

## Chair's Message



Welcome to the Department of Psychiatry. Currently, the department is in an unprecedented growth trajectory. Its new home, a state-of-the-art, 200-bed Psychiatry hospital, the Permian Basin Behavioral Health Center (PBBHC) is scheduled to open in April of 2026. The hospital will be a major psychiatric care, teaching and research facility in the region. It will offer comprehensive behavioral health services, including the acute inpatient and outpatient care for children, adolescent, adult, and geriatric population. It will also have a psychiatric Emergency Department and will be equipped with interventional psychiatric tools like Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) and Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS). Additionally, the facility will provide esketamine treatment. It will have a 42-bed forensic unit for individuals in the criminal justice system requiring mental health evaluations and treatment.

We are on a fast track to expand our academic footprint. The psychiatry residency training program is being expanded from the current level of 16 residents to 40 (10 per year) in the next 2 years. In addition to the General psychiatry, the program will soon offer the rural and research tracks. The Child and Adolescent Fellowship that the department currently runs will also be expanded and we propose to start fellowship programs in Forensic and Addiction psychiatry. We are also planning to start a combined Psychiatry-Family medicine residency program which will allow the graduates to practice both, Psychiatry and Family medicine.

Medical students who rotate in the department find our teaching engaging and educational. Since we focus on treating patients using the biopsychosocial model, most medical students learn the psychological and social determinants of diseases for the very first time during their psychiatry rotation.

The department has an active research program in a variety of areas including addiction, consultation-liaison and community psychiatry. Residents get protected research time and are encouraged to take up a research project under faculty supervision. The department publishes over 30 peer-reviewed papers every year. We organize a journal club 4 days a week and clinical staff meet once a week for book club to help develop their professional skills. We will soon begin grant rounds lecture on a regular basis. These lectures will be delivered by prominent mental health experts and international authorities.

We actively collaborate with local academic institutions, such as University of Texas Permian Basin, Midland College, and Odessa College. The collaboration includes training their graduate and undergraduate students in clinical psychology, social work and counseling. The department therefore helps to address the regional shortage of mental health professionals.

The department has a close relationship with the community. It participates in about a dozen community fairs and for the community produces an hour long presentation and discussion on a mental health topic via zoom. This event is organized biweekly and is open to general public. The audience is encouraged to ask questions in these events. Some of these events are included in our website as Mental Munchies. The department also publishes a monthly newsletter (achieved in the site).

To meet needs of the proposed expansion, we are actively recruiting several psychiatrists at Assistant, Associate and full Professor levels. The faculty have ample opportunity to pursue his/her interest in the area of their clinical or research interests.

The faculty, staff, residents and fellows of the department are deeply committed to help our patients. Since we are the major academic center in the region, we take our responsibility to the people seriously. Department therefore is committed to provide the best mental health care to the population of the region and beyond.



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Chairman