Dean’s Comments: FIGHT AGAINST CANCER GAINS STRENGTH IN SAN ANTONIO

The University ended the year with the transformational announcement that The Cancer Therapy & Research Center (CTRC), through a merger that took effect on December 17, 2007, is now the newest member of the UTHSCSA family. The CTRC at the UT Health Science Center, as it will now be called, is a patient care, research and educational center of the School of Medicine.

Although a strong partnership between UTHSCSA and CTRC has existed for some time, President Cigarroa stated that “Now as we welcome the CTRC into our Health Science Center family, we possess a bold, singular vision for the future — development of an even greater premier cancer center that, backed by the power of academic research, to provide better lives to cancer patients and their families.”

The acquisition of the CTRC complements the UTHSCSA missions by providing one-stop access for cancer patients to receive the most advanced diagnostic and therapeutic cancer treatment delivered by our exceptional faculty, to include new modalities in medical, surgical and radiation oncology.

The CTRC at the UT Health Science Center is currently designated a Cancer Center (CC), one of only three in Texas, by the National Cancer Institute in recognition of its scientific excellence and extensive resources focused on cancer and cancer-related problems. An NCI-designated cancer center conducts a combination of basic, population sciences and clinical research and is expected to conduct early phase, innovative clinical trials. The goal is to create a National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center (CCC) in San Antonio. As designated by the NCI, Comprehensive Cancer Centers must demonstrate expertise in each of three areas: laboratory, clinical and behavioral and population-based research. Comprehensive Cancer Centers are also expected to initiate and conduct early phase clinical trials and help in the recruitment process for these trials. For citizens of San Antonio and South Texas, the Comprehensive Cancer Center will provide the best cancer care available and the latest in experimental therapy for cancers in which current treatments are typically not very effective.

Application for renewal of NCI-designated cancer center status will be submitted in September 2008. Once we have received our cancer center renewal, we will then submit for comprehensive designation.

Additionally, the Institute for Drug Development (IDD), a critical research unit of the CTRC, is internationally recognized for conducting the largest oncology phase I clinical research studies program in the world. In a phase I research study, a new agent for cancer is tested in human patients for the first time. Seventeen of the cancer drugs most recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration underwent development or testing at the IDD.

The scope and capacity of clinical research at the IDD is reflected by the clinical facilities based in and around San Antonio participating in its core activities: Cancer Therapy & Research Center, community medical practices, the Audie Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital, the University Hospital, the Brooke Army Medical Center, and the CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Medical Center. The IDD’s clinical trial infrastructure enables the treatment of over 500 new patients each year on innovative, early stage studies of new anti-cancer approaches, including recent initiatives on the use of viruses as anti-cancer agents and on the use of the body’s immune system as a targeted anti-cancer approach.

As we look toward a new year, with confidence and hope for a brighter tomorrow, I am encouraged that the CTRC at UTHSCSA will soon become a leader in clinical cancer discovery and will provide excellence in medical education and patient care.

William L. Henrich, M.D., M.A.C.P.
Dean, School of Medicine
Vice President for Medical Affairs
John P. Howe, III, M.D.,
Distinguished Chair in Health Policy

Inside this issue:

- New Faculty: 2
- School of Medicine Development Updates: 3
- Announcements & KUDOS: 4 & 5
- Focus Point: Radiation Oncology: 6
Welcome New Faculty

Anesthesiology

Ms. Mary O’Sullivan joined on December 1, 2007 as an Anesthesia Specialist. She received her nursing degree from the University of Washington in 1987. She then received a Masters degree in nursing from the University of New England in 1992, majoring in Nurse Anesthesia.

Epidemiology & Biostatistics

Dr. Luis F. Velez joined on December 17, 2007 as an Assistant Professor in the Institute for Health Promotion Research. He received his medical degree from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in 1989 and he received his Master of Public Health from UT Health Science Center at Houston.

Medicine

Dr. James W. Castillo joined on January 1, 2008 as Clinical Assistant Professor in the Division of Education Programs. He received his medical degree from the University of Miami in 2002 and completed his residency training at the HSC-RAHC in 2005.

Dr. L. David Hillis joined on January 1, 2008 as Chairman & Professor (pending approval from the Promotion and Tenure Committee). He received his medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians in 1972 and completed his residency training in Internal Medicine from the University of Texas Southwestern in 1975.

Ms. Maria Christina Leal-Willett joined on December 1, 2007 as an Faculty Associate in the Division of Hospital Medicine. She received her Master of Physician Studies from Texas Tech University Health Science Center in 2007.

Dr. Carrie Lynn Selvaraj joined on December 1, 2007 as Assistant Professor in the Division of Cardiology. She received her medical degree from Wayne State University School of Medicine and completed her residency training from Wilford Hall Medical Center in 2001.

Dr. Bin Zhang joined on December 1, 2007 as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Hematology/Medical Oncology. He received his medical degree from West China University of Medical Science in 1999 and completed his post doctoral fellowship from the University of Chicago in 2007.

Obstetrics & Gynecology

Dr. Michael D. Berkus joined on December 1, 2007 as an Assistant Professor. He received his medical degree from Case Western Reserve University in 1976 and completed his residency training from Shands Teaching Hospital University of Florida in 1980.

Radiology

Dr. James G. Flournoy joined on January 7, 2008 as a Clinical Assistant Professor. He received his medical degree UT Houston and completed his residency in Diagnostic Radiology at HSC in 1980.

Dr. John A. Sundell joined on December 10, 2007 as a Clinical Assistant Professor. He received his medical degree from University of Nebraska College of Medicine and completed his residency training in Diagnostic Radiology in 2004 from the HSC.

Dr. Gerald E. York, III joined on December 17, 2007 as a Clinical Assistant Professor. He received his medical degree from East Tennessee State University in 1997 and completed his residency training in Diagnostic Radiology from Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston.

Surgery

Dr. Jeffrey H. Semler joined on December 17, 2007 as a Clinical Assistant Professor. He received his medical degree from Texas Tech University, School of Medicine in 1983 and completed his Internship in General Surgery from RE Thomason General Hospital. He then completed his residency training in Anesthesiology from Lubbock General Hospital in 1987. He will be working on a part-time basis throughout the academic year teaching a selective for the medical student rotations.

Dr. Justin B. Williams joined on January 1, 2008 as a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Division of Emergency Medicine. He received his medical degree from Tulane University in 2002 and he received his Bachelor of Science in Psychology at Williams College in 1996.

Ms. Regina Wilson joined on December 1, 2007 as a Faculty Associate. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing in 1995 and she earned her Masters of Science degree in Nursing from the HSC.
School of Medicine Development Updates

Many individuals, corporations and foundations have joined the School of Medicine in “making lives better” in fiscal year 2007. The School has enjoyed its best year yet of philanthropic success with a record $31 million received in gifts. Nearly half of these dollars raised established 21 new endowments—critical for the School’s long-term health.

Your good work continues to play a key role in our success. Grateful patient efforts were launched last year and several major gifts have resulted for Oncology, Cardiology and the Transplant Center.

New ways to engage alumni and parents have been initiated. Dean Henrich conducted his first Dean’s Outreach Visit in August in Beaumont, Texas, and Alumni Association Board President, Dr. James L. Holly hosted him. Many alumni, former residents, parents and grandparents attended this inaugural outreach visit. Several more are planned for fiscal year 2008. Your role as educators has and will continue to play an important role in the success of these outreach efforts.

More than 15 fundraising campaigns are currently in progress—intended to raise both endowment and current-use monies. Your work to identify major gift prospects for these campaigns has been invaluable and essential.

“Truly, fundraising is a collaborative effort. Our combined expertise will continue to bring great success to the School of Medicine. I look forward to working with you in fiscal year 2008!”

Kim Warshauer, Director of Development

Fiscal Year 2007 Health Science Center Benefactors

- Greehey Family Foundation*
- Valero Energy Corporation*
- San Antonio Medical Foundation
- The Brown Foundation, Inc.
- Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust
- The Max and Minnie Tomerlin Voelcker Fund*
- H-E-B*
- The Honorable Dolph Briscoe*
- USAA Foundation
- Col. and Mrs. Robert E. Kelso*
- Mr. Charles C. Butt*
- A.R. Tony and Maria J. Sanchez Family Foundation
- American Diabetes Association*
- Anonymous
- The Ellison Medical Foundation
- American Cancer Society, Inc.*
- AT&T Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. Stanley D. Rosenberg*
- Ms. Nancy S. Hurd
- Robert J. Kleberg, Jr. and Helen C. Kleberg Foundation*

The Health Science Center raised over $55 million in gift in FY07. Of that $55 million, 56% benefited programs in the School of Medicine. *Provided support for the School of Medicine.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Effective January 2008, Dr. L. David Hillis was selected as the Dan Parman Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Department of Medicine.

Dr. Hillis is one of our country’s most eminent cardiologists and leaders in academic medicine. After graduation from the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, he was a house officer in Medicine at UT Southwestern and served as the Chief Medical Resident under Dr. Donald Seldin. His cardiology training was served at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital under the tutelage of Dr. Eugene Braunwald. Upon completion of his training, Dr. Hillis joined the faculty at UT Southwestern where he has become known over the years as a leading authority on ischemic heart disease and coronary artery disease.

Please welcome Dr. and Mrs. David Hillis at a reception on January 31, 2008 in the Parman Auditorium, Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Campus (central) from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm.

A message from Dr. Charles Akos Szabo, Interim Chair, Neurology:

Dr. David Sherman, our Chief of Neurology at UTHSCSA for 20 years, was most proud of the residents who trained during his tenure and of his teaching. The David G. Sherman Educational Endowment will support continuing education in Neurology, with a particular focus on stroke, and be a fitting remembrance of David in perpetuity. Your contributions are warmly appreciated and are tax-deductible.

Click on the following link for online giving: www.uthscsa.edu/univrel/philanthropy/.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation program–The Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Program was established to increase the number of faculty from historically disadvantaged backgrounds who can achieve senior rank in academic medicine. More information is available at www.rwjf.org/cfp/amfdp and the application deadline is March 19, 2008.

Don’t Forget – Submission deadline is January 15

Medical students, faculty and staff are welcome to submit entries in prose, poetry, painting, drawing, sculpture and photography.

Submissions should be sent to humanities@uthscsa.edu.
The following faculty, fellows, residents, staff and/or students appeared in the news (television, print media or radio): Dr. Sunil Ahuja, Infectious Diseases; Dr. David Bebinger, Medical alumnus; Dr. Ruth Berggren, Medicine; Dr. Francisco Cigarroa, President; Drs. Cigarroa/Bailey, President/Cardiology; Dr. Tyler Curiel, Med/Hematology/Oncology; Dr. William Daviss, Psychiatry; Dr. Donald Dudley, Obstetrics/Gynecology; Dr. Omar Enriquez, Alumnus; Dr. Daniel Hale, Pediatrics; Drs. Hale/Guerra, Pediatrics; Dr. Lawrence Harkless, Orthopaedics; Dr. William Henrich, Dean; Dr. Dr. L. David Hillis, Medicine; Dr. Thelma Hurd, Surgical Oncology; Carlos Jaen, Family & Community Med.; Dr. Angela Jenkin, Medical resident alumnus; Dr. Chris Johnson, Pediatrics; Dr. Lee Jones, Associate Dean/Psychiatry; Drs. Keller/Reddick, CCR/Pathology; Dr. Felix Koo, Medical alumnus; Dr. Julio Palmaz, Radiology; Dr. Kristen Plastino, Obstetrics/Gynecology; Dr. Scott Manatt, Medical alumnus; Dr. Thomas Mayes, Pediatrics; Dr. Martha Medrano, Psychiatry; Dr. Amelie Ramirez, Epidemiology/Medicine; Drs. Ramirez/Mulrow, Epidemiology/Medicine; Susan Robinson, Surgery; Dr. Thomas Rozanski, Urology; Dr. I. Jon Russell, Medicine; Drs. Saunders/Katz, So. Tx. Geriatric Edu. Ctr.; Dr. Vivek Singh, Psychiatry; Dr. Pranavi Sreeramoju, Infectious Diseases; Dr. Ian Thompson, Urology.

**Dr. V. Seenu Reddy**, Thoracic Surgery, was featured on KSAT 12 with one of his patients who had undergone a thoracic stent graft repair of her aneurysm. He was also selected to the San Antonio’s Top 40 under 40 by the SA Business Journal. He will serve on the Board of Directors for the American Heart Association-San Antonio affiliate.

**Dr. Sunil K. Ahuja**, Medicine, was selected as one of 35 Texans that will influence the future. The feature will be published in the February issue.

**Dr. Thomas F. Patterson**, Medicine/Infectious Diseases, appointed to the American Board of Internal Medicine Subspecialty Board for Infectious Diseases (ABIM).

**Dr. Sandra Sanchez-Reilly**, Medicine, with the help of her colleagues published her first book, *Communication as Comfort: Multiple Voice in Palliative Care*.  More Details...

**Joseph D. Walch**, MS II, won the $1,000 top prize in the 2007 Holt Bioethics Essay Award, sponsored by the Center for Medical Humanities & Ethics.  **Lauren E. Holguin, Ryan D. Coleman, Scott J. Crabtree and Thomas J. Pillion** also received an award of $250 as honorable-mention. Read more...

The **Kronkosky Foundation** funded all three of the *Diabetes Seed Money Research Projects* a total of $225,000.
FOCAL POINTS: Radiation Oncology

Our Department of Radiation Oncology is located at an NCI designated cancer center, the Cancer Therapy and Research Center (CTRC) at UT Health Science Center. I am thrilled to inform you that we are undergoing one of the most exciting phases in our departmental history to achieve excellence and national leadership in all three missions of our department: patient care, research and education.

With 8 vaults, 7 linear accelerators and soon-to-arrive state of the art improvements in our radiosurgery and stereotactic body radiation therapy capabilities, we are one of the largest and technically most advanced departments of radiation oncology in the U.S.A. More importantly, I am proud to tell you that we have nationally recognized experts in almost every category of cancers. Once a patient arrives in our department for consultation or treatment, he or she can be assured that all of the medical decisions will be made with one goal in mind: the best care for the patient.

There are many cancer specific tumor boards within the School of Medicine where patient’s medical care recommendations are made in a multidisciplinary setting that includes surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, diagnostic radiologists, pathologists and other support staff. Within our department, every patient’s treatment plan is reviewed at quality assurance conferences attended by all of the radiation oncology faculty members and clinical physicists to ensure peer reviewed quality control.

Our department offers many clinical trials open through the national cooperative study groups such as RTOG (Radiation Therapy Oncology Group), SWOG (Southwest Oncology Group) and NSABP (National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project). With close collaboration with the Institute for Drug Development (IDD), the nation’s largest and foremost phase I cancer drug trial center located within the CTRC, our department also renders an array of newest treatments in developmental stage available to our patients.

In addition to clinical excellence, our department takes great pride in our commitment to education and research. We offer clerkships to qualified 3rd and 4th year medical students from around the world. We have an ACGME (Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education) accredited residency program with 7 residents and also offer fellowships to qualified individuals who plan to pursue subspecialty training in radiation oncology. The division of radiation biology is expanding rapidly in its scope of research activities with recruitment of a new division chief. The division of radiation physics is known for tremendous research productivity and is at the cutting edge of new technology development. Close collaboration among the basic science, physics and clinical faculty members is fostered in our department to constantly pursue a better way to diagnose and treat cancer.

With the merger between UTHSCSA and CTRC, we expect greater strides toward achieving the NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center status.

Chul S. Ha, M.D.
Distinguished Chair in Radiation Oncology
Professor and Chair
Department of Radiation Oncology,
UTHSCSA