setting up studies in REDCap to use the UTSHB Consortium Common Data Elements
- Informed consent language to support sharing
- Information on setting up and using electronic informed consent
- Universal material / data transfer agreements for use across all UT institutions
- Training material and information related to training options

Researchers can access The University of Texas System Health Biobank at the [UTSHB Consortium website](https://www.utsystem.edu/utshbc) (<https://www.utsystem.edu/utshbc>) or contact utshb@utsystem.edu for more information.