



# Scoop

May 2, 2003

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

## Events to Know

### May

**5 Dr. Richard Behringer**, "Molecular Genetics of Mammalian Urogenital Development," 11:45 a.m., MSB 2.135.

**6 Internal Medicine Grand Rounds**, Dr. Francois Abboud, "Neurocardiovascular Dysregulation in Syncope and Heart Failure," noon, MSB 2.103.

**22 Annual Faculty Meeting**, 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m., MSB 2.006. Lunch available at 11:30 a.m. The meeting will be telecast to the LBJ/Annex Auditorium, Room 217, and will be available on the Web following the meeting. **Agenda:** Introduction and welcome, **Dean Max Buja**; Faculty Senate Report, **Dr. David Loose-Mitchell**; Clinical Affairs Report, **Dr. Richard Andrassy**; State of the School and Thoughts for the Future, **Dean Max Buja**; Questions and Answers and Comments.

## UTMost Interest

**Dr. James Ferrendelli**, chairman, Dept. of Neurology, has received the William G. Lennox Award, established in 1966, which recognizes members of the American Epilepsy Society who have a record of lifetime contributions and accomplishments related to epilepsy. Ferrendelli has been an active member of the American Epilepsy Society since 1976, serving as council member, secretary, and president...**Dr. John D. Milam**, professor emeritus, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, received the Harlen J. Spjut Award, presented to him on April 26 by the Houston Society of Clinical Pathologists. The Spjut Award, founded in 1948, is annually given in recognition of scholarly activities, teaching, leadership, patient care, and service to pathology. **Dean Max Buja**, **Dr. Harvey Rosenberg**, and **Dr. Regina Verani** are among past recipients.

## CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

**Dean's Message:** Throughout the month of May and into June, watch Scoop for a series of articles highlighting teaching excellence at the Medical School. First and foremost we are a medical school with an educational mission that demands excellence in teaching. Each week in Scoop you will find an article about that excellence, as we have no shortage of outstanding teachers among our ranks. Like excellence in clinical care and research, excellence in education must and will be recognized with career path and compensation rewards for those identified as tops in what they do.



Dean Max Buja

Special recognition for the John H. Freeman Award, the John P. McGovern Award, the Benjy Brooks Award, the Faculty Humanism in Medicine Award, and the Dupont Master Clinical Teaching Award will be made, which are all key components of our overall teaching recognition program. In addition, faculty have been recognized for the Dean's Teaching Excellence Award. Take a minute each week to review these significant faculty awards and this year's recipients. Our commencement on **June 7** as well as our Annual Faculty meeting on **May 22** will further recognize these individuals along with various receptions and special events planned throughout May and June.

## HERZOG APPOINTED TIRR EXECVP AND COO

**Jean Herzog, Ph.D.**, recently was promoted to executive vice president and chief operating officer, The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research (TIRR). Herzog has a background as a speech-language pathologist and has been with TIRR 14 years. In 1989, she established the speech-language pathology department. "Jean's leadership has been valuable to TIRR in responding to the influence of Medicare, managed care, and legislation within the health-care environment, their effects on service delivery and clinical outcomes," **Charles Beall**, president, TIRR, stated.



Dr. Jean Herzog

## CASTRO NAMED SPACE FLIGHT ADVISER

**Gilbert A. Castro, Ph.D.**, interim executive vice president for research and academic affairs and professor of integrative biology and pharmacology, has been named to the External Advisory Council for the National Space Biomedical Research Institute (NSBRI). The NSBRI, funded by NASA, is a consortium of institutions studying the health risks related to long-duration space flight. The Institute's External Advisory Council is composed of leaders in research fields central to the Institute's mission and advises management on strategic issues and programmatic effectiveness. - D. Bates



Dr. Gilbert Castro



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## PRACTICE PLAN RECEIVES STATUS REPORT

Charges are up, collections are improving, yet the Medical School's faculty practice plan continued to show a deficit for the first seven months of 2003. This was the perplexing predicament presented at the Medical Service Research Development (MSRDP) Board of Directors meeting April 23.

The loss is attributed to both a change in payer mix and expenses outpacing revenue since expenses are at budget but projected revenues are under budget, according to **Kevin Dillon**, UT-Houston chief financial officer.

The practice plan, which includes MSRDP and University Care Plus (UCP), recorded **\$173.1 million** in gross charges for September – March fiscal year 2003 compared to **\$165.9 million** in gross charges for the same time period in fiscal year 2002.

Dillon said the net collection rate (net collections divided by gross charges less contractual adjustments, unsponsored charity care, and other unreimbursed medical costs) has improved to a rate of 83.4 percent compared to 82.9 percent for the first seven months of fiscal year 2002. The net collection rate for the entire fiscal year 2002 was 83.7 percent, up from 78.6 percent for fiscal year 2001.

Although the practice plan is posting a **\$7.6 million** deficit for the first seven months of fiscal year 2003, a final loss of **\$3 million** for the practice plan for fiscal year 2003 is what Dillon said he is projecting given the ongoing efforts to improve collections and reduce expenses and the historically greater collections in the last quarter of each year plus the anticipated professional liability insurance rebate.

The leadership of the School is working on a plan to reduce this deficit by not only emphasizing timely charge capture into the IDX System but also reductions in MSRDP expenditures by a variety of means, including reallocation of costs, as appropriate, to non-MSRDP fund sources.

About **75 percent** of the plan's patients come through Memorial Hermann Hospital and the UT-Houston Physicians Offices. The remainder of the patients is from Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital and its associated clinics. Net collections are typically lower from the patients seen in the Harris County Hospital District.

**Carol Alexander**, of Health Directions, Inc., who manages Physician Business Services, explained how the payor mix has changed.

"There was a 7 percent increase in charges for LBJ patients for

the first seven months of fiscal year 2003 compared to the same timeframe in fiscal year 2002. And there has been a 3 percent decrease in charges to Memorial Hermann Hospital patients this year compared to last year," she said.

**Dr. Carlos Hamilton**, executive vice president for clinical affairs, who chaired the meeting, stated that the plan could increase revenues by seeing more patients, improving the patient mix, and getting access to income from ancillary services. In this latter regard, a new joint venture with Memorial Hermann Health Care System will help.

**Dr. Richard Andrassy**, associate dean for clinical operations, reported planned location changes for some of the UT-Houston Physician Offices. The Sugar Land branch of UT-Houston Physicians is scheduled to close by May 30, 2003. The otolaryngology office there is expected to move to the Yorktown office or the Hermann Professional Building, pediatric plastic surgery is scheduled to move to the Hermann Professional Building, and the dermatology office in Sugar Land is slated to move to the Houston Medical Center.

Otolaryngology's St. Joseph's office is expected to close by June 1, 2003 and will relocate to the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the Hermann Professional Building. Orthopaedic surgery is planning expansions into Fort Bend and Pearland, he added.

Andrassy stressed that the Yorktown office is remodeled and has space available for clinicians. Presently bariatrics, minimally invasive surgery, family practice, internal medicine, dermatology, and obstetrics/gynecology all see patients at this location.

Regarding the Memorial Hermann Health Care System and UCP joint venture, the joint venture board is working to meet the following targets of opening an ambulatory surgery center at Symbion-Greenpark in June 2003 and opening an imaging center at UCT later in the summer, Andrassy reported.

"We must attract patients to these new sites for these joint ventures to be successful," Andrassy said.

MSRDP is the "trust fund" for the university's clinical services and its board members are the Medical School's department chairmen and at-large members, who are elected by the faculty. UCP is the business arm of the practice plan. The MSRDP Board of Directors will meet again in **July**. — *D. Brown*

## iFEST NOTE



Sun., April 27, the Rosa del Carmen band from Mexico entertained the crowd in front of the Latin Stage, downtown Houston, at the Houston International Festival.

For more information on the festival, see <<http://www.iFEST.org>>.

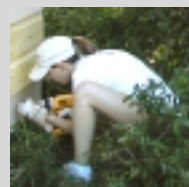
Representatives of UT-Houston will be in two areas of the Houston International Festival, celebrating Mexico, **May 3 and 4**,

## UT-HOUSE MEDICS 2003 IN ACTION

**Cassie Mannin** and "CiCi" her dog were celebrating her 68th birthday Sat., April 26, when the UT-House Medics crew showed up to do repair work on her house.

"This is the best birthday present!" she said.

UT-House Medics will be up and at 'em bright and early Sat., **May 3**, to complete their "house" calls.



**Shelly Babin fastens in a bolt.**



**Matt Sailors (l.) and Tracy Byerly replace outside panels.**



**Tracy Byerly and Rhonda Sailors diligently focus on their tasks.**

photos - C. O'Brien