Special Issue
Celebrating Excellence at UTMB

IN THIS ISSUE

• Galveston Correctional Managed Care employees recognized for excellence p.2
• UTMB resuscitation and stroke programs recognized by American Heart Association p.3
• UTMB hosts meet and greet for MDACC employees p.3
• Rebecca Clayton recognized during National Nurses Week p.4
• UTMB Nursing nominated for Lone Star Award p.4
• Nina Razo voted “Number One Nurse” in The Facts Readers’ Choice Awards p.4
• Best Care in Action p.4
• UTMB researchers working to stem the tide of opioid misuse p.5-6
• Shout Outs! p.6-7
• You’ve been spotted! Photos from around UTMB p.7-8

Miss an issue? www.utmb.edu/fridayfocus Submit a story: friday.focus@utmb.edu Friday Focus Team: Mary Feldhusen and Erin Swearingen
Galveston Correctional Managed Care employees recognized for excellence

“The cure sometimes, treat often, comfort always.”

HIPPOCRATES

The Owen Murray Awards for Nursing and Administrative Excellence & Lannette Linthicum Meritorious Award Ceremony was held on May 10 to recognize excellence among staff members in Correctional Managed Care (CMC) TDCJ Hospital Galveston. The event coincided with UTMB Nurses & Health System Week, as well as National Correctional Officers Week.

The ceremony was hosted by Dr. Olugbenga Ojo, chief medical officer and chief physician executive for Hospital Galveston. He was joined by none other than Dr. Owen Murray, chief medical officer and chief physician executive, CMC, himself. Dr. Lannette Linthicum, president of the American Correctional Association, was also present. She is the first health care professional to ever serve in the role.

“Nursing is a calling,” said Dr. Murray, “But the nurses in Hospital Galveston truly go above and beyond for a unique patient population.”

**Dora Richard** was the winner of this year’s Owen Murray Award for Nursing Excellence. Richard was recognized by her peers as a gifted communicator and team player who is “always cheerful, always patient centric and goes above and beyond to take care of patients.”

**Analu Forto** was the recipient of the Award for Administrative Excellence. Forto, a patient care technician, received the award because, as those who nominated her describe, “She demonstrates the quality of professionalism, is a team player, is dedicated to the patient, and consistently goes above and beyond.”

The winner of the Lannette Linthicum Meritorious Award was **Karen Cochran**. Cochran, a nurse practitioner, was nominated because she “always makes a difference and provides efficient and effective care.” Those who nominated Cochran say she advocates endlessly for the patients, and that she always listens carefully to those for whom she cares.
UTMB resuscitation and stroke programs recognized by American Heart Association

For the fourth year in a row, UTMB has received the Get With The Guidelines® – Resuscitation Gold Award for implementing and maintaining specific quality improvement measures outlined by the American Heart Association for the treatment of patients who suffer cardiac arrests in the hospital.

In 2014, UTMB was the first hospital in Texas to achieve gold status.

The Get with the Guidelines® – Resuscitation program was developed with the goal of saving the lives of those who experience cardiac arrests through consistently following the most up-to-date research-based guidelines for treatment. Guidelines include following protocols for patient safety, medical emergency team response, effective and timely cardiopulmonary resuscitation and post-emergency care.

Additionally, the UTMB Stroke Program recently received the AHA’s Get with the Guidelines® – Stroke Silver Award, AHA’s collaborative performance improvement program designed to improve adherence to evidence-based care of patients hospitalized with stroke. The Silver Award recognizes quality performance over a 12-month consecutive period.

Kudos to all of the dedicated members of our resuscitation and stroke teams! It is through your hard work that we are able to continue to achieve positive outcomes for our patients!

UTMB hosts meet and greet for MDACC employees

UTMB hosted a meet and greet at the UTMB Health League City Campus on May 17 to celebrate the topping off of the MD Anderson Cancer Center outpatient facility structure. The evening also gave MD Anderson staff an opportunity to tour the specialty care center and have a little fun as they mingled with UTMB employees. More than 100 MDACC and UTMB employees attended the event.

Kent Postma, executive director, hospital and clinics at MD Anderson, and Deb McGrew, vice president & chief operating officer for UTMB Health, spoke on behalf of their respective institutions. The partnership is the first University of Texas System clinical collaboration of its kind and will provide patients in the region with convenient access to high-quality, comprehensive cancer care.

David Marshall and Ann O’Connell discovered the photo booth, and the rest is history...
Rebecca Clayton recognized during National Nurses Week

UTMB Nurse Rebecca Clayton was recognized in American Nurse Today, the official journal of the American Nurses Association, during their “Most Inspiring Nurse” contest, held during National Nurses Week (May 8-12).

Rebecca was nominated by a patient’s daughter for the compassionate care Rebecca gave to the woman’s father, who was recovering from liver transplant surgery in the surgical intensive care unit (SICU). After the patient had spent five months on the unit, Rebecca coordinated a team of fellow nurses, patient care technicians and therapists to allow him to spend a few hours in the sunshine to lift his spirits.

In the nomination letter, the patient’s daughter wrote, “It was soup for the soul for him to have that experience after so many months of not being outside. There was so much trust that we had when Rebecca was there. We were able to rest well because we knew she would make sure he was being cared for regardless if she was the primary nurse, charge nurse, or simply a team member on the unit.”

Thank you, Rebecca, for providing Best Care to UTMB patients!

UTMB NURSING NOMINATED FOR LONE STAR AWARD

Nursing Service has been nominated for its third Houston Press Club Lone Star Award in the Public Relations Category for the 2016 UTMB Health System Annual Report, prepared by Barbara Bonificio, John Carstens, Liana Cannon and Juanita Norton. Each year, the Houston Press Club recognizes Texas’ best media professionals working in TV, radio, magazines. Congratulations!

NINA RAZO VOTED NUMBER ONE NURSE IN THE FACTS READERS’ CHOICE AWARD

Congratulations to Nina Razo (nurse clinician III, UTMB Angleton Danbury Campus surgical services) who has been voted the #1 Nurse in The Facts Readers’ Choice Award. The Facts is Brazoria County’s only daily newspaper and will publish all of the Readers’ Choice Award Winners in the May 26 edition. Way to go, Nina!

BEST CARE IN ACTION submitted by Lori Blackwell, senior administrative manager, University Events Administration

“I wanted to send a quick note regarding my recent interactions with the faculty and residents of the UTMB Orthopedic Trauma department. In February, my daughter, Cameron, was injured playing softball and required their medical expertise. The team, led by Dr. John Hagedorn, far exceeded any expectations we could have. Dr. Hagedorn conveyed the highest level of integrity throughout all of our interactions, expecting the same of his colleagues. This provided us with confidence in the care to be provided at such a critical moment. I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Drs. John Hagedorn, Micah Adamson, Robert Williams, William Wilson, Mr. Andrew Goldstein and Mr. David Helfferich as they made lasting impressions on all of us despite the circumstances. The very thought of surgery is scary and traumatizing, but a caring and compassionate team such as this outstanding group provided comfort and thoughtfulness while making life-saving medical decisions. They provided us support, friendship and the best medical care one could pray for. We will forever be grateful.”
In March, Friday Focus highlighted what the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have called an opioid epidemic in the United States. UTMB has recently launched efforts to develop a multi-level comprehensive education plan on substance abuse disorders for all UTMB providers – from students to faculty – and to educate providers and patients about the resources available within the community, like the Gulf Coast Center Ambulatory Detox Clinic. At the same time, UTMB scientists have been hard at work researching methods to combat the powerful pull of opioid addiction by making discoveries that have the potential to curb this problem nationwide.

Opioids, which include poppy-derived opiates, semi-synthetic opioid derivatives (such as heroin and oxycodone) and fully-synthetic opioids (such as fentanyl and methadone), are an important treatment modality for sufferers of acute and chronic pain. However, these drugs also evoke euphoria and positive subjective effects which drive their abuse liability and continued recreational use. More than four million Americans reported using prescription opioids recreationally within the past month from 2013-2014. Half of those individuals obtained the drugs through a friend or family member, while 22 percent had a prescription written by a doctor1. This dramatic increase in opioid use throughout the United States has resulted in fatal consequences – each day, 91 Americans die from an opioid overdose2.

Individuals who use opioids for long periods of time develop a tolerance to the drugs’ pleasurable effects, but not to the adverse side effects, such as respiratory depression, which can lead to death in an overdose. Individuals who take prescription opioids for an extended period of time also develop a state of physical dependence in which the absence of the drug results in unpleasant symptoms of withdrawal. For this reason, individuals are more likely to seek illicit opioids to evade withdrawal symptoms.

To tackle the opioid epidemic from all angles, it is important to find means to prevent opioid-seeking after therapeutic treatment of pain is no longer required. Underlying tolerance and physical dependence result from actual biological changes that occur in the body throughout different stages of opioid use. Essentially, the brain becomes “hardwired” for the drug, making dependence difficult to treat and increases the risk for relapse, rendering it a chronic illness. Yet, nearly 80 percent of opioid-dependent patients do not receive treatment.

No single treatment is appropriate for all patients, but it is clear that in addition to behavioral interventions that increase the motivation to stop drug use, effective medications approved for treatment of dependence may also help by mimicking the effects of opioids to ease withdrawal symptoms while blocking their euphoric effects. Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, explains, “Recovery is hard, and patients need every tool that medicine can offer.”

Research is clear that extending abstinence as long as possible is necessary for sustained recovery from such substance use disorders. Scientists in the Center for Addiction Research at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) are studying the dysregulation of brain function that accompanies the development of substance use disorders. Identification of key neurochemical substrates that regulate drug taking, drug craving and relapse vulnerability are driving new drug discovery initiatives to develop medication-assistant therapeutics for abused opioids and psychostimulants. The broad perspective is to develop medications that diminish the euphoric feelings of the drugs and reduce the chance for relapse after cessation of drug intake.

A primary target of interest to the UTMB team is serotonin, a chemical substrate in the brain involved in transmitting messages in brain circuitry that regulates reward and motivation, decision-making, and memory processing and formation, all of which are implicated in opioid abuse. Repeated exposure to abused substances alter serotonin neurotransmission and cause irregular functioning of brain circuitry. It is believed that rectifying serotonin dysfunction will discourage opioid intake.

The serotonin 5-HT2C receptor may be the key. Preclinical studies illustrate that loss of function of the 5-HT2C receptor system in the brain contributes to dysregulated reward and motivation in substance use disorders. Lorcaserin (Belviq®), a medication that activates the 5-HT2C receptor, is an FDA-approved medication for weight that suppressed appetite and diminishes food cravings. Interestingly, previous studies have...
shown that these suppressant effects extend beyond food to decrease cravings for nicotine and cocaine.

In collaboration with her colleagues, Dr. Kathryn A. Cunningham, director of the UTMB Center for Addiction Research, recently published a study demonstrating that lorcaserin is effective at reducing drug intake and drug-seeking for the prescription opioid oxycodone in rodents\(^3\). In this experiment, researchers administered lorcaserin to rats who were trained to take oxycodone, a powerful prescription painkiller with high abuse potential that is used to treat acute and chronic pain.

They found that lorcaserin suppressed oxycodone intake as well as oxycodone-seeking during abstinence, even when rats were in the environment previously associated with drug-taking behaviors. Lorcaserin may therefore be useful as a therapeutic intervention that could increase the likelihood that individuals will maintain abstinence after cessation of drug intake, even in tempting environments. In addition to the potential use of lorcaserin to treat addiction, the UTMB team has developed a series of novel chemical entities that target the 5-HT\(_{2C}\) receptor as potential therapeutics for substance use disorders. Additional ongoing research at the UTMB Center for Addiction Research also includes novel therapeutics and vaccines geared toward preventing relapse in substance use disorders (conducted by faculty members including Drs. John Allen, Noelle Anastasio, Kelly Dineley, Jonathan Hommel, Jai Rudra and Jia Zhou).

Epidemiological studies have identified adolescence as the critical “at risk” period for the development of substance use disorders. Of patients diagnosed with substance use disorders, 97 percent initiated drug use during adolescence\(^4\). Jeff Temple, PhD, director of Behavioral Health and Research in the UTMB Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and member of the UTMB Center for Addiction Research, is actively developing, implementing and evaluating school-based programs to promote healthy relationships and prevent the onset of risky behaviors, including prescription drug misuse. Temple’s healthy relationships program is being delivered in multiple school districts throughout southeast Texas.

The outreach teams of the UTMB Center for Addiction Research and Behavioral Health and Research are available to provide key information about the biological and behavioral consequences of drug misuse, substance use disorders and their risks, as well as strategies to quit or cut down on misuse and misuse-related risk behaviors. Please call 409-772-9640 to schedule outreach events.

---

\(^1\) [https://www.samhsa.gov/atod/opioids](https://www.samhsa.gov/atod/opioids)
\(^2\) [https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/](https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/)
\(^4\) [https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/](https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/)
Dr. Joel Patterson is an excellent surgeon. He is honest and right to the point when it comes to my medical concerns. He even showed me the MRI—no other doctor has ever done that! He is great. (Neurosurgery)

I really love the staff and Dr. Premal Patel is the best! I live because of your team at UTMB! Thank you. (Internal Medicine, UHC Medicine Specialties)

Dr. John Phelps is excellent! He is knowledgeable, professional, and caring. I feel confident in his care. His nurses always greet me with a smile and listen to what I have to say. (Obstetrics/Gynecology)

Dr. David Yngve is an amazing doctor who listens well and provides great feedback. He treats me with complete respect. He is a high quality surgeon who has given me excellent care pre- and post-surgery. He is the best doctor ever! (Surgery, Orthopaedic)

This was one of the best hospital experiences I have had. My son needed to have his tonsils removed. Dr. Harold Pine was our doctor. He and his entire staff need to be commended for a fantastic job. It was above and beyond my expectations from everyone. There was a complication in the surgery – not their fault – and we were notified immediately and informed on what was happening as it unfolded (it all turned out okay). The aftercare (PACU) team was wonderful at working with my son and his pain, finally being able to get him to eat some popsicles before we left. The nursing staff in the pediatrics area were very responsive, taking less than a minute to respond when we pushed the call button. They were careful and quiet when doing the nightly checks and were super kind. Even one of the staff waiting in the hall the night before reached out to me — I had gone to my car and gotten lost on the way back when this gentleman, on break, noticed that I was lost. He said, “Ma’am, you came from that direction earlier.” That put me back on track and I was able to find my way again. I have been to some so-called “great” hospitals across the country in my life, but this experience was the best. Great Job!

You’ve been spotted!

This month, UTMB employees have celebrated Health System and Nurses Week, National Corrections Officers Week, Stroke Awareness Month, Red Nose Day, and plenty of other special occasions in between. Check out the photos in the following pages to see if we spotted you!
In recognition of Stroke Awareness Month, UTMB nurses set up a station in the Jennie Sealy Hospital Lobby to take blood pressure and educate visitors on the signs of a stroke.

The Galveston campus emergency department (ED) celebrated “popping to the top” in the recent quarterly Vizient Vitals in Performance report. The ED ranked No. 2 out of 44 reporting members for Length of Stay in the third quarter of 2016. Congratulations to the ED team for their hard work and dedication to excellent patient care and service!

Four second-year nursing students from Swansea University, Wales, U.K. in the U.S. toured the UTMB Health Galveston Campus with David Marshall, chief nursing & patient care services officer, and faculty from the University of Houston School of Nursing.