



Scoop

July 12, 2002

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

July

12 Today. Minority Faculty Association Student Affairs Committee Meeting, noon, Dental Branch, Rm. 139. Call 713-500-4134.

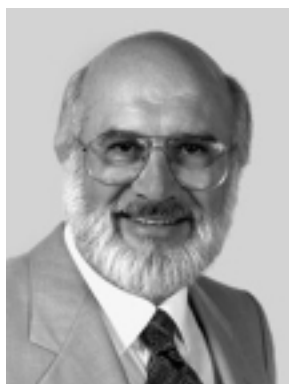
17 Clinical Research Curriculum Scientific Writing Workshop, "Grants: Kinds, Peer Review Process, Abstract, and Specific Aims," presented by M. D. Anderson's **Dr. Maureen Goode** and **Walter Pagel**, 6:30 p.m., MSB 2.135.

UTMost Interest

Dr. John H. Byrne, chairman, Neurobiology and Anatomy, has been invited to present at a symposium about 5-HT systems and memory at the VTH IUPHAR Satellite Meeting on Serotonin in Mexico in July. Also in July, he will be serving as chair of a review committee for the Riken Brain Science Institute in Japan. Byrne was recently quoted in *Science* magazine (May 31 issue) regarding reward learning and brain cell changes...Houston's "**Mattress Mac**" **McIngvale** donated \$150,000 to Memorial Hermann Hospital's President Bush Center for Cardiovascular Health, for restoration purposes, due to Tropical Storm Allison damage last summer...**The office of Dr. Gilbert A. Castro**, interim executive vice president for Academic Affairs, in the name of UT-Houston Medical School, contributed \$5,000 towards the "Inside Out: The Visible Human" exhibit at the Museum of Health and Medical Science...**Dr. Yong J. Geng**, Internal Medicine/Cardiology, recently spoke at the XIIIth International Vascular Biology meeting in Karuizawa, Japan; at lectures at Yokohama City University, Yokohama; and at the First Affiliated Hospital of Soochow University in Suzhou, China (his alma mater). In addition, he spoke at several institutions in Beijing, China, on vascular biology research and cardiac stem cell transplantation.

FUENTES AWARDED GOLD MEDAL BY MURCIA, SPAIN PRESIDENT

The president of the Murcia Regional Government in Spain presented a gold medal this summer to **Dr. Francisco Fuentes**, professor of medicine at UT-Houston Medical School, to recognize his contributions to the prevention, treatment, and understanding of heart disease.



Dr. Francisco Fuentes

Fuentes, who was born in Murcia and earned his medical degree from the University of Valencia School of Medicine in Spain, accepted the award during a region celebration hosted by Ramon Luis Valcarcel Siso.

"It is a great honor to receive this award, and I accepted it on behalf of all the people who have supported my professional and academic work," Fuentes said. "This award shows that it truly is possible to achieve your dream."

Fuentes, the Theodore R. and Maureen O'Driscoll-Levy Professor in Cardiology Research, specializes in general and preventive cardiology. His patients include numerous men and women who travel each year from his native land to the Texas Medical Center

for cardiac care.

A longtime educator and public health advocate, Fuentes currently is researching whether arteries are best unclogged by medicine alone or in tandem with surgical or catheter-based interventions for patients with diabetes and coronary artery disease.

Fuentes also leads the Houston Heart Health project, an extensive effort to assess specific cardiovascular disease risk factors in each of Houston's 88 neighborhoods.

- M. R.-Middleton

SCHOOL IS SITE FOR DIABETES AND HEART DISEASE STUDY

UT-Houston Medical School is one of 42 sites chosen for a multi-center, randomized trial, known as BARI 2D, on how to improve diabetes and heart disease outcomes for patients. "Atherosclerosis develops more quickly and tends to be more severe in those with diabetes. And we don't have a well-established protocol for treating them," **Dr. Francisco Fuentes**, Cardiology, said. Type II diabetes mellitus is one of the most significant risk factors for coronary artery disease and consequent mortality. To find out how to participate, call 713-500-6090.

NEW TMC LIBRARY ONLINE CATALOG SYSTEM COMING

In late July, the Texas Health Science Libraries Consortium (THSLC) will implement the Voyager online catalog system developed by the Endeavor Corporation. This initiative will include replacement of the 10-year-old online catalog and circulation system. THSLC includes the Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library, the UT-H Public Health, Dental, and Psychiatry Libraries, the Research Medical Library of the UT M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, and the Moody Medical Library at the UT Medical Branch in Galveston. Online catalog searchers will be to perform keyword searching with results ranked by relevancy; browse collections by topic or call number; sort items; and easily print, download, and e-mail search results.



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UCP ROLLS OUT NEW INITIATIVES TO PRODUCE “IDEAL EXPERIENCE”

“The Ideal Patient Experience” — that’s the name and the goal of a new customer-service initiative by University Care Plus for the UT Physician Offices.

“The Ideal Patient Experience involves a patient knowing where they are going and what to expect, encountering a friendly and knowledgeable front office staff, and coming to expect the same level of high service in any one of our offices,” explained **Melinda Gerukos**, physician office administrator and co-team leader of the project with **Lorie Medlenka**.



An 18-member team, comprised of employees from across all areas of UCP, convened in December for the kick-off under the direction of **Duke Rohe**, a consultant from M. D. Anderson. After six months of planning and research, the first round of new policies and procedures will be implemented in all UT Physician Offices by August 2002.

The team first did fact finding across the offices, which included questionnaires and the creation of office flow charts, which track patients as they move through the system. The team also surveyed patients through a Hertzberg Survey, asking for the most frustrating aspects of their office visit. Quarterly patient satisfaction surveys also were taken into account.

From this research, the group prioritized major issues to tackle, including internal communication, lobby wait time, unprepared patients, the referral process, and claims.

To address internal communication, UCP’s intranet will be strengthened. “We’ll also do a pre- and post-survey of our employees regarding internal communication to make sure we’re meeting our goals,” said team member **Angelica Lozano**.

To ameliorate the problem of patient wait time, puzzles, television health news, magazines, and music will be introduced into UCP waiting rooms. Although these “lobby occupiers” will not reduce the wait time, they will improve the patients’ perception. Frequent communication with the patient regarding wait time and options available also will help with this problem. Strategies for reducing patient wait times are a high priority, says **Brandy Chandler**, a member of the Customer Service Subcommittee.



“Unprepared patients refers to those patients who arrive for their appointment without essential documentation, such as X-rays, and patients who are not familiar with our location and parking,” Chandler explained.

To assist such patients, the Office of Neurosurgery sends out new patient packets, which tell patient about their appointment, their physician, what they need to bring to their visit, and parking and traffic information.

“As a result of these packets, the patients are better educated, and it cuts down on phone calls to the office,” Chandler said, adding that all offices will implement the new patient packets and reminder calls to patients by the end of August.

To address internal systems, such as claims and referrals, a new referral process with the new Health Directions management consultants is under way and a “Did you know?” campaign aimed at employees will ensure claims are complete. UCP is using some creative educational techniques, such as skits, to help employees understand the importance of “clean claims,” said **Sandra Jeffries**, of the Systems and Processes Subcommittee.

The implementation of these new procedures in August is just the beginning of this project. The team will meet continually to improve processes and create “The Ideal Patient Experience.”

“This will be ongoing forever because there is always so much you can do to improve,” Gerukos said. - **D. Brown**