



TTUHSC donors Celeste and Joe Fralick and Steven Berk, MD, TTUHSC vice president and provost and School of Medicine dean, at their gift announcement.



The trust of Diane Childers, who lost her battle with breast cancer, provided funding for an endowed chair in cancer research at TTUHSC.

Family's Battle with Cancer Leads to Endowed Chair for Research

Diane Childers was known for her community activism, vivacious spirit and unending passion for helping others. The side effects from breast cancer treatments, however, took that all away when she in her early 60s. Not wanting others to suffer from the disease, Childers' desire was for her trust bequest to support cancer research.

"Our family, as so many others, has been impacted by cancer," said Celeste Fralick, Childers' cousin. Celeste and her husband Joe Fralick, a professor in the School of Medicine Department of Immunology and Molecular Microbiology, established the Childers-Fralick Basic Cancer Research Endowed Chair in January.

"Everyone knows a Diane Childers," said TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD. "We thank the Childers and Fralick families for their generosity as this endowed chair will ensure a long-term investment in our research programs."

As trustee of Childers' estate, also having a mother who died of lung cancer and a Stage 4 breast cancer survivor herself, Celeste said the quality of research at TTUHSC outshined the other universities they considered for the endowment.

Kevin Pruitt, PhD, associate professor in the School of Medicine Department of Immunology and Molecular Microbiology, was named to the endowed chair position. His laboratory focuses on how specific proteins create epigenetic "footprints" in cancer cells that enable them to drive the overproduction of estrogen within tumors (Read more about his research on Pages 16-18).

"Celeste and Joe gave us the choice to recruit someone new or find someone within institution (to fill the chair position). When they described their ideal candidate, Kevin immediately came to mind," said Matthew Grisham, PhD, chair of the School of Medicine Department of Immunology and Molecular Microbiology. "They said the investigator should be a rising star, someone whose career was continuing to progress in leaps and bounds.

"Their hope was through his or her investigations, the possibility of new drug therapies for the treatment of these devastating disorders could greatly be increased."



Watch the announcement of the Childers-Fralick gift on Facebook Live at <http://bit.ly/2uf6KRZ>

Nursing Adds Accelerated BSN to DNP Program

Nurses who want to earn an advance degree now have an accelerated option that will save them time and money. The School of Nursing is adding a Bachelor of Science in Nursing to Doctor of Nursing Practice (BSN to DNP) program.

The BSN to DNP program is the first state-supported program in Texas that will give BSN graduates a direct pathway to the doctorate degree while preparing them as family nurse practitioners (FNP) or psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners.

Coursework for the accelerated DNP program will be delivered through a combination of face-to-face and online courses and supervised clinical experiences. Their coursework will meet all educational standards established for these practice fields by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (2006) and the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty's Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs (2016). Graduates will be eligible to sit for national certifications.

The school will continue all current MSN track offerings and the Post-Masters DNP Program for Executive Leadership and Advanced Nursing Practice.

Applications for the accelerated DNP first cohort will be accepted from Nov. 1 to Feb. 15 and begin classes in fall 2018; maximum of 26 students will be accepted with the number of applicants split between FNP and psychiatric mental health tracks.



Visit the School of Nursing website <http://bit.ly/2s9dVGS> for more information

5 minutes with the faculty...

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

BACK-TO-BACK HONORS | Nursing faculty earns multiyear recognition for her work | *By Mark Hendricks*

The last several months of the 2016-2017 school year were rewarding for Deborah Casida, MSN, RN, assistant professor for the School of Nursing in Amarillo.

Casida, who is also the Amarillo site coordinator for the Second Degree Nursing and Veteran to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (VBSN) programs, received the Outstanding Faculty Award from the TTUHSC Student Government Association (SGA) for her efforts related to the Second Degree program. She received the same award following the 2015-2016 school year for her work with the VBSN program.

Students select SGA award recipients, something Casida said makes the award especially gratifying.

"I am honored that the students think so very highly of me, and I have received this amazing award for the second year

in a row," Casida said. "I am honored and thrilled that the students took time out of their schedules to think of me and vote for me."

Casida was also recognized as a member of the nursing team that received an SGA Team Teaching Award for its work in developing the VBSN track. Other team members include Deborah Sikes, DNP, RN, CNE; Patricia Frances-Johnson, DNP, RN, CNE; Melinda Mitchell-Jones, MSN, JD, RN; and Laura Opton, DHSc, RN, CNE.

"I work with an incredible group of women, and I have learned a ton from each of them," Casida said. "It is because of their leadership, team building and their mentoring and support of me that I am able to receive such an award. The credit goes to these incredible women, and I am thankful that they have considered me as part of their team."

In addition to her recognition at TTUHSC, the Amarillo ISD Bowie Middle School Junior Achievers named Casida their Volunteer of the Year. Casida said she has met with the group of seventh graders for the past three years to teach them about the college and financial responsibilities. She said she enjoys spending time with the students because they are so eager to learn.

"These children do not have much, so talking with them and teaching them the many possibilities that come with gaining a college degree and a career has blessed me in so many ways," Casida added. "I keep my crystal candy dish on my desk as a reminder of those students. I am in awe that I could even be considered and to receive these awards is all by the grace of God."

This article was originally posted on TTUHSC's Daily Dose. It is reprinted here with permission.



Culinary Medicine Elective Teaches Medical Students About Nutrition

BY SUZANNA CISNEROS

Studying in a clinical or classroom setting is normal for medical students. For this class however, instead of stethoscopes and classrooms, students trade their white coats for aprons, medical equipment for stoves and cooking utensils, and a chef becomes the professor.

This is Culinary Medicine, a new fall elective established by Sarah Jaroudi and Bill Sessions, both medical students.

“We saw a need for education about nutrition that was not in the curriculum,” Sessions said. “The lectures explored various nutritional concepts and the labs were taught by chefs where medical students applied their knowledge and learned how to prepare healthy meals.”

“The mission of the elective,” said Jaroudi, “is to educate and train medical students to develop and maintain healthy habits and perspectives that will benefit themselves, their communities and most importantly their patients.”

The School of Medicine students studied culinary medicine at the HEB Culinary Laboratories at the Texas Tech University (TTU) College of Human Sciences. Dewey McMurray, CEC, executive chef of operations, taught the students cooking techniques, answered questions and wrote the recipes for the program.

Katherine Chauncey, PhD, RDN, course director and a nutritionist in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, said this course was organized and driven by medical students.

“With the first class, the students were given a recipe and made it in a normal fashion with any



ingredients necessary. As the classes progressed, the students took the same recipe and began to incorporate healthier options for foods such as brown rice for white rice, healthier lower carbs or enhance nutrients by adding other items.

“Each student also was given a scenario with a patient who has been diagnosed with an illness such as diabetes, renal disease, etc. The students not only began to think about how to make the meal healthier, but also think of how to cook the meal for the prognosis each patient has.”

Taylor Lindgren was assigned a recipe that included garlic chicken Parmesan and sweet potato wedges and carrots. Lindgren was surprised by how many different options patients with certain dietary needs have through simple changes in their meal choices.

“One group cooked a delicious, Caribbean-inspired meal catered to renal patients who have dietary restrictions on protein, phosphorus and other nutrients,” Lindgren said. “Without being told about these restrictions, I wouldn’t have been able to tell.”

“I loved learning about how to apply concepts from the Culinary Medicine elective not only to my own life, but also to the lives of my future patients.”

This article was originally published on TTUHSC’s Daily Dose.

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New Online Programs to Address Shortage in Mental Health Counselors

This spring, Texas Tech University System Board of Regents approved establishment of the Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Master of Science in Addiction Counseling.

The online programs will be offered through the School of Health Professions and the F. Marie Hall Institute of Rural and Community Health. Graduate students from both programs will be eligible for a certificate in telemedicine through the institute, creating the first counseling programs in the U.S. to train practitioners in clinical counseling skills and distance service provision techniques.

TTUHSC’s model will help fill a shortage in mental health counselors by allowing the School of Health Professions to recruit students from areas with limited access to traditional educational methods. Additionally, the program offers students the academic and clinical foundations needed to pursue employment in clinical services in rural areas.

More than 72 percent of counties in the state are missing a psychiatrist, said TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects the need for addiction counselors to increase 30 percent by 2024.

Wright Family's Gift Establishes Coveted Scholarship Endowment

With the high cost of a health career education, students search for ways to offset some of the debt. Thanks to a generous gift from the Bill and Corinne Wright family, TTUHSC now has an endowment to provide scholarships to qualified recruits and current students.

Scholarship support is invaluable, Cheyenne Mangold, 2016-2017 Student Government Association president, told the Wright family and those gathered in February for the announcement of the Wright ASCO Foundation Endowed Presidential Scholarship.

Last year, TTUHSC students borrowed \$67 million in loans to help pay for school. The cost of tuition alone varies by field; as example, one semester for a traditional bachelor's degree in nursing can cost more than \$12,000 for residents and four years of medical school come with a bill of more than \$210,000.

"One of the best ways to combat rising student costs is scholarships," said Mangold, who recently completed her third year of medical school. "It provides students with the opportunity to focus more on academics and less on how to pay for an education.

"Without families like you, the dreams of students such as myself could never happen. From the bottom of my heart, on behalf of all students here, thank you."

"The Wright ASCO Foundation Endowed Presidential Scholarship is a game changer," said TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD. "It is not often that we receive a gift with such few strings attached. This scholarship gives us great leeway in using these funds on any campus for any student. I couldn't be more thankful to this family for that."

Mitchell also commended the family on its legacy—one of family relationships, working in unity and philanthropy.

"It was because of their parenting and relationship with one another growing up that they are able to do this and impact so many beyond their own family," he said. "With their thoughtful assistance, our university will continue to educate students in all health care fields and help lessen the burden of debt."

Bill and Corinne Wright's philanthropic legacy is one passed on to their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well as to their employees at ASCO Equipment, said Steve Wright, one of the couple's three children. He and his siblings, Brax Wright and Paula Wright Key established the ASCO Foundation, which supports the scholarship gift.

"When you leave this world it's not bricks and mortar that last, it's your legacy. I can think of no better legacy to leave than one of giving," Steve said.



Texas Tech System Chancellor Robert Duncan, Student Government President Cheyenne Mangold, TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, Steve Wright, Brax Wright, and Paula Wright Key



Paula Wright Key visits with a student following the announcement of the Wright ASCO Foundation Presidential Endowed Scholarship.

Philanthropy such as that exhibited by the Wright family's gift is the lifeblood of university excellence, said Texas Tech University (TTU) System Chancellor Robert Duncan. "The state does a great job in supporting institutions like (TTUHSC) but state appropriations alone just won't get the job done. The way we will continue to achieve excellence depends on philanthropy."

This scholarship gift is the Wright family's second major gift of support to TTUHSC. In 2005, they established the Corinne Payne Wright Endowed Chair in Alzheimer's Disease in the School of Medicine's Department of Neurology. TTU and the TTU System also benefit from the family's generosity.

Awards & Accolades



MARJORIE JENKINS, MD, professor in the School of Medicine and chief scientific officer in the Laura W. Bush Institute for Women's Health, received the American Medical Women's Association Elizabeth Blackwell Award. Jenkins is the founding director of the TTUHSC Sex and Gender-Based Health Curriculum and co-chairs

the President's Task Force on Sex and Gender-Based Medicine. Jenkins founded the Laura W. Bush Institute for Women's Health in 2007. The institute now has a presence in Abilene, Amarillo, Dallas, Lubbock, Permian Basin and San Angelo.



In March, Gov. Greg Abbot appointed **ANNIE L. SOBEL, MD**, to a six-year term on the Texas Military Preparedness Commission. Sobel holds joint appointments as an associate professor in the School of Medicine Department of Medical Education and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. Her term expires in February 2023.



JAYARAM NAIDU, MD, is serving a four-year term on the Texas Medical Board. Naidu is an assistant clinical professor at TTUHSC at the Permian Basin. He was appointed in January. The Odessa Chamber of Commerce also named Naidu an Entrepreneur of the Year. He is president of Naidu Clinic and has been

in private practice for more than 40 years as an internist. He also has recruited more than 20 physicians to the area.

In April, 15 TTUHSC faculty members were inducted in the inaugural class of the local Texas Tech University System Chapter of the National Academy of Inventors. The academy recognizes individuals whose research has moved out of the laboratory and is transitioning to applied use through the patent process. This year's awardees were:

Associate Members – provisional patents: **ROGER SUTTON, PHD**, professor, Department of Cell Physiology and Molecular Biophysics.

Members – one U.S. issued patent: **ULRICH BICKEL, PHD**, professor and director, Center for Blood-Brain Barrier Research; **ROBERT BRIGHT, PHD**, professor, Department of Immunology and Molecular Microbiology; **MATTHEW GRISHAM, PHD**, (Biomedical Sciences '82) professor and chair, Department of Immunology and Molecular Microbiology; **DANIEL HARDY, PHD**, associate professor, Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry; **JAOU-CHEN HUANG, MD**, professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology; **LINGKUN KONG, MD, PHD**, associate professor, Department of Ophthalmology; **DEVIN LOWE, PHD**, (Biomedical Sciences '10) assistant professor, Department of Immunotherapeutics and Biotechnology, Abilene; **CLAUDIA MEEK, PHD**, research associate professor, School of Pharmacy, Dallas; **LINDSAY PENROSE, PHD**, assistant professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology; **AFZAL SIDDIQUI, PHD**, Grover E. Murray Professor and vice president for Institutional Collaborations; and **THOMAS TENNER, PHD**, assistant dean, Faculty Affairs and Development, professor, Department of Medical Education.

Senior Chapter Members – three or more U.S. issued patents: **SAM PRIEN, PHD**, director, Clinical and Research Laboratory and professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Animal and Food Science in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources; Texas Tech **TED REID, PHD**, professor, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences; **PATRICK REYNOLDS, MD, PhD**, director, School of Medicine Cancer Center and professor, Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry.



Four of the six chair positions established in 2014 with the generous gift from the J.T. and Margaret Talkingington Charitable Foundation to the School of Medicine Department of Internal Medicine have been filled. Chair holders had the opportunity this spring to personally thank foundation board members for the gift, which helps supplement incomes for the academic physicians working in a field not as well-compensated as other medical specialties. Pictured with TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, far left, are chair holders Michael Phy, DO, MS (Resident '00), associate professor; John Pixley, MD, professor; Cynthia Jumper, MD, MPH, (Medicine '88), TTUHSC vice president of health policy and associate dean for Health Services Management and professor; Alan Henry and Norton Baker, Talkingington Charitable Foundation board members; and chair holder Alan Peiris, MD, PhD, executive director of the TTUHSC Clinical Research Institute and attending physician. Jumper's relationship with the late Margaret Talkingington, her patient, played a key role in securing the foundation's gift. Read more about this gift in the winter 2015 issue of PULSE.

MATTERS

of the heart

By Holly Leger

Nursing Alumna Helps Parents Through Infant Loss



Beth Uszynski, BSN, RN, (Nursing '06) was unprepared for the grief she felt after losing her first baby to a miscarriage in June 2015.

"As a nurse, you kind of know medically what you're going to expect," said Uszynski, a staff nurse at Hospice of South Texas in Victoria, "but it was a lot more graphic than I ever thought. It's physically painful and emotionally heart wrenching."

After the miscarriage, Uszynski remembers returning home from the hospital exhausted. Her emotions were high, and the hormonal changes occurring in her body made the loss feel even more intense. She was grateful when a friend brought food, because in the days that followed, she and her husband, Adam, just wanted to stay at home to mourn their baby, who died at 10 weeks and two days.

"It's one of those things where you learn, 'Well how in the world can you grieve a baby you haven't met yet?' But what you're grieving is their future. You're grieving all these dreams you had and all these plans you had," Uszynski said.

About 10 to 20 percent of known pregnancies end in miscarriage, and more than 80 percent of these losses happen before 12 weeks. Knowing how common the issue was and feeling overwhelmed with her grief, Uszynski searched for a support group. She found some in Austin, San Antonio and Houston, but nothing in Victoria, a town with a population of about 60,000.

Uszynski shared her grief with a co-worker, who had also experienced miscarriage. Uszynski talked about her fears of what the miscarriage might do to her marriage and the immense sense of failure she felt with her body. Her co-worker was able to relate, and the two quickly found encouragement in one another, realizing there was power in their conversations.

"The only thing that really helps you to get through something like that is to see that other people have done it," Uszynski said. "They've experienced it, and they've gotten through it."

In the fall of 2015, the pair created a local support group. They call their group Angel Babies Victoria, welcoming all


parents who have experienced loss of an infant from miscarriage, abortion, stillbirth or SIDS.

Uszynski and her co-worker facilitate group discussions and allow mothers and fathers to voice their concerns and share their grief. About five people attend the monthly meetings, but over 100 people are members of the Angel Babies Victoria Facebook group. Uszynski said they use the online platform to post motivational stories and inspirational quotes. The closed group is also a private place for parents to post encouraging words or seek help, like when a woman is anxious about attending a baby shower after experiencing a miscarriage.

"We're not counselors or therapists or psychiatrists," Uszynski said, "but we're just trying to get that group discussion going to allow people to heal."

A year after her miscarriage, Uszynski gave birth to a healthy boy, John Wyatt. She describes their 10 month old as a light for her and her husband, a joyful baby who loves the outdoors, swimming and their yellow Labrador.

After having her son, Uszynski went back to Hospice of South Texas as a part-time staff nurse. She manages symptoms at the end of life, helping to provide comfort and dignity to patients and their families. Working in hospice for seven years has given her the opportunity to see the importance of guiding loved ones through grief. Pulling from professional and personal experiences, she continues to encourage fellow parents that while the loss of an infant is incredibly painful, it's possible to get through it with the support of others.

"Death is really taboo in our society, and a lot of times people shy away from actually addressing the loss, which completely alienates the person who is grieving and makes it harder for them," Uszynski said. "If somebody is experiencing a loss, say something to them. Be there for them. Don't let them be alone." 

GGHSON Assistant Professor Represents Texas Nurse Practitioners

Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing Assistant Professor Christina Blanco, DNP, has been elected as the North Texas state representative for the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). In this role, Blanco represents all nurse practitioners in the Panhandle, West Texas and Dallas-Fort Worth regions.

“The AANP is the largest national organization for nurse practitioners, so it’s important to play an active role with them,” Blanco said. “Assisting regional directors with state events and initiatives is part of my role, but as a state rep, it is also crucial for me to help in developing legislative priorities.”

Since 2010, Blanco has provided testimony to various Texas State Senate committees, advocating for such issues as women’s and indigent health care. In addition to advocating for important issues in health care, one of the AANP’s goals is improving access to nurse practitioners while improving their presence in health care.

Blanco’s one-year term began at the close of the AANP 2017 National Conference in Philadelphia June 25. She is one of two Texas representatives. Blanco joined TTUHSC El Paso in 2016.



Faculty Member Elected to Texas e-Health Advisory Committee

Ogechika Alozie, MD, MPH, CPHIMS, has been elected to the Texas Health and Human Services e-Health Advisory Committee. As a committee member, Alozie serves as a key adviser on state initiatives related to health information technology. Duties of the committee members include strategic planning and advising on policy, rules and services related to the use of health information technology, health information exchange systems, telemedicine, telehealth and home telemonitoring services.

In addition to his new role on the e-Health Advisory Committee, Alozie also serves as the chief medical informatics officer in TTUHSC El Paso’s Office of Clinical Informatics.



Vice President for Research Joins CPRIT Higher Ed Committee

Earlier this year, Peter Rotwein, MD, was appointed to the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) University Advisory Committee.

“Dr. Peter Rotwein’s appointment to the CPRIT’s UAC is a testament to his professional success and commitment to others,” said Texas Tech University (TTU) System Chancellor Robert Duncan. “He will be a tremendous resource for CPRIT and the state of Texas.”

As the TTU System representative, Rotwein will help advise the organization’s oversight committee on the role of higher education in cancer research.

“CPRIT plays a critical role in improving the health of Texans by investing in the highest quality fundamental and clinical cancer research,” said Rotwein, TTUHSC El Paso’s vice president for research.

He added, “This role comes with the twin goals of more effective treatments now and enhanced progress toward cures in the future.”

In addition to helping advise the institute’s oversight committee—a committee of nine Texans appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor and speaker of the House—Rotwein will advise CPRIT on how Texas universities and other institutions of higher education can assist in furthering the organization’s goals.

“I look forward to participating in this important task and in representing our university, the citizens of West Texas and the entire state in helping our scientists and clinicians make cancer disappear,” said Rotwein.

Rotwein joined TTUHSC El Paso in 2014.

New Degree Positions Nurses for Leadership Roles

In April, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) at TTUHSC El Paso. The seven-semester hybrid program will prepare nurses for positions in management and administration in the health care field.

“Traditional on-campus programs may be difficult for working nurses, and while entirely online programs are flexible, they are not always effective in fully engaging students,” said Penny Cooper, DNP, RN, assistant dean for graduate programs at the Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing (GGHSON). “That’s why we’re giving students the opportunity to experience and benefit from both learning environments.”

The program was developed in response to several national reports, including a 2010 report issued by the Institute of Medicine. The report emphasized the importance of nurses being full partners alongside physicians and other health care professionals, encouraging nurses to achieve higher levels of education.

The MSN will include leadership-focused courses in business, finance and policy. Students will also learn from the faculty of TTUHSC El Paso’s medical and biomedical science schools, preparing them to communicate effectively with a variety of professionals in future health care settings—an opportunity that can only be provided at a health sciences center.

“We provide our graduate students with a unique environment in which to study and a framework for them to be valuable contributors to any community or health care system, no matter where they decide to practice,” explained GGHSON Dean Jeanne Novotny, PhD, RN, FAAN.

The first class of graduate students begins in spring 2018.



Karinn Chambers, MD, (center), director of the Texas Tech Physicians El Paso Breast Care Center, poses with a patient and breast cancer survivor (left) and her daughter.

Bubbles & Brunch Raises \$33,000 for Breast Care Center

Support for the Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso (TTP El Paso) Breast Care Center came to light this March when the El Paso community raised more than \$33,000 at the inaugural Bubbles & Brunch event.

The signature event brought together over 200 El Pasoans for brunch, Champagne and trivia in support of the TTP El Paso Breast Care Center. The sold-out occasion celebrated breast cancer survivors and inspired hope for those battling the disease while raising awareness about the organization’s work in the community.

“Philanthropy is at the core of everything we do at TTUHSC El Paso, and it’s critical that we support one of the community resources designed specifically for women and men of our region,” TTUHSC El Paso Associate Vice Chancellor Victoria Pineda said.

Event attendees had a firsthand opportunity to hear from former patients of the TTP El Paso Breast Care Center about how the treatment they received positively impacted their lives. They also enjoyed six rounds of exciting trivia and competed for exclusive prizes sponsored by El Paso businesses, including GECU, this year’s gold sponsor.

The Breast Care Center was featured in the Summer 2016 issue of PULSE.



Visit <http://bit.ly/2vFUi9> to read the article or the center’s website at elpaso.ttuhsu.edu/bubblesandbrunch to learn more



Leadership from two Vietnamese institutions visited TTUHSC El Paso for the first time this spring, touring the campus and meeting with TTUHSC El Paso officials.

New International Partnership to Enhance Medicine in Vietnam

BY NADIA M. WHITEHEAD

To advance medical training and education in Vietnam, TTUHSC El Paso recently partnered with the University of Medicine and Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City and Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine, both in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

As part of the collaboration, Hoi Ho, MD, TTUHSC El Paso clinical professor of medicine and director of the Collaborative Educational Program, will spearhead the creation of a Faculty Development Program to train Vietnamese faculty at their respective institutions. Faculty members will attend regular sessions with Ho in Vietnam to learn how to integrate medical education and clinical simulation in undergraduate curricula. Ho, a consultant for the Center for Advanced Teaching and Assessment in Clinical Simulation (ATACS) at TTUHSC El Paso, will also

assist the universities in establishing clinical simulation centers of their own to facilitate more effective medical education.

The ATACS is an integral component of medical education at TTUHSC El Paso. The center uses both mannequins and standardized patients—live people trained to act out clinical scenarios—to facilitate clinical practice. The lab's lifelike animatronic mannequins are designed to replicate the full spectrum of medical conditions, from childbirth to respiratory distress and diabetic symptoms. This unique environment gives trainees a chance to refine their clinical skills and see the effects of clinical decisions that they may encounter in real-life situations.

"Clinical simulation is not only very important for nursing and medical training, but it is also important for performing high-quality services and increasing patient safety," said Ho. "Simulation centers can decrease errors that happen in everyday practice and improve collaboration and communication; I look forward to helping these universities strengthen their medical education by creating a simulation center and faculty development program for each to utilize."

Teddy Bears Help Students Practice Medicine

BY NADIA M. WHITEHEAD



A distressed patient is lying down in pain. He has a broken foot and needs immediate medical care. A stern-looking man in a white coat stands over him, assessing the grave situation.

"All right, so what we're going to do next is set the bone back in place," he tells a group of curious, gaping onlookers. But these are not medical students in training, or even high schoolers shadowing a physician. They're 10-year-olds, and their patient is a giant, human-sized teddy bear.

The students are experiencing their first Teddy Bear Clinic, a mock health clinic where kids take care of teddy bears as stand-ins for real patients. Organized by the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) at TTUHSC El Paso, the event is intended to spark interest in health care careers at an early age.

"I pretended that the bear's foot was broken to an extreme degree, to the point that all the kids gasped," said volunteer and first-year TTUHSC El Paso medical student Benjamin Chang, aka, the somber man in the white coat. "We realigned the teddy bear's leg and pretended to put a cast on it, explaining that it was needed to protect the wound."

\$1.5 Million Grant Funds Cervical Cancer Prevention in West Texas

Navkiran Shokar, MD, MPH, MA, has received nearly \$1.5 million from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) to reduce the burden of cervical cancer in West Texas.

“Hispanic women in our region have a 30 percent higher risk of dying from cervical cancer,” said Shokar, a physician and professor at TTUHSC El Paso. “They also have a higher incidence of cervical cancer and are typically diagnosed at later stages.”

Shokar will use the grant to expand De Casa en Casa, a program that helps uninsured or underinsured Latinas access free cervical cancer screenings. Since its establishment in 2013, De Casa en Casa has provided more than 1,500 pap smears to women in El Paso and Hudspeth counties.

The new funds will help the program expand its service area to 105 additional rural U.S.-Mexico border counties in Texas, stretching from the Big Bend Country to the Panhandle Plains. Cervical cancer test rates in this region lag far behind the national average of 82 percent; only 63 to 71 percent of qualifying residents in these counties have been screened.

“The region has high rates of poverty, low education and low rates of health care coverage, making it the ideal location for health education and free diagnostic screenings to save more lives,” said Shokar.

Shokar and her team will begin the effort by organizing a convoy to visit a 19-county area by the end of the year. The team will offer cervical cancer prevention education, including



A \$1.5 million grant will help expand TTUHSC El Paso's program De Casa en Casa.

a bilingual educational video, and free cervical cancer screenings to qualifying residents. During the visit, the team will also provide training for local nurses and community health workers to increase awareness of cervical cancer, its symptoms and common barriers that women in these communities face to get access to cancer screening and care.

Shokar's ultimate goal is not only to have more women screened but also to educate Hispanics about the importance of regular pap smears for early diagnosis—when cervical cancer is most curable.

Chang's demonstration pulled out all the stops. Before yanking the bear's leg back into place, he and the students dramatically counted down to prep the teddy for the pain of resetting his bone. Afterward, they experimented with stethoscopes by listening to each other's heartbeats, breathing sounds and gurgling stomachs.

“We try to make it as interactive and fun as possible,” Chang said.

In addition to learning about what physicians do, the fifth-graders toured a variety of medical stations. They had the opportunity to play the role of a nurse, take vital signs, conduct a dental checkup and prescribe medications as a pharmacist.

“We try to plant a seed in these students at an early age so that they can eventually enter the health care field,” said Daniel Camacho, director of the AHEC at TTUHSC El Paso. “There is a real health care provider shortage in El Paso and the surrounding region, and with this event we hope to interest more of our talented youth in choosing a health career.”

The Teddy Bear Clinic is traditionally held once a year at an El Paso high school; this year, the center decided to branch out and add a second trip.

With teddy bears in tow, AHEC hit the road in March for Van Horn, Texas, a small, rural community with a population of 2,000. Like El Paso, the city suffers from a health professional shortage—but to an even greater degree. The community does not have a dentist or orthodontist, and its hospital is extremely small, accommodating only 14 beds.

“We have some services offered at our local hospital, but it's not anything close to what's offered in the city (of El Paso),” said Sandra McCoy, district counselor for Van Horn schools. “(Van Horn) really struggles with being able to service patients.”

This limits the exposure Van Horn students have to medical specialists, and in turn, considering a career in the medical field doesn't easily come to mind for most. The shortage also affects school attendance because students must commute to a bigger city to see a specialist.

“In our community, if students need to go to the doctor they miss a whole day of school and education,” McCoy explains.

For this reason, she eagerly welcomes visiting medical programs like the Teddy Bear Clinic. If students are inspired to become health care professionals, perhaps they will one day return to their hometown and help curtail this shortage.

For now, that's a waiting game; a career decision for these children is probably another 10 years away. McCoy, however, is certain the Teddy Bear Clinic's first road trip was a success.

She says, “Who wouldn't love learning with teddy bears?”



Watch a video of the Teddy Bear Clinic's first road trip online at elpaso.ttuhscc.edu/teddy-bear-clinic

JUST *the facts*



7 Students comprised first class of graduates to complete the Veteran to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (VBSN) program. They graduated in December. All seven are employed as registered nurses in Texas.

\$6.06M

Amount of public grant funding **TTUHSC El Paso** received in 2016.



14

Projects have been funded by Our HSC programs on **Amarillo, Abilene, Lubbock and Permian Basin** campuses. Employees at each campus have contributed a combined \$110,000 since the program launched in 2015 to enhance the workplace at their respective campuses. To learn about the funded projects, visit www.ttuhsu.edu/ourhsc



82M

Views on a children's educational YouTube channel produced and scripted by Marie Leiner, PhD, associate professor of research in the **TTUHSC El Paso** Paul L. Foster School of Medicine Department of Pediatrics. Leiner recently received YouTube's Silver Creator Award for her cartoons promoting social learning and mental health in preschoolers.



1,500

Number of volunteer hours logged by members of the **TTUHSC** Student Occupational Therapy Association during the fall and spring semesters. Association members volunteer at several organizations in Lubbock, focusing on children and adults with special needs.



\$24,000

Amount projected to be raised in the first year of the **TTUHSC El Paso** Employee Giving Campaign. Employees are encouraged to give back to the university through payroll deductions to support the university's three schools and campus research.