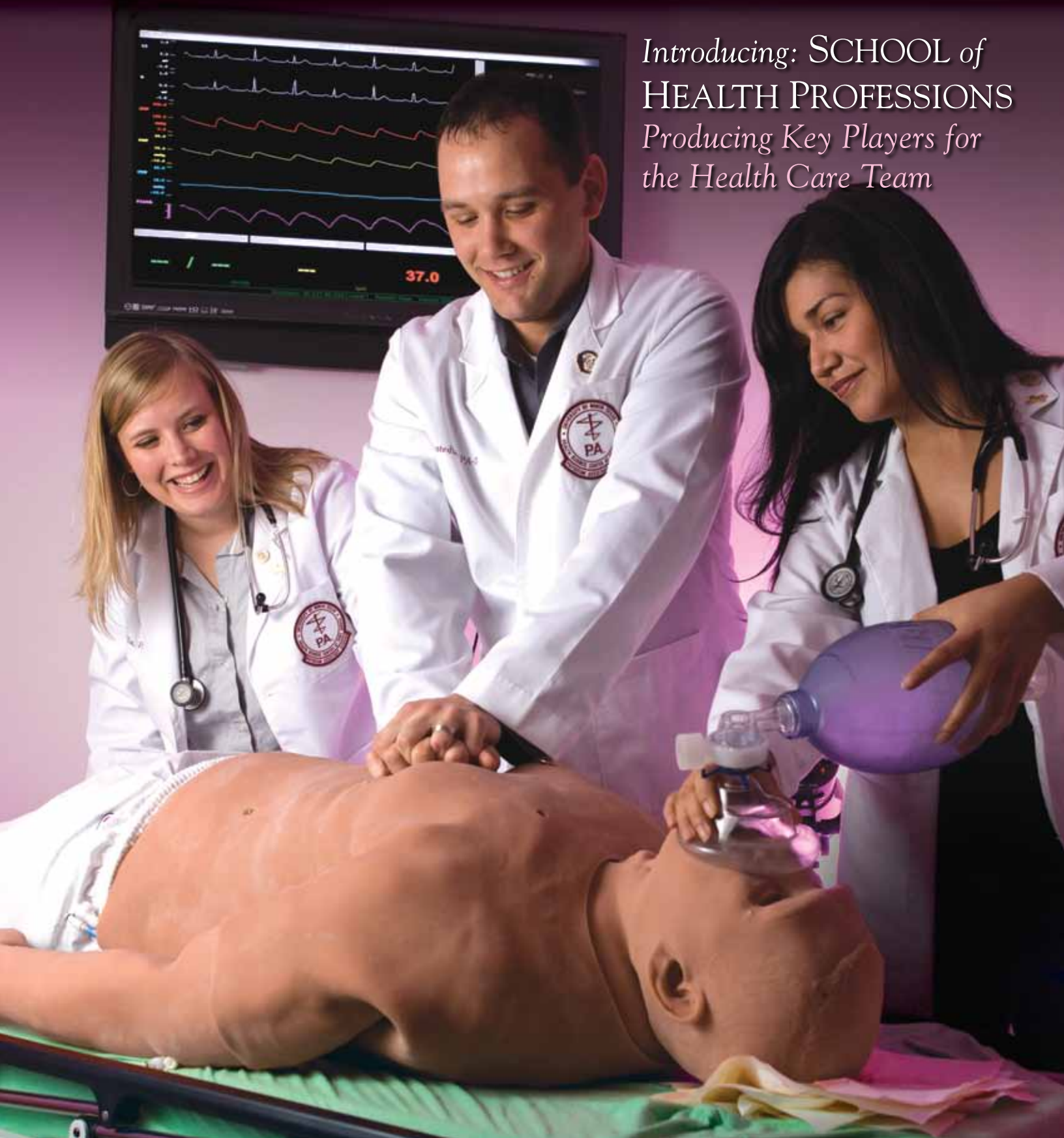


NORTH TEXAS HEALTH & SCIENCE

Spring 2009

The Quarterly Magazine of UNT Health Science Center

Introducing: SCHOOL of
HEALTH PROFESSIONS
*Producing Key Players for
the Health Care Team*



MESSAGE from the PRESIDENT



A wise person once said, "No problem is insurmountable. With a little courage, teamwork and determination, a person can overcome anything." As we move through challenging economic times, I'm heartened by these bright words of wisdom and how fortunate we are to be part of a strong, healthy institution.

I believe that one of our fundamental strengths is teamwork.

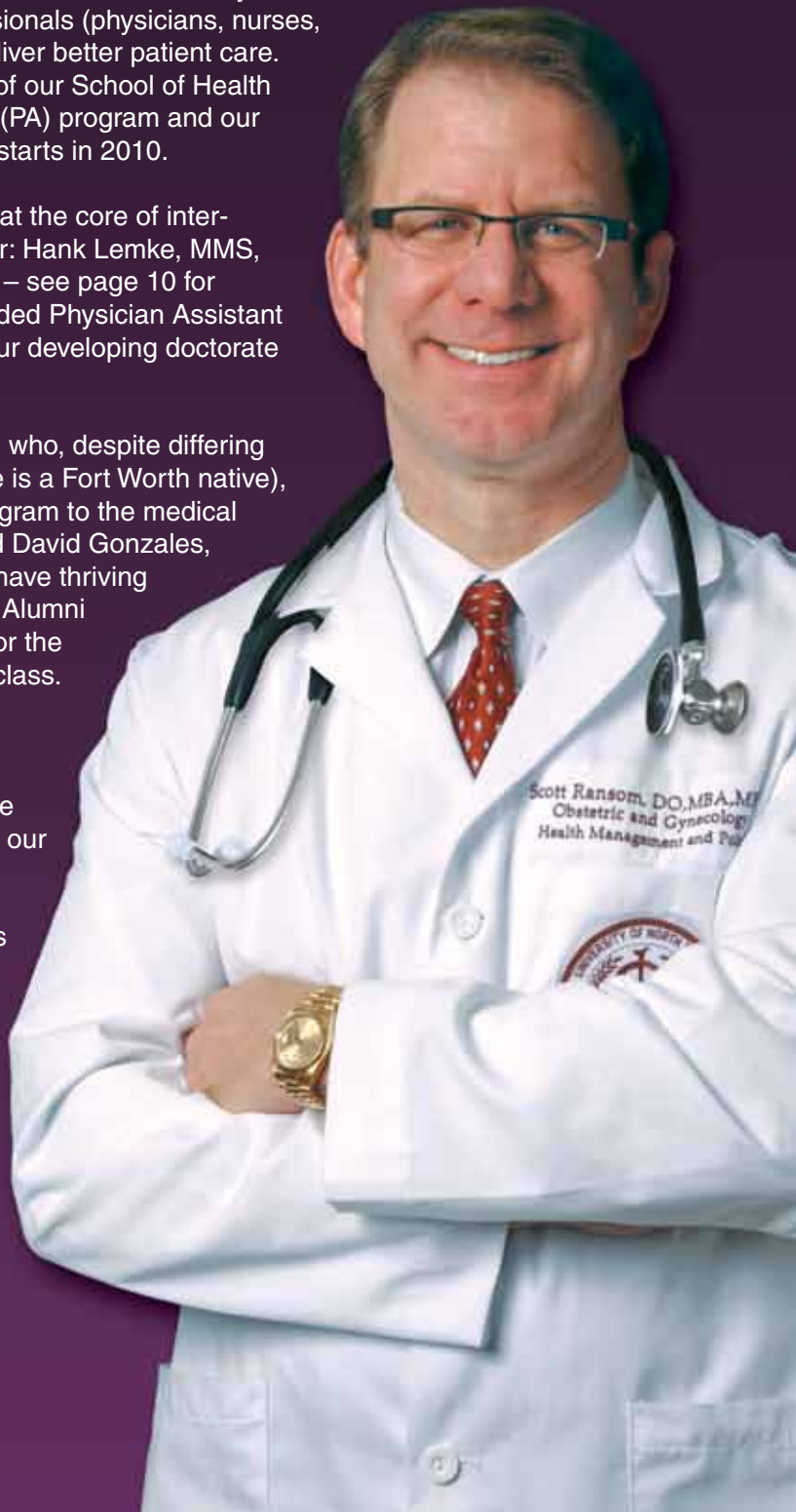
Teamwork is critical, especially as it applies to inter-professional education. That's really just a fancy way of saying that we provide opportunities for students, faculty and researchers to collaborate with health care professionals (physicians, nurses, surgeons and therapists, to name just a few) to deliver better patient care. These teamwork opportunities are the foundation of our School of Health Professions, most notably our Physician Assistant (PA) program and our brand-new Physical Therapy (PT) program, which starts in 2010.

In this issue, you'll meet the people and programs at the core of inter-professional education at our health science center: Hank Lemke, MMS, PA-C, (known to many here as "Hammering Hank" – see page 10 for more details), founding director of our highly regarded Physician Assistant program, and Clayton Holmes, EdD, PT, head of our developing doctorate program in Physical Therapy.

You'll meet PA students Tri Tran and Randy Moore, who, despite differing backgrounds (Tran hails from Vietnam while Moore is a Fort Worth native), share a positive outlook on the value of the PA program to the medical system. Enjoy the heartwarming story of Kelly and David Gonzales, both PA grads ('00) who met on campus and now have thriving careers ... and two sons! And read about what PA Alumni Society President Heidi Medcalf ('04) is planning for the 10th anniversary of the program's first graduating class.

To my mind, teamwork is key to overcoming any obstacle. Drawing on the capabilities of many to move in a unified direction and solve what we alone cannot, we can surely create a better tomorrow for our families, our community and ourselves. Teamwork is at the very heart of our efforts as we continue to build our academic programs, research capabilities and community outreach for the well being of people everywhere.

There's much more in this issue, so read, enjoy and stay tuned as we continue to grow our capabilities and the beneficial outreach of teamwork throughout all our health science education programs. And, as always, please feel free to e-mail me with your comments and suggestions at sransom@hsc.unt.edu.



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PA student Jennifer Johnson

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SCHOOL of HEALTH PROFESSIONS



Clayton Holmes, EdD, PT; Warren Anderson, EdD; and Hank Lemke, MMS, PA-C; celebrate installation of the sign announcing the new School of Health Professions.

Reinforcing Teamwork in Patient Care

*There's a new buzzword in the health care industry: **interprofessional education**. It's simply a multi-syllable way to describe using teamwork to better a patient's health.*

And it's one of the reasons why adding our new School of Health Professions (SHP) makes sense for students, the UNT Health Science Center and the community. Also, the Health Science Center's roots are based in the osteopathic medical model, which fosters a holistic, team-based approach to patient care.

The new school will prepare students for health care professions distinct from physicians and nurses – professions like physician assistants (PAs) and physical therapists (PTs).

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the school in 2004, but it just became a reality when the Health Science Center's established and well-regarded masters-level Physician Assistant program moved into the school. (The program ranks 34th among all graduate-level PA programs in the country by *U.S. News & World Report*.)

The PA program will soon be joined by a new doctorate-level physical therapy (PT) program, which will begin accepting applications in May and begin classes in 2010. Application information will be posted at www.hsc.unt.edu.

Collaboration from the start

Both the PA and PT programs strengthen the Health Science Center and patient care by providing opportunities for collaboration and coordination between students studying health care professions and those studying medicine.

"That's where health care is right now – it's a team approach," said Warren Anderson, EdD, dean of the

new school. "It's a collaborative model, and those who are the best at health care practice this.

"Unfortunately, a lot of health education is done in silos, and the students don't realize until they get into their hospital rotations what the other professions do. Our students will experience a team orientation from the beginning of their education that will become an important strength for them later – and that will benefit you and me when we are patients."

Most of us have experienced the disconnects that can occur when a loved one is cared for by multiple providers. Graduates of the Health Science Center's Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (TCOM) and School of Health Professions will be a step ahead of those from many other universities; they will already be comfortable collaborating with their health care colleagues.

And that's just one way the School of Health Professions will strengthen the Health Science Center, Anderson said.

"We are very selective about the health professions programs we bring to the university," he stated. "Not only must they be compatible with our mission and supportive of our existing programs – they must be strong programs in their own right that will help our existing programs become even better and reach top-10 status."

The physician assistant and physical therapy programs are great examples, he said. TCOM faculty members actually requested the PA program, and faculty from the Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine Department suggested the PT program.

"They see these programs as natural extensions of what they do that enhance the educational environment on campus," said Anderson. "And there are excellent opportunities for research collaboration with these professions."

The PA and PT programs also represent health care professions that are in short supply, are fiscally viable and capable of achieving top-10 status in their own rights. They contribute to all

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UNTHSC missions – teaching, research and clinical services. Any new programs added to the School of Health Professions must meet these tough criteria, he said.

Continuing the evolution

Anderson is continuing an innovative model that's worked in the past for the Health Science Center, which began with TCOM. When the college added the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, "suddenly we had basic science faculty join the medical faculty – molecular biologists and other scientists who were researchers at the PhD level," Anderson said. "That made a big difference, led to a lot of mentoring and allowed us to offer joint degrees – for instance, a physician who also wants a degree in biomedical science."

The evolution continued when the Health Science Center added the School of Public Health (SPH) in 1999 as a response to a community need. It was a risky move since medical schools and schools of public health haven't always worked well together.

"But we looked at it as an opportunity," he said. "Once we discovered how to leverage what we were doing, it became a tremendous asset. The same thing happened when we added the Physician Assistant program, and I expect it will happen again with the PT program. The collaboration among all the schools makes us stronger as a whole."

Will the School of Health Professions add programs for still more of the approximately 200 recognized health professions?

Not immediately.

"We want quality," Anderson said, "and we want to make sure the PA and PT programs are where we want them to be before we add more programs. We will continue evaluating potential programs for the future, but only if they will make us stronger, and if they contribute to patient care teamwork." 📺

Did you know

Doctors and nurses represent the minority of health care providers. They represent just 40 percent of the health care work force.

At 6 million strong, health care professionals represent the remaining 60 percent, and they are professions in demand. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, eight of the fastest growing occupations are health professions.

The UNT Health Science Center's new school is the first state-supported program in Texas to be called health professions rather than allied health, and now others are following the example and changing the names of their programs – just another example of the Health Science Center leading the charge in health care education.



PA's Extend Patient Care

PA Students (from left) Jennifer Johnson, Danielle Forte, Kristi Willis, Kristi Fimbres, Leah Tan and Margarita Sandoval "resuscitate" Stan, a computer-controlled robot that simulates patient symptoms.

It's been 10 years since the first class of physician assistants graduated from the UNT Health Science Center, but the progress made since then has far outpaced its years.

And Hank Lemke, MMS, PA-C, is the proud father. As the founding director of the program, he recalls those early years like a dad reviewing his child's baby pictures.

"We had 12 students in that first class," he said. "We had 44 in the most recent class. We've had a lot of growth and a lot of change during that time." That's one of the reasons why he came to the Health Science Center in 1996 to launch Physician Assistant Studies.

"I knew there was potential here for creating a top-notch program."

The program's advances have been significant and rapid. Just three years after it started, Lemke helped organize other program directors throughout

the state to ask the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to approve a master's-level program. The Board did approve it, and the Health Science Center became the first state-supported university in Texas to begin offering a graduate-level PA program. It resided at that time in the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine.

By the following year, the program had its own faculty and curriculum tailored for the special needs of PA students. The accolades kept coming. The program:

- has been ranked among the best PA programs in the country by *U.S. News & World Report* since 2003.
- graduates candidates who routinely achieve high scores on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam.
- recently received a seven-year accreditation from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for Physician Assistants, the longest period of accreditation the agency grants.

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The latest milestone? Now the program resides in the new School of Health Professions. While Lemke believes the move has been invisible to the students, it allows the program to build the foundation required to increase the class size and continue to grow as a leader in PA education.

He's working closely with Warren Anderson, EdD and dean of the School of Health Professions, to determine what those needs are for growth and quality – and to make sure they get met. The plan is to increase the admitted PA class to 70 students by 2010.

There are serious reasons behind the expansion plans.

Increasing PA student enrollment at the Health Science Center responds to the growing need for physician assistants in Texas and across the nation. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics lists the profession among the 30 fastest growing in the country.

Prospects for PA employment are strong in Texas, particularly in view of population growth and the enhanced roles of PAs in health care. Texas ranks a low 38th in the country for the total number of PAs compared with the total population of the state. In the decade from 2004 to 2014, the Texas Workforce Commission projects a 59 percent increase in the number of PAs needed to meet the needs of its population.

"Physician assistants extend the reach of primary care physicians," Lemke said, and the Health Science Center is helping fill the gap between patients' needs for health care and the number of practitioners out there to provide it.

"About half the PAs we graduate go into primary care, and about 95 percent stay in Texas," he said. "We encourage them to practice in areas that need them, and, as students all of them are required to do a clinical rotation in an underserved area. Many of these are in rural areas, and they often find themselves becoming local celebrities who are written up in the local newspaper."

But he notes that there are underserved needs in urban areas as well. For instance, one of the program's clinical rotations is at a Fort Worth homeless shelter.

In addition to providing practitioners where they are needed most, the program allows Lemke to share his passion. "When I was young, I wanted to be a

doctor," he said. "But I didn't have the money to go to medical school. I became a PA, and now I am able to practice medicine with doctors.

"I fell in love with being a PA. I got to work with patients to help them get better when they were sick. They shared their individual life stories with me, and I was able to play a significant role in moving them to a new direction in their health or thinking. I had an opportunity that not everyone gets."

And he's in a position to make sure others get the chance to pursue their passions. However, the program is selective about who is admitted.

"Last year we had more than 800 candidates in our applicant pool, and only 44 made it in," he said. "We only take the best. All of our applicants have the talent to easily become physicians if they wish. But instead they choose the PA profession. Often it's because of the shorter span of education, the flexibility or the lesser costs to become a PA. But mostly it's because they see the chance to help patients and work directly with physicians without having to shoulder all of the responsibility alone."

When they arrive, they join a family-like atmosphere on a small campus with a faculty that cares about producing quality physician assistants. And, some of them might even find themselves participating in a "fatherly" talk with Lemke.

"I have an expectation that PAs should always strive for the highest standard they can reach," he said. "If I don't feel like that's what they're doing, I point it out to them. I'll ask them, 'is this really what you expect of yourself?' If they say, 'yes,' I'll say, 'are you sure?' I try to show them how far they can reach if they try."

"If they say 'no,' I ask them 'how can you accept that from yourself?' If they aren't reaching the standards they've set for themselves, I work with them until they do."

After all, he tells them, "My job is not to teach you – it's to challenge you to learn."

The facts speak for themselves – Lemke has indeed created the top-notch program he envisioned when he arrived. Like his students, he insisted the program deliver on its potential, and he's still reaching for more. ■

What is a PA?

Physician assistants are skilled health care professionals who practice medicine with physician supervision.

-- Michael G. Clark, PhD, PA-C

And Clark should know. He was the legislative chair for the Texas Academy of Physician Assistants for more than a decade and helped write the state laws governing PAs. He also helped start the PA programs for Texas Tech University and the University of Texas-Pan American.

PAs work as a team with physicians, and they provide an affordable and quality way to extend the reach of doctors, increasingly important in these days when there is a shortage of primary care physicians across the country.

"PAs can perform many medical functions similar to those of a physician," Clark said. "They are

trained in the same medical model of diagnostic and management skills, except in an accelerated manner. The key here is that they perform this in the 'Physician-PA' team model."

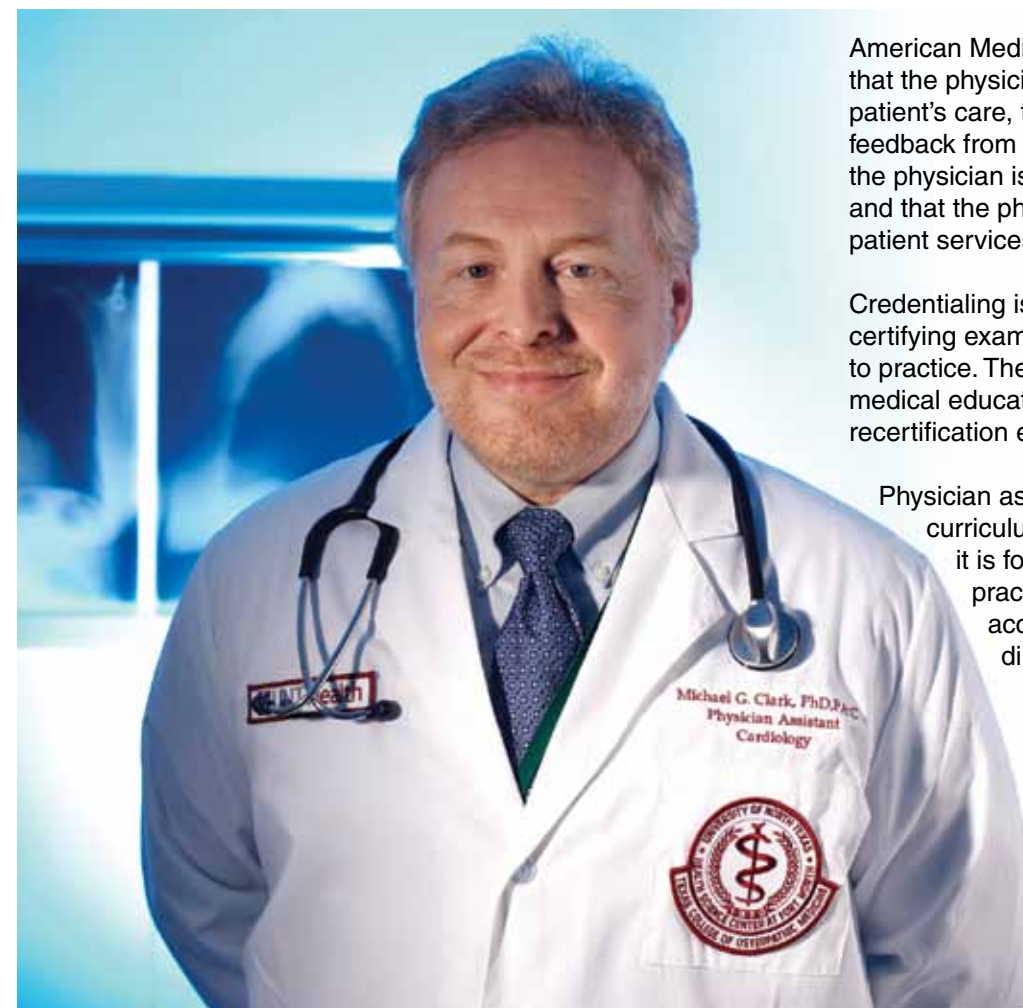
PAs examine patients, order and interpret laboratory and radiologic tests, make diagnoses, prescribe medications, provide patient education and perform medical procedures. They may enter a general or family practice, or they may specialize. PAs' responsibilities vary according their training, experience, state law and their supervising physician's preference. In general, PAs see many of the same types of patients as their supervising physician, although the physician typically sees the more complicated cases or the patients who require care not in the regular scope of a PA's duties. PAs often refer a patient to their physician or consult with their physician on hard-to-manage cases; in fact, a PA's education emphasizes "knowing your limits."

American Medical Association guidelines specify that the physician is ultimately responsible for the patient's care, taking into account appropriate feedback from the physician assistant. They state the physician is responsible for supervising the PA and that the physician should regularly review all patient services delegated to the PA.

Credentialing is tough: PAs must pass a national certifying exam before they may become licensed to practice. They must log 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years and sit for a recertification exam every six years.

Physician assistants' education includes curriculum similar to that of a physician, but it is focused more directly on the everyday practical aspects of patient treatment, according to Hank Lemke, MMS, PA-C, director of Physician Assistant Studies.

"When you are educating medical students, you have four years to prepare them for a residency, where they will receive additional training," he said. "When you are educating PAs, you have 34 months to prepare them to go to work the next day after graduation."



Michael Clark, PhD, PA-C, helped write state laws governing physician assistants.

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Physician training includes extensive coursework on the human body down to the cellular and molecular level, Lemke said. PAs focus more on the outcome of this cellular and molecular activity – and the impact these events have on patients to cause symptoms.

“PAs can safely extend care to patients in many different fields of medicine because they work alongside doctors and are able to regularly consult with physicians who have those specialized scientific backgrounds,” Lemke said.

This idea of accelerated and intense training is not new, Clark said. During World War II when the country needed physicians quickly, two-year medical schools were developed to get medical officers quickly onto the battlefield.

Another war helped prepare the first physician assistants.

“The first PAs were Vietnam veterans – Navy

corpsmen and Army medics – with battlefield medical experience that they couldn’t use at home,” Clark said.

Those same veterans are the reason Clark entered the profession – even though he had a music scholarship to attend college in Tennessee.

“I was an orderly in high school during the latter part of the Vietnam War,” Clark said, “and I talked to a lot of veterans who told me about the PA program, which was a new concept at that time. I decided that’s what I wanted to do.”

He entered the military and became a combat medic, a cardiac catheterization tech and a nurse. Now he specializes in cardiology and helps prepare the next generations of PAs. He believes the Health Science Center is the perfect place to do so.

“The holistic approach of osteopathy is important to the PA philosophy,” Clark said. “This is a great environment to be in.”



Hank Lemke, MMS, PA-C

When Warren Anderson, EdD, dean of the School of Health Professions, first called the U.S. Air Force’s PA School to encourage Hank Lemke to take the Physician Assistant Studies program chairmanship at the UNT Health Science Center, the person on the other end of the line seemed confused.

“I asked for Mr. Lemke and the person who answered the phone didn’t know who I was talking about,” Anderson said. “Finally he said, ‘oh, you mean Hammering Hank!’”

Hammering Hank? Indeed. And he’s got the hammer to prove it. He received it as a gift from graduating Air Force PA students, who inscribed it, “Hank the Hammer, Pounding Out the Best PAs.”

And that’s what Lemke has done throughout his career. He completed his PA education through the U.S. Air Force and directed the Air Force PA Training Program at Sheppard Air Force Base near Wichita Falls, Texas, before retiring from the military.

He serves on the editorial review panel for The Journal on Physician Assistant Education, and he is past president of the Texas Academy of Physician Assistants and the Society of Air Force Physician Assistants. He is currently a national commissioner on the Accreditation Review Commission for the Education of Physician Assistants and a fellow in the American Academy of Physician Assistants. And he’s still pounding out the best PAs.

PAS Graduates Find Love for a Profession ... and More

David and Kelly Fenimore Gonzales, both PA Class of 2000 graduates, entered this millennium with treasured new degrees from the Health Science Center’s Physician Assistant Studies program and an even richer reward – each other. They married, have two sons and say that because they both are PAs, their family life is even more successful.

“This career has allowed me to balance my family and my schedule,” said Kelly, who works part-time at the MaxHealth clinic in Colleyville, Texas. David, who practices emergency medicine at the Baylor Grapevine Regional Medical Center, works full-time, which means 12 10-hour shifts per month.

“You can’t put a monetary value on the rewards,” David said. “You might see 100 patients, and if just one of them tells you ‘thank you so much for taking care of my daughter,’ it makes it all worthwhile.”



David and Kelly Gonzales, PA-Cs, class of 2000

They want to make sure future PAs from the Health Science Center reap the same rewards. Both mentor students and teach in small groups. David is former president of the Physician Assistant Studies Alumni Society and a frequent guest lecturer here in emergency medicine.

“Actually, being a mentor is a reward in itself,” he said. “You get to see the students prosper, and you know that they will be good PAs and colleagues.”

Kelly’s route to becoming a PA was not a direct one. She earned a bachelor’s degree in finance and was working as an analyst for what she calls a “boring” Houston oil company. When her cousin became ill, that route started taking a course correction when she began volunteering for the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center and the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

“I had no clue that I would end up in this profession,” she said. “But I kept wondering about these kids who had once been perfectly healthy – what was going to happen to them? Then I knew I wanted to be in medicine.” When a friend suggested she become a physician assistant, Kelly said she’d found a new career.

“Being a physician assistant allows you to practice

medicine in a team setting,” she said. “You don’t go to school as long as you do to become a physician, but you get on-the-job training while earning a good income – and there is a lot of flexibility.”

David’s route had almost laser focus. He was working as an X-ray technician when he joined the “Future PA” group at Texas A&M University.

“I’ve always wanted to take care of patients,” he said. “PAs evaluate, diagnose and treat patients alongside physicians. We are extenders of physicians.”

What do they tell current PA students?

“I tell them to take time for themselves,” David said. “Study hard, but also play hard. Make time for your loved ones. It makes you a better person, and you’ll get more from your studies.”

Kelly advises students “to be supportive of each other and learn all you can. But realize that you’ll never stop learning even after the ‘PA-C’ (Physician Assistant Certified) designation is behind your name,” she said. “Use good judgment in knowing when to ask your physician for help, and most important, represent well. It’s a great career.”

Physician Assistant

Studies Class of 2010

Nine years ago Tri Tran, Physician Assistant Studies Class of 2010, was a physician practicing internal medicine in Vietnam. Now he's studying at the Health Science Center to be a physician assistant who practices in a hospital or clinic – and to do charity work in a setting where he can help people who speak predominantly Vietnamese.

"I understand Vietnamese medical terms fully and can speak easily with Vietnamese patients," he said. "There is a need for that, especially for those who have just arrived in this country."

He's finding the transition to the U.S. medical model satisfying. After graduating high school in Vietnam, Tran, then 19, went directly to medical school for six years.

"I had to take a very competitive exam to get in," he said. "There was no four-year pre-med program. In the United States, you begin medical school or a PA program with a strong academic foundation already. It's a good system."

Tran decided being a physician assistant would be a better option for him than working as a physician, giving him an opportunity to update his medical knowledge while mastering the English language and the American culture.

Tran arrived in the United States in 2000 after having practiced medicine in Vietnam for more than four years. In order to continue his medical career in the United States, he first took English and social science classes at Eastfield College in Mesquite, Texas, and worked as a tutor in biology and mathematics. While pursuing a bachelor's degree in neuroscience from the University of Texas at Dallas, he applied to the Health Science Center's Physician Assistant Studies program.

"UNTHSC has a great PA program," Tran said. "It's 34 months long, which is a good amount of time to absorb medical knowledge. Other programs are only 24 to 26 months long."

He's just beginning his clinical rotations, something he said he's very much looking forward to.

"I'm hoping to learn something new from the health care system here – I'm really excited about that," he said. And he's also excited about applying that knowledge to help others.

"The most important thing is to serve patients," he said.

It's almost as though it was pre-determined that Randy Moore would choose medicine for a career and study at the Health Science Center. The first clue happened the day he was born – at the Osteopathic Medical Center of Texas that once stood next to campus.

Then there was the imaginary "hospital" that he and his brothers staffed growing up in their south Fort Worth home – using a white coat and stethoscope belonging to their mother, a nurse's aide.

At age 10, he began caring for his grandmother, who had diabetes, administering insulin injections when needed. He often accompanied her to appointments at the Osteopathic Medical Center, wondering what the campus next door with all the buildings was all about.

"And now I'm here," Moore said, and he's pursuing a career as a physician assistant, Class of 2010. "It's kind of ironic." Or maybe it's destiny.

It hasn't been easy. His was a challenging neighborhood for a child growing up, and he remembers being ostracized by classmates who made fun of his studious ways. There wasn't money for college, so Moore joined the Texas Army National Guard and received a prestigious scholarship from the Ronald E. McNair program. He graduated from East Texas' Wiley College with a degree in biology.

After graduation the National Guard sent him, then an E-4 Specialist, to serve as a medic in the Sunni Triangle area of Iraq. He enrolled at the Health Science Center when he returned to the United States.

"I particularly chose UNTHSC because of the extended clinical rotations," he said, noting that most PA programs are only 24 months long.

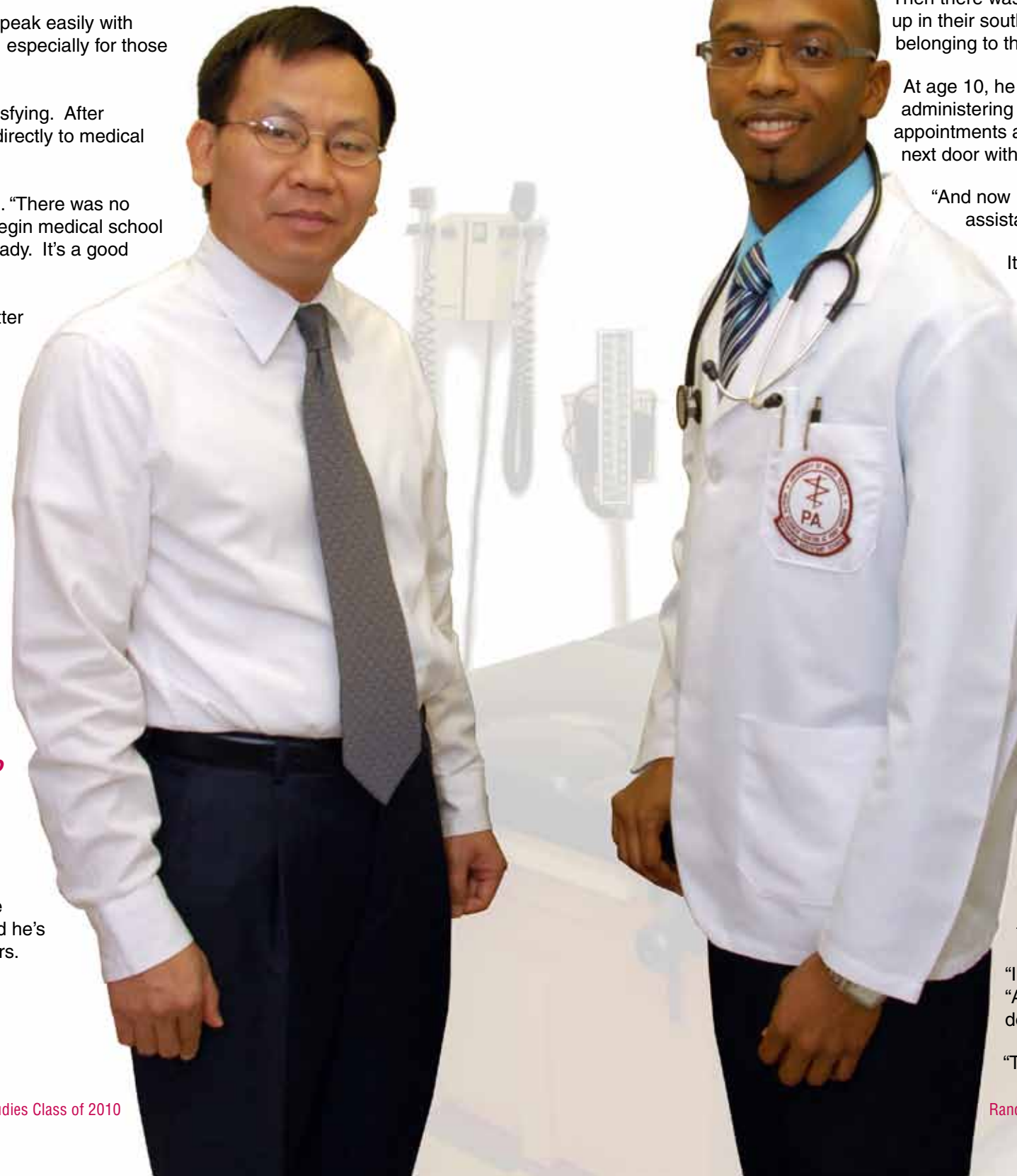
Now on the cusp of beginning his clinical rotations, Moore says, "I definitely made the right decision. I love it. I love the way the faculty teaches here. They encourage you to talk to your patients, and I want to get to know my patients."

Another reason he chose the Health Science Center was because it requires a master's research project. When he completes the Physician Assistant Studies program, he says he wants to work in an economically deprived area, treating "people who aren't going to the doctor because they don't have the money."

It's not something he could have imagined when he was a child traveling to the Osteopathic Medical Center with his grandmother.

"I'm one of the few to make it out of my neighborhood," he said. "And not only have I been able to further my education, but I'm doing what I want to do."

"Thanks to God, I'm actually living my dream." 🇺🇸



Tri Tran, Physician Assistant Studies Class of 2010

Randy Moore, Physician Assistant Studies Class of 2010

Physical Therapy

Restoring Function, Alleviating Pain and Delivering Collaboration in Health Care

The human body is a testament to graceful engineering. Legs stride, arms reach, torsos bend and fingers grasp in a balletic balance of physiology and physics where function follows form.

But when this balance is disrupted, function may become difficult – or even impossible. The body may react with pain, most commonly in the lower back or neck. Overall well-being suffers.

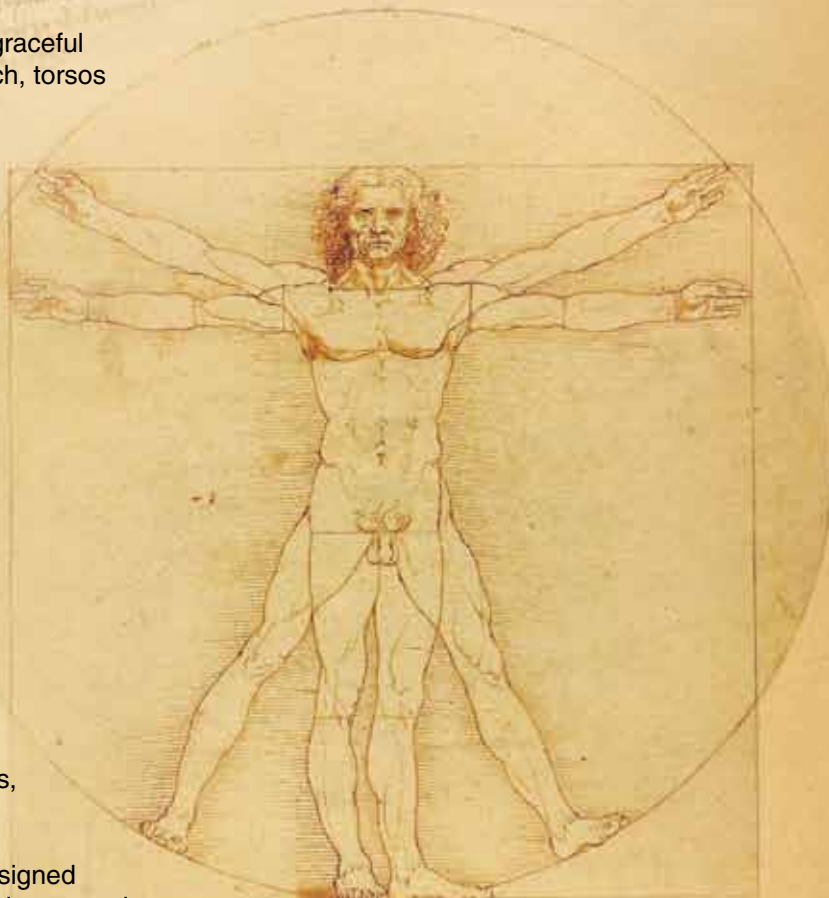
Fortunately, there are health care professionals trained to restore form and alleviate pain – physical therapists.

The Health Science Center will begin offering a new doctorate program in Physical Therapy (PT) in the summer or fall of 2010, led by department chair Clayton Holmes, EdD, PT.

Physical therapists use specially designed exercises and equipment to help patients regain or improve their physical abilities. It's not a new discipline, getting its start immediately after World War I. Demand for PT practitioners increased dramatically following World War II as soldiers rehabilitated from their injuries. The polio outbreak of the 1940s and 1950s further increased demand for treating polio-weakened bodies.

Holmes said the Health Science Center's new physical therapy program will include a distinctive focus on manual therapy and the osteopathic model, as well as a strong focus on rural physical therapy. This approach complements two of the Health Science Center's greatest strengths: osteopathy and rural medicine.

It's an example of collaboration that's the foundation of the new School of Health professions – bringing health professions programs to the Health Science Center that are individually strong and that make our existing programs even stronger.



PT meets OMM

"I came to UNTHSC because the institution wants physical therapy to be an integral part of the university overall," Holmes said. "We have a strong relationship with the Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM) program."

Warren Anderson, EdD and dean of the newly established School of Health Professions, noted that this approach is breaking new ground.

"We are experimenting with mixing the osteopathic model with traditional physical therapy," Anderson said. "Both physicians and physical therapists tell us they believe this is a sound approach, and I wouldn't be surprised if others adopt this model."

Holmes pointed out that there are six other

osteopathic medical schools that also offer PT, but "to the best of my knowledge, there is no collaboration between the two in any of them," he said. "Here there is a collaborative culture, and the Health Science Center made the conscious decision that physical therapy would be a good fit."

Practitioners in rural settings

Holmes plans to capitalize on the Health Science Center's strength in rural medicine by developing a Physical Therapy Rural Track program.

"I'm from a small town – Nixon, Texas – and we need physical therapists in the rural setting," he said. "A lot of PTs – like a lot of physicians – are now going into specialties. But rural practitioners will need to be generalists with strong diagnostic skills who work well with physicians."

The Health Science Center's clinical emphasis will further strengthen the program. Holmes pointed out that the professors in the classrooms will actively be seeing patients.

"Most academic programs don't have a clinical practice at the department level," he said, "but many of the best ones do."

Leading-edge model

Holmes is already envisioning the results.

"We hope to have a nationally ranked program with a strong research effort and clinical practice while producing outstanding PT generalists," he said. "In addition, we'll have a strong manual therapy program because of our close association with the OMM program. And we'll have a strong track for rural practitioners."

The timing is perfect as the demand for physical therapists is growing more quickly than ever and now ranks among the top 30 fastest growing professions, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The United States has a growing geriatric population, and studies show that 80 percent of Americans will develop lower back pain during their lifetime.

"At some point, just about everyone will need physical therapy," Holmes said. And there are real advantages to treating mobility-related issues with physical therapy.



Clayton Holmes, EdD, PT, is chair of the new Physical Therapy Program, which will begin classes in 2010.

First, it works. Research shows that both PT and osteopathic manipulation can significantly improve lower back pain, among other conditions.

Second, it's cost efficient.

Third, practitioners are able to spend considerable amounts of time with their patients. Holmes said he spent an average of 30 minutes with each patient, and some CPT codes are even paid in time increments.

"Physical therapy – due to its intrinsic nature – puts a premium on human interaction," Holmes said. "That's what draws a lot of people into the profession."

And fourth, it's compatible with the growing trend toward "interprofessionalism" – team-based health care. PTs today work closely with physicians and are "already good team members," Holmes said. ■

Eri Yoshimura, piano performance doctoral student at the UNT Denton campus, studies data about hand positioning on piano keyboards.

Music & Medicine

Unique collaboration combines performing arts and science

When Eri Yoshimura begins to play, beautiful music fills the air. Her eyes close, and her body sways in time to the prelude. Her small hands glide over the keyboard gracefully, fluidly, as if they were tiny ballerinas on a miniature stage.

When she's not performing, though, this University of North Texas (UNT) piano performance doctoral student is part of a collaborative study between the Denton campus and the UNT Health Science Center, designed to measure benefits to a pianist's hands when using a special modified keyboard. This information can then be used to educate musicians who teach musicians and help prevent pianists – especially those with small hands – from developing pain caused by playing keyboards.

"We're looking at hand function in piano players," said Rita Patterson, PhD, professor and director of the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation Physical Medicine Core Research Facility (OHFPMCRF). "We've developed hardware and are collecting data on hand position and function while playing piano."

The study is funded by the Joint Institutional Seed Research Program, an intramural grant designed to foster collaborative, innovative research conducted jointly by UNT and the UNT Health Science Center faculty – in this case Patterson; Shrawan Kumar, PhD, OHFPMCRF professor; and Kris Chesky, PhD, director of UNT's Texas Center for Music and Medicine.

Yoshimura has studied piano-related pain among pianists in the past. She and Chesky published a paper in September 2006 concluding that 86 percent of college students majoring in piano experienced playing-related pain, with lack of flexibility and small hand span as contributors. This Joint Institutional Seed Research grant will allow researchers to quantitatively measure what happens when a player sits down at a keyboard and begins to play.

One possible answer to alleviating the pain certain players feel while performing is the ergonomically modified Steinway piano that UNT students use in

an effort to reduce such problems. The keyboard has narrower keys designed specifically for performers with smaller hands.

"We're measuring hand size, hand position and how hard they're hitting the keys," Patterson said. "Our technology will give us a thorough motion analysis as [the student subject] plays. There are 30 students, and we're gathering enough data to keep me busy for a long time. We can easily have two more dissertations worth of material."

Patterson said the researchers are using sensors on the players' hands that measure how far the hands must move to reach some of the chords common in piano pieces. Sensors under the piano keys measure how hard the player strikes the key while playing.

"We're working on synching these systems properly," Patterson said. "This will make the data easier to analyze."

Yoshimura has played on the modified keyboard in the past – her first concert on the new piano, also the first at UNT, was a performance in 2006 of the complete 24 Preludes by French composer Claude Debussy.

"We are the first school to offer this [modified keyboard] to students," Chesky said. "It's a major departure from the norm and hugely significant because many people pursuing piano at the college level are Asian females. But this population has smaller hands than the average male, for whom standard pianos were designed."

"It's like someone who is used to driving a 1987 Impala suddenly getting into a Ferrari. They just have much more flexibility and ease of playing. It's really quite remarkable."

Yoshimura, who came to UNT from Osaka, Japan, 10 years ago to pursue a second bachelor's degree in music, a master's degree and now a doctoral degree, said traditionally sized keyboards do cause her pain.

"I have very small hands. When I span a chord or octave, I have to stretch my hands a lot, so I feel the tension in my arms," Yoshimura said. "There are many pieces with big chords, so the repertoire I can play is limited."

"Musicians are like athletes: they're highly motivated, and they won't tell you when they're in pain," Patterson said. "They just keep playing. Dr.

Chesky has found that the repetitive use of certain muscles, hunching over, playing 24/7, causes musculoskeletal problems. We've partnered to look at this. Hopefully we'll have a long history together."

This dual-campus project has since grown, though, to include a third. George Kondraske, PhD, professor of electrical and biomedical engineering at the University of Texas at Arlington and founding director of UTA's Human Performance Institute, is joining the investigation.

Patterson said she had heard of Chesky's work with musicians, studies for which Kondraske had fashioned hardware.



Sam Durham, PMI Research Engineer, demonstrates sensors used to record and measure hand movements.

"Dr. Kondraske modified what Dr. Chesky had to fit our needs," she said. "Because we both have history with him, we're rolling him into this project, and he will be included in any proposals for additional funding." Patterson said despite the distance between the three campuses, the study has proved to be a productive partnership.

"If you have competent people on each end, it works," she said. "We've been to the Denton campus a couple of times to see the data collection. And e-mail's great."

The team hopes to continue this pilot program with more grants.

"We'll probably have enough data with this initial study to publish, but it's crucial that we expand this study and apply for federal funding," she said. ■

CAMPUS FACILITY UPDATE

'Living Legacy' honors special people while greening campus



The new Living Legacy program, sponsored by the Health Science Center's Facilities Management Department, offers an opportunity to plant a living, growing memorial on campus for someone special.

The public program, founded by Facilities Management's Assistant Director Jason Hartley and Grounds Foreman Dean Conine, will not only help "green up" the campus as called for in our master plan, but also provide a way to remember lost loved ones, commemorate special events like a birth or mark any occasion by planting a tree or sponsoring a flower bed on campus.

Tree purchasers may attend their tree-planting and plant the tree themselves, have Facilities staff help or let the staff do all the work. Those who prefer to adopt a planting bed pay a one-time fee, based on the bed size and plants chosen, which allows the adopter to help select the plants, that Facilities will install.

A special Web site will allow sponsors to see photos of their tree or plants, updated as they grow. Plantings will be marked with an 8.5-by-11-inch oak plaque bearing the honoree's name. The plaque will be given to the sponsor after a year.

All proceeds will be used for the Living Legacy program. Facilities will provide \$100 toward the cost of any 95-gallon tree purchased.

"My tree will be for my grandmother, who has passed away," Hartley said, "but it doesn't have to be only for those who have passed on. It could be for a newborn. The TCOM class of 2012 is planning to plant a tree for the people who donate their bodies to our Willd Body Program."



Facilities Management's Grounds Foreman Dean Conine and Assistant Director Jason Hartley.

The program is designed to make the campus more attractive.

"We have a 33-acre campus, and, right now 27 acres of that is concrete," Hartley said. "One goal for the Master Plan is to be a good, greener neighbor. I think Living Legacy is an exciting and unique way to do that while commemorating someone special."

Participants may choose from red oak, live oak, sweet gum, lacebark elm, desert willow, red bud and Little Gem magnolia trees. Prices range from \$200 to \$500, depending on the size of the tree. 🌳

More information is available at: www.hsc.unt.edu/Sites/LivingLegacy/



IN *the* COMMUNITY

Cowtown Marathon breaks records

A record 17,829 runners pounded the chilly Fort Worth streets Feb. 28 in six different races known collectively as "The Cowtown." This year the UNT Health Science Center sprinted beyond its role as founder and sponsor to become title sponsor.

The 31-year-old event, comprising a marathon, ultra marathon, half marathon, 10K, adults 5K and kids 5K, reflects the Health Science Center's overall mission of promoting health in Fort Worth and North Texas.

Weekend activities began Thursday, Feb. 26, with a kickoff reception for all sponsors and Cowtown Board members, hosted by the Health Science Center. On Friday, more than 700 people visited the inaugural UNT Health Fair, taking advantage of blood glucose, bone density and blood pressure screenings and body mass index calculations, as well as osteopathic manipulation treatments (OMT) provided by Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (TCOM) students.

Community Engagement staffed a two-day Health and Fitness Expo booth, greeting runners with UNT Health-branded lip balm. In the medical tent on race day, Al Yurvati, DO, (TCOM '86), professor and chair of the Department of Surgery, served as medical director, and TCOM students assisted as medical crew and provided OMT to appreciative runners.

Health Science Center employees and students volunteered in a variety of key capacities, and some even crossed the finish line as participants.

SPH hosts first Research Collaborative

The School of Public Health (SPH) recently hosted the first regional public health Research Collaborative, inviting Metroplex organizations to join together and discuss future research collaborations. Participants presented information on their own research interests and activities and discussed key areas for working together in the future.



A record number of racers participated in the 2009 Cowtown, presented by the UNT Health Science Center.

Joining the meeting were representatives from Baylor Health System's Institute for Health Care Research and Improvement, Cook Children's Health Care System/UNTHSC Department of Pediatrics, the DFW Hospital Council Education and Research Foundation, Southwestern Medical School's Department of Family and Community Medicine, Texas Health Resources' Research and Education Institute, Texas Department of State Health Services, Tarrant County Health Department, UT Arlington School of Nursing, UNT College of Public Affairs and Community Service and the UNT Institute of Applied Sciences.


Participating from the Health Science Center were the Center for Community Health, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Institute for Primary Care Research, Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine and SPH faculty representatives. 🌳

NEWS

UNIVERSITY of NORTH TEXAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER



ORC study shows more DOs treat lower back pain

 Recent research by **John Licciardone, DO, MS, MBA**, found that the percentage of visits to primary care physicians for lower back pain is too low, and surgery to correct the situation is too often recommended over counseling and prescriptive therapy.

DOs were more likely than MDs to provide medical care during patient visits for lower back pain. In addition, the study, sponsored by the Osteopathic Research Center, found that osteopathic physicians prescribed drugs less often than allopathic physicians in treating low back pain.

Licciardone is professor and executive director of the Osteopathic Research Center and Osteopathic Heritage Foundation Clinical Research Chair. The study appeared in *Osteopathic Medicine and Primary Care's* November 2008 edition.

Religion-based support improves mental, physical health

Church-based social support networks may help improve mental and physical health, according to a study conducted by **Elena Bastida, PhD**, associate dean for research in the School of Public Health. The federally funded study analyzed the effects of religious beliefs on support late in life.

"Core Religious Beliefs and Providing Support to Others in Late Life," published in the journal *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, studied how strong church-based social support networks may be the result of key religious beliefs. The study measured spiritual connectedness – an awareness of the bond and sense of the interdependence among people.

Data from a national survey of older people in the United States revealed that a strong sense of

spiritual connectedness is associated with providing more emotional support and tangible assistance to fellow church members. The data further revealed that older people with a strong sense of spiritual connectedness are more likely to pray for others. The study was funded by the National Institute on Aging, part of the National Institutes of Health.

Eating less may not increase life expectancy

Michael Forster, PhD, professor of Pharmacology and Neuroscience, and **Raj Sohal, PhD**, of the University of Southern California's School of Pharmacy, have discovered that eating less may not be a key to living longer.

The Forster-Sohal study found that lean mice that ate fewer calories did not lengthen their lifespan – a dietary factor which may be true for humans as well. Caloric restriction was beneficial to obese mice in the study, however. The study was funded by the National Institute on Aging, part of the National Institutes of Health. Results from the study were published in *The Journal of Nutrition*, *Scientific American*, *Asian News International*, *Medical News Today*, *Science Daily* and *ScienceBlog.com*, among others.

UNTHSC faculty publish other research findings:

Peter Raven, PhD, professor of Integrative Physiology and assistant dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, published a study that yields new information about blood pressure during exercise in *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*. Results from the study were also published in *Life Science Weekly*, *Blood Weekly*, *Biotech Week* and others.

Adnan Dibas, PhD, research associate professor


of Pharmacology and Neuroscience, published findings on enzyme research, particularly related to glaucoma, in the journal *Molecular Vision*. The study found that modifying a protein may eventually lead to axon degeneration. Results from the study were also published in *Proteomics Weekly*.

Shigehiko Ogoh, PhD, research assistant professor of Integrative Physiology, found that cerebral autoregulation and the autonomic nervous system work together to regulate cerebral blood flow during exercise. The results of his study were published in *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, *Science Letter*, *Life Science Weekly* and other publications.


A team of researchers from the Department of Molecular Biology and Immunology, along with researchers from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, shed new light on the understanding of disintegration of cells. The research team, whose study was published in the *Archives of Biochemistry and Biophysics*, *Health & Medicine Week*, *Biotech Business Week* and others, included: **Abha Sharma, PhD**, research assistant professor; **Rajendra Sharma, PhD**, research associate professor; **Pankaj Chaudhary,**

PhD, postdoctoral research associate; **Sanjay Awasthi, MD**, professor and associate vice president of Research; and **Yogesh Awasthi, PhD**, professor.

The Center for Commercialization of Fluorescence Technologies partnered with the Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami and the Institute of Physics at the Marie Curie-Sklodowska University to use fluorescence to study activity in cardiac contractile fibrils of skeletal muscle. They found the lifetime of a fluorescent marker was high in the presence of actin, a component of muscle plasma important to muscle contraction. Findings were published by the American Chemical Society News Service.

Research by **Roberto Cardarelli, DO, MPH** (TCOM '01, SPH '01), and **Jennifer Thomas**, GSBS student, is featured in the January – February 2009 issue of the *Annals of Family Medicine*, a peer-reviewed research journal focusing on new, evidence-based information affecting the primary care discipline. Their research assesses the relationship between having a personal health care provider and receiving colorectal cancer screenings. 

Texas College of
Osteopathic Medicine
Reunion
Weekend
Classes of:
1979 • 1984 • 1989 • 1994 • 1999 • 2004



Save
the
Date

September 11-12, 2009

Physician Assistant Studies
Reunion
and 10th Anniversary
Celebration



Save
the
Date

May 1, 2009

If you are interested in attending these events, please contact the Alumni Office:
817-735-2278 or email us at alumni@hsc.unt.edu

Applause!

Rhonda Roby, PhD, project coordinator at the UNT Center for Human Identification, was invited to speak as part of The Dallas Regional Chamber's Distinguished Women Leaders Lecture Series presented by *The Dallas Morning News* on Dec. 2.

Roby also was named a Healthcare Hero by the Fort Worth Business Press in its Feb. 23 edition for her dedication to the fields of research and health care.

Joyce Hood, MPH (SPH '07), RN, COHN-S, was also named a Healthcare Hero. Hood, director of occupational health services at Cook Children's Health Care System, is pursuing her doctorate in Public Health at the Health Science Center.

Janice Knebl, DO, MBA, professor, chief of Geriatrics and Dallas Southwest Osteopathic Physicians Endowed Chair in Clinical Geriatrics, received the 2008 University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNECOM) American Geriatrics Student Chapter Humanism in Aging Leadership Award funded by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation. The award is given to physicians who exhibit exemplary academic and professional practice in the care of older adults.

Karan Singh, PhD, professor and chair of Biostatistics, was invited to serve a three-year term as a member of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure's Prevention and Risk Reduction scientific peer review committee.

Larry J. Sharp, DO (TCOM '83), recently completed an Integrative Medicine Fellowship under Andrew Weil, MD, founder and program director of the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona Health Science Center in Tucson. Weil, a leading proponent of integrative medicine, has written several best-selling books and maintains the popular Web site, www.Drweil.com. Sharp practices family medicine in Fort Worth with a focus on chronic fatigue and immune dysfunction syndrome.

Thomas Yorio, PhD, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs, was named to the inaugural class of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Fellows. ARVO's mission is to facilitate the advancement



Rhonda Roby, PhD, project coordinator at the UNT Center for Human Identification

of vision research and the prevention and cure of disorders of the visual system worldwide. Dr. Yorio, whose research is focused on visual sciences, was named a fellow at ARVO's highest level.


A. Scott Winter, MD, associate professor and director of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health, earned the Irma Bland Award for Excellence in Teaching Residents from the American Psychiatric Association (APA). The award is given annually to APA members who have made outstanding and sustaining contributions to resident education in psychiatry.

Andy Crim, executive director of Professional and Continuing Education, was recently appointed by Gov. Rick Perry as a member of the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities.

John Licciardone, DO, MS, MBA, professor and executive director of the Osteopathic Research Center, was recently appointed as Osteopathic Heritage Foundation Distinguished Chair in Clinical Research for the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Alumni update

PA Medcalf helping plan PAS 10th Anniversary celebration


 Heidi Medcalf, PA-C ('04), puts her UNTHSC PA training to use for the healing of others and to further her own fulfillment at Tarrant County's public hospital, John Peter Smith, in trauma and critical care.

"I'm touching people's lives at a dramatic moment that changes them medically, physically and spiritually," she said. "Being a PA is one of the most rewarding careers you can have. You have the ability to practice medicine, treat patients, touch their lives and develop a close working relationship with your attending physician – yet you have autonomy."

The Health Science Center's Physician Assistant Studies program prepared her well for the profession she loves, she said, by providing "excellent, patient-care-based" training. She maintains campus ties by serving as president of the PA Alumni Society and is heading the planning committee for the PA Studies 10th Anniversary Celebration. She's looking forward to the May 1 festivities.

"We're commemorating the graduation of the Health Science Center's first PA class," Medcalf said. "UNTHSC has a successful program and turns out some of the best PAs in the country. This is a great time to reunite and celebrate."

PAs from all classes are expected to participate and take advantage of the six hours of Category I Continuing Medical Education credits that will be available, as well as attend a formal event that night at the Fort Worth Club.

"It will be great to see all the alums that day," she said. "As an alum myself, I believe participating in the Alumni Society allows me to stay in touch with my fellow PAs – they are an incredible network. And I also have the opportunity to help mentor the future PAs in the program. Because of UNTHSC, I have a wonderful career. This is my opportunity to give back to the university." 



Heidi Medcalf, PA-C ('04)

Alumni Directory

Have you been receiving phone calls or postcards asking for updated contact information? We're working with Harris Connect LLC to publish a 2009 UNTHSC Alumni Directory.

Support Current Students

This spring alumni have the opportunity to support our current students through the Alumni Annual Fund Campaign. Proceeds are used primarily for student scholarships and financial aid, although they may be used for any purpose that advances the university.

Keep in touch

alumni@hsc.unt.edu
817-735-2278 or 800-687-7580
www.hsc.unt.edu/alumni

ADVANCEMENT *update*

Cancer Research Advanced



Because of generous grants from the Cancer Research Foundation of North Texas, five Health Science Center researchers are able to continue their work in battling a disease that claims 1,500 people every day – and two student researchers obtained government funding.

The Cancer Research Foundation of North Texas (CRFNT) awarded a grant to support three “CRFNT Fellows”: GSBS students Subhamoy Dasgupta, Rebecca Johnson and Soumya Krishnamurthy – all of whom are PhD candidates pursuing cancer research. Thanks to these seed grants, Dasgupta and Krishnamurthy also recently received funding from the U.S. Department of Defense to continue their promising work.

Krishnamurthy, who is focusing on breast cancer research, said she is motivated to find a cure for the disease. Partnering with CRFNT “has given me strong encouragement to keep working toward that end,” she said.

Dasgupta said he was “honored” to be chosen as a fellow. “This valuable support has helped me to pursue my research on identifying novel genes and their role in cancer progression and metastasis,” he said.

Johnson said her passion for research comes from a desire to alleviate the suffering that cancer causes. “Being a CRFNT Fellow has allowed me to see the transition from bench research to practical application,” she said.

In addition to the CRFNT Fellows funding, the organization awarded a grant to Sharad Singhal, PhD, associate professor, and Sushma Yadav, PhD, assistant professor, both in the Department of Molecular Biology and Immunology, for their cancer research.

CRFNT was founded by a group of Tarrant County citizens – including physicians, nurses and lay



Representatives from the Health Science Center and the Cancer Research Foundation of Texas (CRFNT) honor our CRFNT Fellows (from left): Subhamoy Dasgupta, Rebecca Johnson and Soumya Krishnamurthy. Next to them are (from left): J.K. Vishwanatha, PhD, dean of the GSBS; Amy Baker, UNTHSC Advancement; Roberta Frost, CRFNT; Gary Grant, UNTHSC Advancement; Rachel Peña, CRFNT; Jackie Finch, CRFNT president; and Tammy Taylor, CRFNT.

people – joined by their passion to defeat cancer, the second most common cause of death in the country. They formed CRFNT in 1987 as a non-profit agency in Arlington, Texas. The organization has raised more than \$2.5 million for cancer prevention, education, treatment and research through its annual Silver Spurs Gala, affiliate memberships, sponsorships and individual giving.

Cowtown Cruisin’ For a Cure

Cowtown Cruisin’ For a Cure presented a check for \$10,000 to Andras Lacko, PhD, professor of molecular biology and immunology, to support his prostate cancer research.

Lacko’s nano-particle research is exploring the potential of an innovative cancer drug delivery system that uses reconstituted, high-density lipoproteins.

Fort Worth-based Cruisin’ for a Cure was established in 2002 by Chris Goetz to help raise awareness among men about the risk of prostate cancer. The group conducts an annual vintage auto show in downtown Fort Worth that attracts thousands of visitors to view the customized

cars and participate in the free prostate cancer screenings offered during the show. This was the group’s fifth consecutive year to support Lacko.

Healthy Aging Council Formed

With the graying of the baby-boomer generation, a tremendous challenge is now being presented to the overall health delivery system in this country. According to a U.S. government source, by 2030 the number of Americans ages 65 and older will reach 70 million and will represent 20 percent of the population. Those 85 and older are our fastest growing age group, and their numbers will at least double within 30 years to 8.5 million.

Recently a group of concerned civic leaders and citizens joined together to partner with the UNT Health Science Center in making a positive impact in the area of aging and Alzheimer’s disease. Fred and Michele Reynolds have agreed to co-chair the development of the Healthy Aging Council at UNTHSC, a civic council of local citizens committed to supporting and advancing the clinical, research and educational activities around aging. Other local civic leaders who are joining them include Laura Bird, Anne Davidovich and Rebecca Ward.

The Reynoldses are certainly not new to giving back to the local community. They have served in several volunteer civic capacities to support the Fort Worth Library, Jewel Charity Ball for Cook Children’s Medical Center, Alzheimer’s Association and Fort Worth Country Day School.

Michele said she was touched very personally by Alzheimer’s disease in her own family with her father. She noted that going through that challenging experience was the catalyst that connected her to the UNT Health Science Center.

“I want to do everything I can to strengthen the quality of life for those with Alzheimer’s and their families,” she said. “This is so important when the end of life is nearing.”

Michele also positively noted the clinical care provided to her father by UNT Health Science Center geriatrician Janice Knebl, DO, MBA.

“The care my dad consistently received from Dr. Knebl and her great geriatric staff made all the difference in the quality of my father’s life in his last years. As my family tried to cope with the disease, their help and support was invaluable.”



Photo by Kay Turner

Michele Reynolds, co-chair of the Healthy Aging Council, with her father, Charles Etkoff.

Fred and Michele have enthusiastically embraced their leadership roles. In addition to their work in forming the Healthy Aging Council, they have stepped up to other volunteer service roles with the Health Science Center. They co-chaired the committee planning the 2009 Presidential Invitational Golf Tournament and assisted in securing sponsorships and players, as well as opportunities for connecting with the institution.

Letter from Arnold Gachman: Advancing Our Mission

The Foundation Board is a community link to ensure that the Health Science Center’s mission advances in the strongest possible way and that people in Fort Worth recognize the organization as one of our city’s treasures — a part of its history as well as part of its proud future.

Working with President Ransom, the Executive Team, faculty, leadership and staff, we are making significant progress in increasing awareness of the great things happening at the Health Science Center. The Foundation Board serves as a catalyst for involving and engaging the community in support of a mission that has global impact. I’d like to highlight a few of the Board’s current activities that we feel demonstrate our shared commitment to excellence:

Healthy Aging Council: Some of the nation’s best and most vital Alzheimer’s research is being conducted in the Health Science Center’s Alzheimer’s labs. Equally as exciting, the center

Continued on page 26

Continued from page 25

is a model for the nation in geriatric training and care. Recently Michele Reynolds, and a growing group of civic leaders, have organized to create the "Healthy Aging Council." Their expertise and leadership will seek to advance the cause of research, treatment and education about issues related to aging & Alzheimer's. The Board looks forward to working and supporting the efforts of this new group.

Dean's Council for the School of Public Health:

We salute Dean Richard Kurz of the School of Public Health for his recent initiative in creating the "Dean's Council" to involve the community in partnering with the school to better understand the issues that impact health in Tarrant County and beyond. Libby Watson, former administrator of the Fort Worth Public Health Department and long-time advocate for local public health initiatives, has been instrumental in developing a plan for this group of hospital administrators, concerned citizens and others.

Heart Civic Council: Community leader Gary Terry has agreed to help advise and lead our new "Heart Civic Council." Before retirement, Terry served for 32 years as an executive with AT&T and currently serves as chairman of the American Heart Association's Texas Chapter. He will be working with the Foundation Board; Advancement staff; and Michael Smith, PhD, and James Caffrey, PhD, both professors in the Department of Integrative Physiology; to advance heart research, education and treatment services.

New grant application support: The Board congratulates outstanding Health Science Center geriatrician Dr. Janice Knebl, Dallas Southwest Osteopathic Physicians Inc. Distinguished Chair of Clinical Geriatrics, for securing a \$2 million geriatric training grant for the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine through the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation. The Board and the Advancement Office were honored to support her excellent and successful application and look forward to providing assistance for this crucial program going forward.

Campus expansion support: As construction progresses on the first building in our Master Plan on the site of the former Osteopathic Medical Center of Texas, the Board is actively participating in efforts to create interest and awareness in the



Arnold Gachman, Chair, UNTHSC Foundation Board

community. Our goal is to engage more people, both in understanding the value of the new space to increase the number of students and the amount of research, but to also add positively to the city's Cultural District with more green space and attractive campus features.

Recruitment of new Board members: Finally, I'd like to recognize and welcome the newest members of the Foundation Board. All are leaders in the Fort Worth community who are committed to help our continued growth and advancement. The newest members are: John Avila Jr. (Thos. S. Byrne Inc.); Michael Deese (Santech Inc.); James "Jack" Jackson (MillerCoors Inc.); Adelaide Bratten Leavens (Streams and Valleys); Tim Sullivan (TAS Healthcare Consulting Inc.); Brian Happel (Compass Bank); David Garza, DO (TCOM '89, representing the TCOM Alumni Association); and Pat Cappelletti, MS, (GSBS '98, Alcon, representing the GSBS Alumni Association).

Arnold Gachman, Chair
UNTHSC Foundation Board



Non-Physician Providers Extend Care



It's well documented that there's a shortage of physicians today, and forecasts warn this shortage will worsen as baby boomers age. However, physicians at UNT Health, the Health Science Center's physician practice, increasingly are using "non-physician providers" to extend their reach and ensure quality, timely care for all patients.

In fact, these non-physician providers (NPPs) are often called "physician extenders," and they play a valuable role in treating patients who have less-than-acute issues, but who still need the watchful eye and caring demeanor of a certified provider. Most often they are physician assistants (PAs), nurse practitioners (NPs) and certified nurse midwives (CNMs).

Non-physician providers are licensed to examine and assess patients, develop a treatment plan and monitor patients' conditions in collaboration with physicians. In 2002, the American College of Surgeons reported that "care (from NPPs) is equivalent in quality to care provided by MDs for similar problems," and studies show that patient satisfaction with NPP care is equal to that of physicians'.

In a national study published in the Journal of Clinical Outcomes in February 2005, PAs and NPs rated just as favorably as physicians, and the findings suggest there are no differences in satisfaction among provider types.

Collaboration with NPPs has boosted patient satisfaction and physician productivity at UNT Health, where 25 NPs, 18 PAs and four CNMs treat patients.

For Kirk Barron, PA-C (Physician Assistant Certified), who practices in UNT Health's Internal Medicine department, the flexibility of the job and the option to teach students at the Health Science Center are essential to his professional and personal satisfaction.

"I've worked in cardiology and now gastroenterology," Barron said. "I love teaching, so

the opportunity here at the UNT Health Science Center to be in the classroom and care for patients is perfect for me."

Nurse practitioner Nancy Tierney, ACNP (Accredited Certified Nurse Practitioner), also values the patient care opportunities and the ability to work as a team with physicians.

"We work in collaboration with the physician to provide what's best for the patient," she said. "The physician sees the patient initially and formulates a plan of care. I can help carry out that plan and change it if needed, as I collaborate with the physician and give the doctor my assessment."

Robert Adams, DO, chief medical officer and an OB/Gyn for UNT Health, certainly agrees that PAs, NPs and CNMs can fulfill a need in a physician practice that makes quality patient care more expedient and patient-centered.

"No doubt, the role of these non-physician providers will continue to play a major role in keeping health care delivery personal and responsive to the patient's needs," Adams said. ■

Did you know

- NPPs represent a growing share of the workforce: from 60,000 in 1992 to 144,000 in 2000.
- NPPs can actually increase physician productivity. A recent study by the American Medical Association's Center for Health Policy Research reported that solo physicians who employ non-physician providers see more patients per hour, per week and per year than those who do not.
- Other factors for the increasing demand for NPPs are the reductions in the number of physician residents and increasing patient care acuity.

SAVE *the* DATE



May 1
GSBS Awards Banquet
7 p.m.
Cultural District Banquet Center

May 1
PA 10th Anniversary Celebration
CME Training, 8:30 a.m.- noon,
UNTHSC – Beyer Hall
Celebration, 6:30 p.m.
Fort Worth Club

May 12
PA Graduation Dinner & Awards Program
6 p.m.
Colonial Country Club

May 13
DO Awards Banquet
6 p.m.
Fort Worth Club

May 16
Commencement
3 p.m.
Fort Worth Convention Center
Arena and Ballroom

May 28 – 29
Health Disparities Conference
*Targeting Health Disparities
Through Prevention*
UNTHSC – Luibel Hall
[www.hsc.unt.edu/HealthDisparities/
conference.html](http://www.hsc.unt.edu/HealthDisparities/conference.html)

July 25
White Coat Ceremony
2 p.m.
Will Rogers Auditorium

Oct. 10
UNTHSC Gala
Renaissance Worthington Hotel

For more information about any news item or event, please e-mail news@hsc.unt.edu.