There is a saying: “Time is brain.” Once a stroke begins, neurons in the brain begin to rapidly deteriorate, and victims lose 10 percent of salvageable brain for every 15 minutes that they go untreated. Therefore, limiting the extent of damage requires urgent, expert evaluation and treatment. Fortunately for patients in the Houston-Galveston region, those precious moments awaiting treatment do not have to be wasted.

UTMB is a Joint Commission Certified Primary Stroke Center, a designation that recognizes centers for exceptional outcomes in stroke care. The Stroke, Neurovascular and Neurointerventional Program at UTMB provides a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to caring for stroke patients and patients with a wide range of complicated disorders of the blood vessels of the brain and spine, such as brain aneurysms, arteriovenous malformations (AVM), arteriovenous fistula, carotid/vertebral artery stenosis and other various other neurovascular conditions.

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Miss an issue? www.utmb.edu/fridayfocus Submit a story: friday.focus@utmb.edu Friday Focus Team: Mary Feldhusen and Erin Swearingen
Led by Dr. Stephen Busby, medical director of UTMB Stroke Services and director of Inpatient Neurology Services, the stroke program includes an acute stroke team, a dedicated neurosciences critical care unit, and outpatient stroke rehabilitation services. Included on the care team are specialists with fellowship training in stroke, neurocritical care, neurointerventional therapy, vascular neurosurgery, interventional neuroradiology and stroke rehabilitation.

Dr. Busby, with Dr. Anish Bhardwaj, chair of the Department of Neurology, Dr. Eric Walser, chair of the Department of Radiology, and Dr. Venkata Dandamudi, assistant professor of neurology, aim to gain Advanced Comprehensive Stroke Center Certification from The Joint Commission within the next year. Dr. Bhardwaj emphasizes that the UTMB Stroke Center is already successfully providing comprehensive stroke care services to the community with exceptional outcomes.

UTMB is also home to one of only three Level I Trauma Centers in the Houston-Galveston area, the highest level given by the American College of Surgeons. It is the lead trauma facility for a nine-county region of southeast Texas. Level I verification means patients benefit from a full range of every medical and surgical specialty, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. When a stroke patient arrives in the UTMB Emergency Department, they will immediately begin receiving the important care they require.

In addition to providing care for acute stroke patients, Neurointerventional Services are offered at UTMB, led by fellowship trained neurointerventionalist Dr. Dandamudi, who specializes in endovascular techniques for the diagnosis and treatment of conditions of the brain and spinal cord. Conditions treated include subarachnoid hemorrhage, intracerebral hemorrhage, brain aneurysms, arteriovenous malformations, arteriovenous fistula, tumor embolizations of head and neck, epistaxis, venous sinus stenting for medically refractory pseudotumor cerebri, carotid/vertebral artery dissections and carotid/vertebral artery stenting.
UTMB Neurointerventional specialists and a team of specially trained nurses and technicians utilize state-of-the-art, image-guided techniques to deliver endovascular treatments. For patients, the benefits of minimally invasive neurointerventional treatment include very small incisions, less risk, faster recovery, less pain and more importantly, better outcomes than traditional surgery.

The Stroke, Neurovascular and Neurointerventional Program works in partnership with the Transitional Learning Center (TLC) in Galveston, a national pioneer in post-acute care for patients with acquired brain injury. In addition to working closely with referring health care providers, UTMB specialists are planning to utilize Telestroke technology to provide round-the-clock, real-time video consultations for community physicians and providers in rural areas. Receiving prompt evaluation increases the chance that clot-dissolving therapies (thrombolytics) can be delivered in time to reduce stroke-related disability (the therapies must be given within three to four and a half hours after stroke onset), and a decision to transport the patient to a higher level of care, if necessary, can be quickly made.

Dr. Bhardwaj says the next steps for the program include plans to partner with various community care hospitals to enhance delivery of comprehensive stroke care services, developing fellowship training programs, and continuing to work toward acquiring The Joint Commission’s Advanced Comprehensive Stroke Center designation.

Below are cerebral angiograms from patients who received care from the skilled physicians in the UTMB Stroke, Neurovascular and Neurointerventional Program.

Above: A patient in their early 50’s was brought in the the UTMB emergency room with devastating stroke symptoms causing paralysis on one side, and was unable to speak. The patient underwent endovascular clot retrieval resulting in near complete resolution of her symptoms. The arrow in the left photo points to the blocked blood vessel in the brain. The right arrow points to the vessel after reopening.

Above: A patient in their early 60’s presented with a brain aneurysm, notorious for causing devastating brain bleeds. The patient underwent elective endovascular stent assisted coiled embolization, resulting in complete obliteration of the brain aneurysm.
The construction completion date for the new Jennie Sealy Hospital in 2015 is finally within sight, and with more than 1.12 million person hours to date, the facility is still on track to be operational in 2016. Recently, the Friday Focus team had an opportunity to take a hard hat tour of the hospital to check out its progress.

Patients and guests will enter the hospital through the main lobby on Level 2. The first coat of paint has been completed, and ceramic tile installation is 40 percent complete. In addition to the main lobby, Level 2 will be home to a conference center, volunteer and patient services, Hospital Administration offices, and Day Surgery.

The new facility will feature 192 regular medical-surgical patient rooms, with an additional 64 rooms on the 12th floor that will remain as shelled space for the time being. Rooms on patient floors 9-11 will have a spectacular view of the Gulf of Mexico—access to natural light is one of the twelve primary evidence-based design elements of the new Jennie Sealy Hospital. The rooms are also acuity-adaptable and nursing stations allow for maximized visibility of the patient rooms. These features, among other evidence-based design elements, help to create a patient- and family-centered healing environment that promotes healing, quality, safety and efficiency.

Level 8 will be home to the Moody Foundation Intensive Care Complex. The complex is divided into four units totaling 60 patient rooms. This brings the patient room total of the hospital to 316 rooms. The floor will also house a dedicated CT scanner. The ductwork, metal stud framing, mechanical and plumbing installations are approximately 90 percent complete on Level 8.

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Level 7 will be dedicated mechanical space. Patients and most UTMB employees may never step foot on the hospital's seventh floor, but this space is crucial to the functionality of the building. Level 7 will control the air conditioning, electricity as well as the plumbing for every area of the building. By locating the mechanical systems far above sea level, the hospital will remain fully functional in the event of a major storm. Ductwork and plumbing on Level 7 are complete.

Level 6 will remain shelled space for future needs. Meanwhile, Level 5 will house faculty offices for the Department of Anesthesiology, surgery offices, an on-call suite and a resident's suite. Mechanical, electrical and plumbing rough-ins (basic plans) are 99 percent complete and drywall is currently being installed.

The surgical complex on Level 4 will contain 20 state-of-the-art operating suites, including hybrid operating rooms, with space for organ transplant, neurosurgery cystoscopy and orthopedic surgery. Space is also dedicated to pre-op holding and post-anesthesia care. A corridor has been designed on Level 4 that will provide physicians a direct route from the emergency room to the operating suite.

In order to provide continuity throughout John Sealy, the Clinical Services Wing and Jennie Sealy hospital, there will be no Level 3 in the new facility.

The holiday season is a special time to share good cheer with family and friends. But an unfortunate reality of the season is that crime, especially theft, spikes this time of year.

However, you can effectively protect yourself, your family and your personal property from criminal activity by being observant, careful and vigilant. At UTMB, we have implemented a couple of programs to keep our students, staff and visitors on campus safe.

We have increased patrols in the parking lots and garages at UTMB. This is especially important now that it gets dark much earlier in the evening when our students and employees are heading home.

For those students and employees who are on campus late into the evening, UTMB police officers and public safety officers are available to escort them to their car. To request a safety escort on campus please call (409) 772-2691.

We encourage employees to lock their valuables (purses, cell phones, laptops) in a drawer or storage facility when they are not in use during the work day. The best way to protect your belongings is to lock them up when you are not with them.

Students and employees are urged to report any persons or activities that seem suspicious on campus to the University Police Department. One of the very best crime prevention tools available is simply you! Your observations and identification of the unusual or out-of-place are invaluable crime prevention tools.

Keep in mind that some of our buildings, particularly in research and education areas, have less activity than normal during the holidays, so extra vigilance is in order.

For many of us, the holidays are a time for shopping, dining out, attending parties and taking part in other activities typical of the season. Therefore, in addition to keeping safe in the workplace, it is equally important to practice personal safety measures when you are out and about. Here are some timely tips:

• Avoid shopping alone; if you have to shop alone, ask security personnel to escort you to your car.
• Carry cash only when you have to, and keep it in your front pocket. Criminals usually observe their victims before taking action. Cash is very attractive to potential thieves.
• Do not park in dark or dimly-lit areas.
• Lock your vehicle—always, lock your vehicle and hide valuable items out of view. Place your packages in the trunk or under the seats in your car.
• Hold purses close to your person; do not let them hang, and do not cross them over your neck.
• Be fully aware when you are walking in the open. Walk with confidence. Do not be distracted by headphones or your cell phone until you are safely at your destination.
• Tell family or friends exactly where you are going, and check in with them before you leave a shopping mall, restaurant or party.
• Stay alert and keep on your guard. Do not expose your credit card or ATM PIN numbers to those around you. If a credit card is lost or stolen or if unusual charges appear on your statement, contact that Credit Card Company or financial institution immediately. The longer you wait the more damage a criminal can do to your credit.

Online shopping is becoming an increasingly popular method of shopping during the holidays. The following tips provide basic information on how you can prevent online fraud:

• Keep your computer current with the latest patches and updates.
• Make sure your computer is configured securely.
• Choose strong passwords and keep them safe.
• Protect your computer with security software.
• Protect your personal information.
• Online offers that look too good to be true usually are.
• Review bank and credit card statements regularly.

By staying alert, being aware of your surroundings and practicing some of these personal safety tips, you greatly reduce the crime opportunity.

Safe Holidays to All!

UTMB Police
409.772.1111 (for emergencies, please dial 9-1-1)
www.utmb.edu/police
As Thanksgiving approaches, UTMB Health System Leadership and I would like to thank each of you for the incredible work you’ve done this year. One blessing I believe we all share is that we work in a field that positively impacts those whom we serve. We are grateful to every employee at UTMB who goes above and beyond to provide outstanding care and service to our patients and families. No matter what your role, you make a difference!

I would like to especially thank those of you who will work on Thanksgiving Day at the UTMB Health Galveston and Angleton Danbury campuses to assure that our patients receive the care they need. As a small token of our appreciation, we will be offering a Thanksgiving meal to those who are working on November 27. All you need to do is show your UTMB identification badge in the cafeteria to receive your complimentary meal.

I hope that each of you has an opportunity in the coming week to enjoy special times with family, friends and neighbors, and I wish each of you a very Happy Thanksgiving!

“Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received. Thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling. Thanksgiving is the following of that impulse.” —Henry Van Dyke

New! Winter Specials for Inpatient Menus

Morrison’s Food Services now features new daily lunch and dinner specials in UTMB’s Inpatient Menus, presented by Chef Jeffrey Inman. Chef Jeffrey’s passion for cooking simply with fresh ingredients is showcased in a wide range of entrees, including seasonal dishes, like Salmon with Harvest Risotto and Chicken & Wild Mushroom Penne Pasta with Smoked Gouda, to regional favorites, like Shrimp & Cheddar Cheese Grits with Creole Cream Sauce and Chicken & Sausage Gumbo.

Chef Jeffrey hails from Louisiana. His culinary and managerial expertise was honed in restaurants as diverse as the Rainforest Café at the San Luis Resort, Copeland’s Cheesecake Bistro, and Houston’s House of Blues. Since 2012, Chef Jeffrey has served as UTMB’s Executive Chef for Food Service Operations and is a current instructor of Culinary Arts at Houston Community College.

UTMB ADMC Hosts Volunteer Reception

The UTMB Health Angleton Danbury Campus recently hosted an Appreciation Reception and Service Hour Pin Awards Ceremony for its volunteers on November 20. UTMB Health honors and thanks the Angleton Danbury Campus Volunteers for their tireless support, commitment and dedication as we continue to build on their legacy to improve health in the Brazoria County community.
Race, ethnicity, age, physical ability, sexual orientation and gender are all core dimensions of diversity, and these factors all influence how people, as individuals, are perceived and treated by others. Many additional, external factors, such as religion, socioeconomic status, recreational habits, etc., are also components of diversity. Although it is composed of many different facets, diversity encompasses all of the potential differences that affect how we interpret and behave.

On November 18, 2014, members of the UTMB Diversity Council participated in their First Annual Retreat, Race Matters - Results Count!™, with a goal to offer professional development training for council members. The retreat focused specifically on the core dimension of race, and through a combination of storytelling, discussion and experiential exercises, explored how race influences how we work together.

The dimension of race impacts us all—that's why it is important to maintain awareness, explore, and understand how race plays a role in the practice of health care. Although there have been great improvements over the last 50 years, gaps in health care related to race do still exist, and they continue to persist, particularly for African Americans, Hispanic/Latino and Native Americans, despite substantial policy efforts to close the gap.

This is one reason that diversity, from the point of view of both our patients and our workforce, is a core value enfolded into our institutional mission to improve the health of people in Texas and around the world.

Why do these disparities exist?

Disparities in health care for racial and ethnic minorities exist for a number of reasons, such as limited access to affordable health insurance, lower income levels, geographical location, and other societal determinants. In some cases, there are also unique cultural, informational and linguistic needs. Because patients (people) are the composite of their life experiences, culture and individual circumstances, there are many factors that influence their perceptions that may impact the quality of care and/or the interactions they have with their health care team.

The Institute of Medicine's (IOM) report Unequal Treatment, revealed that minority populations may distrust the health care system as a result of historical discrimination; consequently, they may not feel empowered to speak up or may perceive providers and employees as insensitive to cultures and lifestyles that are different than their own. Several studies presented by the NIH affirm that racial and ethnic minorities do tend to receive lower quality of care than non-minorities, and research suggests this could be due to social construct rather than a biological construct; the IOM report also acknowledges that bias and prejudice sometimes play a role in the delivery of health care to racial and ethnic minorities.

Therefore, health care workers and staff must be aware of their own perceptions of different races and ethnicities and the assumptions they may make based upon stereotypes: How much clinical information do we provide to patients based on our perceptions of their education level? Do they receive our full attention? Do we make assumptions about their lifestyle choices? Could a patient’s reluctance be misconstrued as defiance, or frustration as anger? Do we maintain an awareness of cultural viewpoints on medicine, such as alternative/folk medicine therapies?

It is important to understand our perception of race, because it can cause a disconnect between the patient and provider/care team.

How can we overcome our biases?

PRISM International, Inc., a certified, full-service provider of innovative services and training programs for diversity and inclusion, shares six steps for keeping our biases “in check”:

1. Acknowledge that filters are always operational and stereotypes influence our words and behaviors.
2. Identify which filters might be operating in any given situation, and which stereotypes you have intensified.
3. Pause….take a second look.
4. Remove judgment – focus on the behavior (that is occurring).
5. Learn more about the person or group associated with the stereotype.
6. Choose behaviors to build and enhance the relationship to reach your intended goals.

As health care providers and employees, our call to action is to spread the word and create a more PC (personally conscious) academic medical center environment. It is through increased awareness that we begin to create a more inclusive environment that will ultimately impact the delivery of patient-centered care.

The mission of the Diversity Council is to work together to harness the broad spectrum of ideas, experiences and voices that characterizes the UTMB community. On a monthly basis, the Diversity Council will share activities, milestones and accomplishments along with a “Diversity & Inclusion Topic” in the Health System Friday Focus Newsletter.
Dr. Whitney Baker was exceptional, polite, informative and reassuring; the staff was professional and courteous. (Emergency Department)

Dr. Luis Monsivais (resident Pgl-2) was amazing! He was very informative, helpful and thorough. I can’t praise him enough. (Obstetrics)

Rachel Nginyi-Munyoli (Nurse Practitioner) is an excellent health care provider. Her medical staff does a wonderful job taking care of patients. (General Medicine T.E.A.M Clinic)

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Dr. Michael Cook and staff receive an A+ for meeting and exceeding all of my pain needs and referrals. (VLTC Pain and Neurology Clinic)

Dr. Perry Fulcher is caring and easy to talk to about my concerns. (Women’s Health Care Bay Colony)

Crystal Gates is one of the most caring and responsive nurses we’ve ever met. Outstanding! (PCP Harborside Medical Group)

Dr. Michael Boyars was great in every aspect of his care. He was very easy to talk to and understood my concerns. I would be pleased to see him in the future; I know I would receive the best care. (UHC Medicine Specialties)

I have total confidence in Dr. Courtney Williams and the care and concern he provides. I have continued to remain one of his patients for many years, despite having to travel great distance to receive his care. Dr. Williams is a great physician, and one of the most sincere, caring and kindest human beings in my life. I am very grateful to have him for my doctor! (VLTC Pain and Neurology Clinic)

Dr. Jeffrey East is an excellent doctor; he has treated me for years. UTMB has saved my life. Thank you. (UHC Medicine Specialties)

My life was saved in June with the help of Nurse Casaundra Dilworth. (Vocational nurse at Texas City Family Healthcare Center)

I felt that I must write again and thank you and all the workers a UTMB for such a fine hospital. My daughter was a patient in the Oncology unit 5C recently. She received such excellent care, I had to let you know how good your staff is to patients.