



Scoop

Aug. 12, 2005

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

August

- 12 New Student Retreat** Camp Allen
- 16 Clinical Research Billing Program Training.** 11:30 a.m. MSB B.610. To sign up (and reserve lunch), call 713-500-3524.
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September

- 5 Labor Day Holiday**
- 8-9 Grants 101 New Investigator Development Program.** 8 a.m. - noon, MSB B.100. Details: 713-500-4218
- 9 Blood Drive to Honor Victims of Sept. 11.** 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Medical School Leather Lounge.
- 13 Deadline to register for Baylor's Medical Terminology, Anatomy and Physiology Course.** Course runs Sept. 20-Nov. 15. The cost on or before Sept. 13 is \$125. Details: <http://www.hcoa.org/medterm>
- 14 Deadline for hotel registration for Conference on Innovations in Medical Education: Physician Competencies and Professionalism.** Conference to be held Oct. 6-7 in Austin. Details: www.utsystem.edu/hea/symposiumoct2005

UT Most Interest

Chirag Patel, third-year M.D./Ph.D. student, has been named one of The Texas Jaycees' Five Outstanding Young Texans. He will receive the award Aug. 13 in Austin.



AAALAC RECOMMENDS 3-YEAR ACCREDITATION FOR FACILITIES

Representatives from the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International are recommending that the health science center's laboratory animal care facilities and programs receive full accreditation for another three years.

"This is a true reflection of the hard work and dedication of the staff at the Center for Laboratory Animal Medicine and Care," said **Bradford S. Goodwin, Jr., DVM**, the center's executive director. "No program can succeed at this level without the teamwork of each and every CLAMC employee."

The recommendation for renewed full accreditation is based on the findings of two auditors who conducted a four-day site visit in July.

"We found institutional support and virtually all areas of animal care to be exemplary," said **William King, DVM, Ph.D.**, an AAALAC council member from the University of Louisville. "What you do is extremely important. None of the good research would be possible without your conscientious work."

In addition to the institutional support of the laboratory animal care facilities and programs, *(Cont'd. on back)*



Dr. Goodwin shows off state-of-the-art rodent cages.

DILLON: PRACTICE PLAN EXPECTED TO BREAK EVEN FOR FY05

With increasing charges and collection rates, the Medical School's practice plan is on pace to break even at the end of the fiscal year, according to **Kevin Dillon**, health science center executive vice president for finance and business affairs.

A slight increase in net charges over the last fiscal year has resulted in a 6 percent increase in net patient revenue and 4 percent increase in the net collection rate (net patient revenue/net charges) in the last 10 months of the Medical School's practice plan, Dillon reported at the July 27 meeting of the Medical Service, Research and Development Board meeting.

Despite these increases, the plan is posting a net loss of close to \$1 million through June due mainly to an increase in charity care, which has increased from \$112.2M in fiscal year 2004 to \$139.2M so far in fiscal year 2005. The Gulf State Hemophilia Program, which is now included in MSRDP, posted a \$400,000 loss, which has contributed to the plan's overall negative balance.

"We have been making some changes in the hemophilia program and have made some profits in that program in the last couple of months," Dillon said.

In addition, the practice plan is not expecting a physician liability insurance rebate from UT System this year, which it has seen in years past.

"We anticipate the practice plan will approximately break even for FY05 without professional *(Cont'd. on back)*



THE UNIVERSITY
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MEDICAL SCHOOL
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ELDERS ADDRESSES AMSA MEETING

Former U.S. Surgeon General **M. Joycelyn Elders, M.D.**, visited the health science center July 27 to deliver the keynote address at the "Achieving Diversity in Dentistry and Medicine Leadership Training" event of the American Medical Student Association's (AMSA) annual conference, held this year at the Dental Branch.

Elders spoke of the importance of educating students about community health needs, including recognizing cultural differences and health-care disparities.

Elders also discussed recent problems with prescription drugs such as Vioxx, saying, "The Food and Drug Administration may not be perfect and may not have the funding it needs, but it's the best agency of its kind in the world." She added that most drugs are tested in a controlled environment, and that it follows that when they are released to the general population, the possibility for more reactions and side effects always exists. "There's no such thing as a drug without side effects," she added. "Even water has side effects, if you ingest too much of it."

Nominated by **President Clinton** in 1993 for the position of surgeon general, Elders was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in September of that year. She became a controversial and well-known personality during her tenure for her positions on sex education and universal health-care coverage, among others. She continues to be a strong supporter of universal health-care coverage and believes the medical community has not been a good leader in the health-care debate. "We've lacked a strong voice who can communicate effectively to people, without partisanship, that the health-care crisis in this country is terrible, and worsens every day."

-S. Rasp



Dr. Willerson thanks Dr. Elders for her talk.

MSRDP meeting, cont'd.

liability insurance rebates," Dillon said.

In other news, **Dr. Jeffrey Katz**, medical director of UT Physicians, gave an update on UT Imaging, a new venture on the South Loop near Bellaire that will feature the latest and highest quality in MRI, CT, ultrasound, X-ray, and Dexa scanning. The 10,000 square feet of leased space for imaging will feature reserved patient parking and is expected to open Jan. 1.

Katz said the DaVita Dialysis joint venture, in which UT Physicians has a 60 percent share in the two dialysis centers in Houston, is going well. Total treatments are up 10 percent over budget, and the patient census is up 20 percent over the last 10 months.

"Fellowship training and clinical research is also ongoing at both sites, according to Dr. Kone," Katz said.

The Medical School practice plan includes MSRDP and UT Physicians. 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.

Seven students win Dean's Research Awards

The Graduate Student Education Committee met June 22, to review 19 applications received for the Dean's Research Awards. These \$2,500 scholarships were established by the Medical School to recognize Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences students who have achieved distinction in the biomedical sciences.

Recipients will give a 10 – 15 minute presentation of their research at the Dean's Research Scholarship Reception, which is scheduled for September.

The following seven students were selected as recipients: **Brian Corbin**, Microbiology and Molecular Genetics (adviser **William Margolin**); **Diana Lazzell**, Neurobiology and Anatomy (adviser **Roger Janz**); **Janci Chunn-Noble**, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (adviser **Michael Blackburn**); **Jun Xie**, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (adviser **William Dowhan**); **Tera Guidry**, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (adviser **Jeffrey Actor**); **Eric Williams**, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (adviser **Henry Strobel**); and **Julio Morales**, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (adviser **Phillip Carpenter**).

Animal care, cont'd.

King said, leadership and sense of collegiality were "particularly commendable." He also noted that the animals were well-conditioned and maintained, and research protocol forms were thorough and well-organized.

"We recognize all the hard work that you do," King told program administrators and staff during an exit briefing July 28 at the Medical School.

Peter Davies, M.D., Ph.D., the university's executive vice president of research, thanked the nonprofit accreditation association for its comprehensive evaluation of UT's animal care program. He also congratulated the employees who work to make the program a success.

"We as researchers appreciate all that you do for the program," Davies said.

King and **John Harkness, DVM**, an ad hoc consultant and former council member of AAALAC, will present a report to the organization's Council on Accreditation in September. If the council agrees with the recommendation, UT should receive official notification of continued, full accreditation renewal in November.

The voluntary accreditation program encourages high standards of care and use of laboratory animals, including appropriate veterinary care, controlling variables that might adversely affect animal research, and protecting the health of animal research workers.

Since 1978, animal care facilities at the UT Medical School and the UT Mental Sciences Institute have been fully accredited by AAALAC.

"The team spirit and compassion for optimal animal care is the backbone of the success of the university's research program that involves the use of laboratory animals," Goodwin added.

The CLAMC is now awaiting the completion of the Medical School's Replacement Research Facility, which will have two floors dedicated to the animal care and use program and is expected to open in May 2007.

-M. Raine