



Scoop

Nov. 14, 2003

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

November

- 14 Today, Research Day**, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Hornberger Conference Center.
- 19 Dean's Lecture Series, Dr. Victor McKusick**, speaker, 4 p.m., MSB 3.001.
- 20 Integrative Medicine, Dr. Victor Sierpina**, noon, on supplement interactions with cancer therapy, Hickey auditorium, R11.1400. Lunch provided.

December

- 3-6 Student Scholarship Holiday BookFair**, 9 a.m.-11 p.m., Barnes & Noble, 3003 West Holcombe Blvd., at Buffalo Speedway.
- 4 Annual Arts and Crafts Fair**, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Fifth Floor Gallery. Call 713-500-5505 or 713-500-6513.
- 5 Neurology Grand Rounds**, noon, **Dr. Richard Dewey**, speaker, on cervical and cranial dystonia, MSB 2.135.

UTMost Interest

Drs. Mohammad Madjid and **Ward Casscells** were in the news (*Houston Chronicle*, 11/11/03), espousing the benefits of flu shots, including their use as a preventative to ward off heart attacks and strokes. A growing body of research indicates that flu shots can reduce heart attack risk by 50-67 percent. Other studies show flu shots may cut stroke risk in half....Effective Nov. 1, **Theresa Le** became interim DMO for the Department of Anesthesiology and **Michael Bridgett** became interim DMO for the Department of Psychiatry. These actions relieve **Jeff Reinhart** and **Karen Jones** of a portion of their multiple department responsibilities...**Dr. L. Scott Rodkey**, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, will be elected to a seat on the Council of the American Electrophoresis Society Nov. 17 in San Francisco.

NOTE - Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, *Scoop* will not be published Fri., **Nov. 28**.

PRACTICE PLAN POSTS PROFITS, CLOSES FY03 WITH SLIGHT LOSS

Bucking a trend and setting a record, the Medical School's practice plan posted healthy numbers for the months of September and October of 2003. The practice plan, which includes Medical Service Research Development (MSRDP) and UT Physicians (formerly University Care Plus), posted more than \$9 million in gross patient revenues for the month of October – the highest monthly dollar amount ever.

"It's a wonderful start to the fiscal year," **Dr. James T. Willerson**, president of the UT Health Science Center at Houston and chairman of the MSRDP Board, told board of director members at their Nov. 5 meeting. "You all should be very proud of what you have accomplished."

(Continued on back page)

GIBSON ELECTED FELLOW IN ANTHROPOLOGY BY AAAS

Dr. Kathleen Gibson, professor, Neurology and Anatomy, and the UT Dental Branch at Houston Department of Orthodontics, has been recognized by her peers, who have elected her as fellow on



Dr. Kathleen Gibson

the Anthropology Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, citing her "distinguished contributions pertaining to evolution of the brain and cognition and to the field of developmental neurobiology in higher primates."

"It is deeply gratifying to be recognized by the AAAS, which I view as our nation's premier scientific society in terms of its recognition and dissemination of research findings across the breadth of the entire scientific spectrum," Gibson said.

"It's a great honor to be elected an AAAS fellow and well deserved for Dr. Gibson, who is a very distinguished figure in the field of brain evolution," said **John H. Byrne, Ph.D.**, chairman of the Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy. Gibson is the fifth member of the current health science center faculty to be elected an AAAS fellow. Her research centers on a basic, if complex and difficult, question: What is the nature of the human mind and how did it evolve?

- S. Merville

UT MEDICAL STUDENTS -TURNED ELVES FOR THE DAY - DELIVER

The student chapter of the American Medical Women's Association, and the Pediatric Student Association assembled in the older section of the Cullen wing of Memorial Hermann Hospital Nov. 6 to -- sew Christmas stockings! About 100 first- and second-year UT medical students gathered and, like busy elves, stitched over 150 holiday stockings. Each December baby will go home with the parents in a red Christmas stocking made by a UT Houston medical student. Said **Dr. Elizabeth Hartwell**, the histology course director for the first-year medical students, "They really enjoy giving back to patients; they get service credit for the project, and besides, it's great practice for future suturing needs!" The Memorial Hermann Volunteer Board helped sponsor the project.



Student elves at work.



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HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON
MEDICAL SCHOOL

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PRACTICE PLAN POSTS PROFITS, CONTINUED

Kevin Dillon, executive vice president for finance and business affairs, said that it is “unusual and encouraging to have a positive September and October.” During these first two months of fiscal year 2004, gross charges and gross collections are up over last year’s numbers. UT Physicians made half a million dollars in profit in the month of September, he added.

Dillon said he attributed this upward trend to a staff reduction, more conservative revenue projections, spending at a more sustainable level, better collection rates, and an increase in the fee schedule.

Outsourcing all billing and collections is being considered, and there are three vendors who are finalists for the job, Dillon added.

The practice plan (MSRDP and UT Physicians combined) ended fiscal year 2003 with a net loss of \$.6 million. Fiscal year 2002 ended with a net loss of \$2.2 million.

Dr. Richard Andrassy, executive vice president for clinical affairs and associate dean for clinical affairs, said that he has been evaluating all of the plan’s business ventures on a quarterly basis and added that noninvasive cardiology is now profitable.

“Bariatrics is very profitable,” Andrassy said. “There is a long waiting list to get in, and we’re trying to recruit another surgeon.”

The ambulatory surgery center at Symbion-Greenpark is up and running and new specialties, including otolaryngology, pediatric anesthesia, and endoscopy, are coming on board soon. Three dialysis centers around the Houston area, in which we will be financial and medical participants, also will open in the next few months.

Due to the estimated \$8 million to \$10 million loss in waiting for faculty members to be credentialed before they can begin practicing in the plan, Andrassy said MSRDP is looking into centralizing the credentialing process.

Willerson talked about building plans and announced that the new School of Nursing facility is nearing completion, with dedication ceremonies scheduled for April 2004, and that the construction of the Institute of Molecular Medicine for the Prevention of Human Diseases (IMM) building is under way. \$140 million of the \$200 million goal has been raised for the IMM, he said, and \$15 million for the project will come from tuition revenue bonds recently granted by the Legislature to replace research and academic space lost in Tropical Storm Allison. Willerson stated that some Medical School faculty will work in the IMM building.

Two sets of tuition revenue bonds were allocated to the Health Science Center. House Bill 1941, by State Rep. Beverly Woolley of Houston, authorizes the UT System Board of Regents to issue \$34.9 million in tuition revenue bonds to help pay for infrastructure repairs to restore the Medical School, plus bringing the building up to fire and safety codes. An additional \$30 million in House Bill 1941 goes for rebuilding about 75,000 gross square feet of lost research laboratories and academic space in different and safer locations. The remaining \$15 million of this second set of tuition revenue bonds will be designated to partially fund a new research building for the Medical School, Willerson said.

Regarding a new ambulatory care building, Willerson said that several site options are being evaluated and a final decision should come at the end of November.

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. UT Physicians is the business arm of the practice plan. The MSRDP Board of Directors will hold its annual meeting, which is open to the entire MSRDP membership, Jan. 28, in MSB 3.001. - D. Brown

SUPPORTING MEDICAL SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS

The Second Annual Scholarship luncheon honoring donors and student recipients took place Thurs., Nov. 6 at the Warwick Hotel.

“I feel honored to have received a scholarship and am very appreciative to have financial help at this time when interviews are coming,” said **Erica Allyson Roberts**, an MS IV. And **Saul Torres**, an MS I, said, “To me this scholarship means that someone cares about what I am doing here.”

Interim Dean Stanley



Scholarship winner **Manuel Reyes**, MS III, spoke on what winning a scholarship meant to him.

Dr. Margaret McNeese recognized the 73 scholarship recipients, and **Lynn Cutrer** presented each recipient with a certificate.



Students and donors gathered for photos after the luncheon.



- photos, C. O'Brien



Scholarship winner **Uyen Hoang**, MS I, accepts her honor.

Schultz gave opening remarks, and former **Dean John C. Ribble, M.D.**, gave a humorous and historical look back at the nature of scholarship giving. Scholarship donors **Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dierks** gave an overview of how their scholarship program got started years ago.