



Scoop

May 14, 2004

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

May

- 14 Alliance for NanoHealth Workshop**, 2 p.m., Call 713-500-6545.
- 16 Run for the Rose**. Visit <<http://www.runfortherose.com>>.
- 17 Yogafit classes starting**, 5:30 p.m., Mon. & Wed. Call 713-500-5044.
- 17 Weight Watchers Series**, noon, JFB G.734. Call 713-500-3325.
- 20 Transfusion Medicine talk**, Dr. Harold S. Kaplan, noon. For information call 713-791-6201.
- 30 Commencement**, 1 p.m., Assembly Hall, George R. Brown Convention Center.

PRACTICE PLAN ON PACE TO POST PROFIT FOR YEAR

With a \$1.2 million net profit in the last seven months, the Medical School practice plan has made tremendous improvement, overcoming a \$7.6 million net loss for this same time period last year.

"I want to congratulate all of the clinical faculty and staff who have contributed to this great turnaround," **Dr. James Willerson**, president of the UT Health Science Center, told the audience at the Medical Service, Research and Development Plan (MSRDP) Board of Directors meeting April 28. "I think we've only just scratched the surface."

For the first seven months of fiscal year 2004, net patient revenues of the Medical School practice plan, which includes MSRDP and UT Physicians, had an increase of 13 percent over this same time period last fiscal year.

Per-Se Technologies, which was contracted to provide physician billing and collection services, started its work with the practice plan in February, initially working to reduce the backlog in collections. More than \$10 million in gross charges were collected in March 2004.

"I think some of what we are seeing in the March number is improvement in collection from this backlog, and we should see improvement for a couple of months," said **Dr. Thomas Clanton**, who chairs the billing operations committee.

In addition, Per-Se is hiring account managers to work directly with clinical department chairs to clarify the billing and collection process at the department level.

With this rate of improvement, the practice plan is on track to post at least a \$1 million positive margin by the end of the fiscal year, said **Kevin Dillon**, health science center executive vice president for finance and business affairs. "Higher physician production, better billing and collections — with Per-Se's help — and improved expense management have been the keys to

(Continued on back page)

MAUK APPOINTED TO ENDOWED POSITION

Dr. Michael Mauk, professor, Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy, was appointed the holder of the William M. Wheless, III Professorship in the Biomedical Sciences. Mauk was nominated by Interim Dean **Stanley Schultz** and endorsed by his peers. "The appointment attests to your dedication and outstanding service to UTHSC-H and the Medical School, as well as your personal research and academic accomplishments," said **Dr. James T. Willerson**, president of the UT Health Science Center.

Mauk's research explores understanding of how the cerebellum processes information and he uses computer simulations of the cerebellum in his efforts. Injuries to the cerebellum are expressed as movement disorders. Mauk received his doctorate in psychology from Stanford University, has received many honors, awards, grants and fellowships, and has been with the Medical School since 1988. His two current research grants are "Cerebellar mechanisms of motor learning" and "Computational analysis of cerebellar motor learning."



Dr. Michael Mauk

UTMost Interest

Five UT health-care institutions, in collaboration with Texas A&M University's National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center, and with the American Medical Association, have begun training nearly 20,000 state health providers for possible bioterrorism attacks with federal funding of \$3.6M for the two-year effort.

UT-HOUSTON MEDICINE IS OUT



The Spring Edition of *UT-Houston Medicine* magazine, "Medical Education/Teaching At Its Best," is now out. Features include plans for a new six-story building, a new humanities center, outreach

and hypothermia applications. For copies, call 713-500-5109.



THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON
MEDICAL SCHOOL

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Celebrating Teaching Excellence

HUMANISM IN MEDICINE AWARD – DR. VIRGINIA MOYER

Virginia A. Moyer, M.D., M.P.H., is the 2004 recipient of the Humanism in Medicine Award, sponsored by the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey.



Dr. Virginia Moyer

The award honors faculty who are exemplary in their compassion and sensitivity in the delivery of care to patients and their families, in addition to administering scientifically excellent clinical care.

“In my 35 years as a physician, I have never worked with anyone who better meets the criteria for the Humanism in Medicine Award,” wrote her nominator.

“I’m extremely honored to have received the award,” Moyer said. “It’s wonderful to be recognized for what you aspire to do.”

Moyer is a professor in the Departments of Pediatrics and Internal Medicine. She also is associate director of the Center for Clinical Research and Evidence-Based Medicine and the director of Community and General Pediatrics at Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital. Additionally, she holds the position of adjunct associate professor management and policy sciences at the School of Public Health.

“I love taking care of patients and teaching students – it’s really fun,” she said. “I try to teach them how to find out what’s going on with their patients – that beyond the signs and symptoms, there’s a way to elicit information that is nonthreatening and engenders trust so that the patient feels comfortable asking questions, and we can develop a plan that the patient is likely to follow.”

Moyer said evidence-based medicine teaches future physicians that staying on top of the latest research is not enough. “When you apply information from research to patient care, you have to understand the patient’s values and circumstances and be thoughtful about how you apply the information to the individual,” she explained.

Moyer received her medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine and her master’s of public health degree from the UT School of Public Health.

She has received numerous honors and awards, including the Dean’s Teaching Excellence Award four times and was voted outstanding teacher in pediatrics by the graduating class four times and by the residents twice. She also is the recipient of a master teacher award and was named “best role model” by the residents in 2003. She has served in several editorial positions and is presently editor in chief of *Current Problems in Pediatrics* and is on the editorial board of *Pediatrics* and *AAP Grand Rounds*. She is well represented on local, national, and international committees.

The previous recipients of the Humanism in Medicine Award are **Drs. Oscar Rosales, Phil Johnson, John R. Stroehlein, Philip R. Orlander, and Cheves Smythe.**

- D. Brown

PRACTICE PLAN, CONTINUED

this turnaround,” Dillion added.

Dr. Carlos Moreno, vice chair of the clinical operations committee, spoke of initiatives the practice plan is undertaking to improve patient relations, including the possibility of improving patient parking through the use of Metro tokens or garage subsidies and conducting a patient satisfaction survey.

Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer **Michael McKinney** said the plans to purchase the Hermann Professional Building are still on track, with the proposal to go before the UT System Board of Regents in May. He said he expects the purchase to close by Sept. 1.

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.

- D. Brown

ADOPT A STUDENT CAMPAIGN

For as little as \$1 or as much as \$20 per paycheck, employees can provide an important source of scholarship funding for students.

University employees or children of employees are eligible to apply for the scholarships and will be given special consideration once they have met the academic requirements for entering their program of study and can document financial need. Contact **Ginny Solt**, director of Annual Giving at 713-500-3257.

Gifts from all six schools to the 2003 campaign totaled \$13,077, and as a result, six new scholarships will be awarded in August 2004. Now in its third year, the Medical School has set a goal of \$5,000 for the 2004 campaign, which would provide the opportunity to award two \$2,500 scholarships in 2005.



IT IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS



Bassel Chouchair, Medical School Information Technology, greets visitors to his department’s open house May 7 in its new locale at MSB G.500.



(L. to R.), Major General **Lester Martinez-Lopez, M.D.**, **S. Ward Casscells, M.D.**, and **Ronald S. Weinstein, M.D.**

THURMAN AWARD GRANTED

Dr. S. Ward Casscells, the John Edward Tyson Distinguished Professor of Medicine and vice president for biotechnology, received the 2004 General Maxwell Thurman Award for his work in the use of advanced technologies to improve emergency medical care during an American Telemedicine Association meeting May 4.