



From the Desk of the Founding Dean

Mission: Haiti - Many of us have felt overwhelmed by the images of the devastation caused by the Haitian earthquake - especially those of children. My heart is lightened by the fact that two of our amazing Family and Community Medicine doctors, *Marco Diaz, M.D.*, and *Leonardo Loaiza, M.D.*, have selflessly responded to this international crisis. The pair arrived in Haiti Tuesday morning - determined to make a difference. They have somehow managed to keep us up-to-date as this unimaginable experience unfolds. Please read excerpts of their mission in the story below. I'd also like to thank our medical students, specifically *Sudha Bhadriraju*, for stepping into action and organizing a drive to help the relief efforts. Through such tragedy, somehow good prevails.

Vision for the Future - Last month, Chancellor Kent Hance announced his plans for the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Paul L. Foster School of Medicine (SOM) campus to expand into a Health Sciences University, we have received many calls wanting details about this plan. However, we are currently in the planning stage of this evolving endeavor. Once I have details, I'll make sure to pass them along in this column.

LCME Accreditation - We have set our sites on the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) visit early next year, establishing full accreditation for TTUHSC Paul L. Foster SOM. For those of you not familiar with LCME accreditation, it is the process of quality assurance in postsecondary education that determines whether an institution or program meets established standards for function, structure, and performance. The accreditation process also fosters institutional and program improvement. Dr. Steele has organized workgroups focusing on our third and fourth year curriculum. Many of us have been through this before and understand how demanding the process can be, but in the end it will all be worth it. I thank each of you in advance for taking this journey with me.

- Jose Manuel de la Rosa, M.D. Founding Dean

TTUHSC Paul L. Foster School of Medicine Doctors Arrive in Haiti for Medical Mission

Two Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Paul L. Foster School of Medicine (SOM) physicians arrived in Haiti early Tuesday morning for a humanitarian mission. They were contacted by the US Coast Guard to help victims of the earthquake. Both *Marco Diaz, M.D.*, and *Leonardo Loaiza, M.D.*, assistant professors in the Department of Community and Family Medicine, are trained and certified in basic disaster life support.

"We have just completed the initial stage of this unbelievable experience," emailed Dr. Diaz on Tuesday. "So far we have had nothing but amazing luck and unbelievable timing. The breeze is hot and with a distinct smell. The damage is immediately evident and we have not yet left the airport. The face of despair and disbelief is still fresh."



Marco Diaz, M.D.



Leonardo Loaiza, M.D.

Leonardo Loaiza, M.D., who participated in the 1999 Columbian earthquake relief efforts and the 1995 American Airline crash in Colombia, says every disaster is different with its own set of issues. "A disaster is a major call where you have to improvise. Everything you've learned is challenged and you have to work faster and use your common sense."

After a 5.9 magnitude aftershock hit Wednesday, family members were alarmed when phone lines went down. Thankfully, Dr. Loaiza was able to get an email through. "Marco and I worked very hard to have a nice round this a.m. Then I felt the floor moving and patients yelling and dragging patients to get them out as quick as possible. I felt bad for the face of horror they had. Some of the patients that were not moving got hurt by trying to do so. This was the fastest hospital evacuation I have ever seen," said Loaiza.

"It was chaos. Family members of the wounded were hastily dragging the patients out into the yard. It was the (most) moving and tragic thing I have ever seen. The place erupted into a panic. Fortunately, the structural integrity of our facility remained intact and no one was hurt," said Dr. Diaz.

Thursday, Dr. Loaiza was headed to the U.N. temporary "tent camp" near the downtown section of Port Au Prince where thousands of people have been staying since the earthquake. These survivors have not yet been seen by a doctor. Dr. Loaiza is part of a group of physicians that will assess individuals who are in need of medical care. He is planning to return to Saint Damian Hospital, the only free pediatric hospital in Haiti, to relieve Dr. Diaz before dusk.

It appears that the last two aftershocks that hit yesterday, which measured at magnitude 4.9 and 4.8, did not hamper their mission. Both doctors are expected to stay in Haiti until late next week. Until then, they will keep us posted via email. Dr. Diaz wrote that they thank everyone for their support and concerns. "Again we are okay and very glad to be here," said Dr. Diaz.

Disseminating Information Following Haitian Earthquake

The following is a message from Dr. Darrell Kirch, M.D., president and CEO of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC):

The AAMC has been asked by the federal government to serve as conduit for information to the academic medical community, which is mobilizing quickly to assist in the relief effort. As in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, a new page on our Web site (<http://www.aamc.org/haiti/>) has been created to serve as a reliable source of information that includes notices, fact sheets, and other resource information from the U.S. government, links to the many relief efforts underway at our member institutions, and a list of organizations that are accepting charitable contributions. This page will be updated regularly as new information arrives, and we hope that you will make your institutional colleagues aware of this new resource.

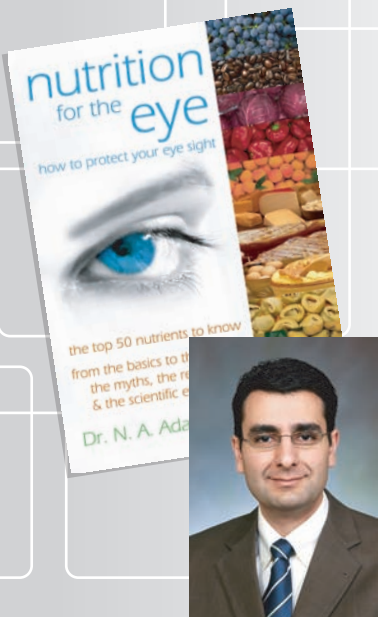
Please accept our sincerest thanks for all that your institutions are doing individually and collectively to respond to the calls for help in Haiti. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Haitian people.

Clear Vision: Neal Adams, M.D.

Neal Adams, M.D., chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology and associate professor, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Paul L. Foster School of Medicine (SOM), recently published *Nutrition for the Eye: How to Protect Your Eye Sight*. The book reviews in detail 50 nutrients that protect the eye and vision. Dr. Adams will share some of his nutritional handbook findings at a lecture/booksigning on **Thursday, January 28, 2010 from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Paul L. Foster School of Medicine Medical Education Building, 5001 El Paso Drive**. The net proceeds from the book go to support the Collaborative Vision Research Program of the Department of Ophthalmology at TTUHSC Paul L. Foster SOM.

As a child, Dr. Adams dreamed of writing a book. "As a faculty member at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, I frequently encountered patients who would ask me 'What can I eat to help protect my eyes? Carrots?'," said Dr. Adams. He realized this was important information for his patients. Dr. Adams has spent the past eight years writing this book.

Dr. Adams has reviewed extensively the medical literature on nutrition and eye sight and



Neal Adams, M.D.

believes that a good healthy diet may help prevent some forms of eye disease and possibly reduce the progression of existing eye disease. "As the saying goes: Strive for Five," said Dr. Adams. He recommends five servings of fruits and five servings of vegetables each day.

"People throughout the country care about their vision and eyes. Here in El Paso, it is no different," said Dr. Adams. "However, the higher incidence of diabetes means that extra attention must be taken regarding our patient population in order to care for the retinal disease that occurs in diabetes."

Dr. Adams previously served as chief of the Division of Visual Physiology at the Wilmer Eye Institute of the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. He earned his Bachelors in Chemistry from Yale University and his M.D. from Johns Hopkins University. He is a graduate of the Wilmer Eye Institute Residency Program. Following completion of a Retina Fellowship at Wilmer, he joined the Faculty at Johns Hopkins and also led the Division of Visual Physiology. Dr. Adams is a board-certified retina specialist and a highly skilled surgeon and clinician. He devotes a significant amount of his time to his research endeavors, focusing on retinal degenerations such as retinitis pigmentosa and macular degeneration.

