

## Increased State Premium-Sharing Helps Offset Rising Health-Care Costs

With the continually rising cost of health care, The University of Texas System has managed to maintain competitive rates without a reduction in benefits. This is absolutely great news, says UT Health Science

even though the cost of insurance premiums for benefits-eligible employees has increased consistently, the State of Texas has increased the premium sharing (a portion of the premiums the state pays) to help offset that cost."

Kidd credits the negotiation skills and hard work of the employees in the UT System Benefits Office with helping keep our premiums within reason. "The UT System insurance programs are among the largest in the state.

The administrators have been able to monitor claims utilization, review claims experience and request bids tailored to fit the needs of the statewide UT community, allowing us to maintain reasonable premium rates," she says. ★

See related information about your insurance choices for FY06 on Page 3. Visit <http://www.utsystem.edu/egi> for more detailed information.

Center Benefits Manager Rosemary Kidd, when you consider the rise in health care premiums across the United States.

"In addition, we are one of the few employers that still provides employee medical coverage at no cost to the individual employee and pays up to 50 percent of dependent coverage on the employee's behalf. This is a rarity and an excellent benefit," she emphasizes.

"Based on the national Employer Health Benefits 2004 Annual Survey, premiums of employer-sponsored health insurance in the United States are rising at a rate five times faster than workers' earnings," Kidd says. "So,

### Tracking Monthly Health Insurance Costs, FY04-06

The accompanying chart shows the total monthly premium cost, the employee's cost and the state contribution for the past, current and coming fiscal years.

Insured	2003-2004			2004-2005			2005-2006		
	Employer Pays	Employee Pays	Total Premium	Employer Pays	Employee Pays	Total Premium	Employer Pays	Employee Pays	Total Premium
<b>UT Select</b>									
Employee	287.77	0	287.77	301.83	0	301.83	330.30	0	330.30
Employee/Spouse	438.93	124.14	563.07	459.78	129.76	589.54	503.26	142.05	645.31
Employee/Children	384.48	129.84	514.32	402.89	135.68	538.57	440.96	148.57	589.53
Family	536.53	244.48	781.01	561.78	255.43	817.21	614.95	279.75	894.70
<b>HMO Blue/Humana</b>									
Employee	290.98	0	290.98	325.48	0	325.48	364.23	0	364.23
Employee/Spouse	443.83	125.53	569.36	495.9	139.97	635.87	555.08	156.74	711.82
Employee/Children	388.77	131.29	520.06	434.51	146.39	580.90	486.33	163.93	650.26
Family	542.53	247.22	789.75	605.95	275.64	881.59	678.31	308.68	986.99

## Centennial Ceremony Highlights HSC Commencement Line-Up

**Editor's Note:** Public Affairs staff members covered three of the commencement ceremonies at the UT Health Science Center this year. Their impressions follow.

Centennial in style, successful by design and sensational by any measure — the commencement ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston was the highlight of the UT Health Science Center's six graduation ceremonies this spring.

With remarks by UT dignitaries, the attendance of former Dental Branch deans, degree presentations by parents and a jubilant reception, the oldest dental school in Texas celebrated graduation in a big way.

Sixty-five students in the D.D.S. program participated in the ceremony, 16 students received their dental hygiene certificates and 22 received a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene.

Graduate Cecelia Hong Reid said the graduation left her with a feeling that was hard to describe. "This day is a reminder of the benefits of working hard. I would tell anyone pursuing the D.D.S. never to give up," she said.

Keynote speaker Jerry Long, D.D.S., president of the UTDB Alumni Association, also spoke of the importance of perseverance and giving back in his message to the graduates.

"Every dentist or dental hygienist who has graduated from this institution over the past 100 years has made a deposit in your account," Long told the graduates.

"Chances are you would not have chosen a career in dentistry if these men and women had not been exemplary in their commitment to their patients, to society and to the profession. The taxpayers of this state have identified dentistry as a noble and necessary health-care service and have told their elected officials that this profession is essential to our nation's health and well-being. The University of Texas and this health science center have committed to training oral health-care professionals to serve the citizens of Texas, as well as enhance the image and

prestige of this great institution.

"Now it's your turn. You can literally consume everything that dentistry has to offer and one day simply toss the profession aside. Or you can begin a lifetime of repaying those who have invested so much in you and your chosen career."

Other special guest speakers included UT System Regent H. Scott Caven; James T. Willerson, M.D., president of the UT Health Science Center at Houston; and Kenneth Shine, M.D., UT System executive vice chancellor for Health Affairs, who delivered the remarks of UT System Chancellor Mark Yudof, J.D., who planned to attend, but could not be present.

"From its beginnings, the Dental Branch

has been a leader in research, innovation, and preventive dentistry. One hundred years and more than 5,000 graduates after its beginnings, it is one of the preeminent schools of dentistry in the nation," Yudof wrote. "And as the most recent graduating class, you are the beneficiaries of 100 years of hard work, outstanding teaching and continuing devotion to the advancement of your profession. You carry with you all our hopes for an improved profession and a healthier Texas."

Several distinguished alumni, as well as two former deans, Don Allen, D.D.S., who served from 1982-1992, and Ronald Johnson, D.D.S., who served from 1996-2002 and now serves as the vice president for Strategic Affairs at the UT Health Science Center at Houston, were present.

David Kostohryz, D.D.S., a 1978 graduate of the UTDB, saw his son, David Kostohryz Jr., graduate. "I am elated and excited. He has always determined to reach his goals and to progress," Kostohryz said. "I think what I most enjoyed from these four years is seeing all his friends."

Several fathers presented their sons and daughters with their degrees as they crossed the stage, siblings graduated together, and graduates who became the first

continued on page 2



Dental Branch Centennial graduates proudly sing "The Eyes of Texas" at commencement's close.

### Inside:

Willerson Updates ..... Page 2

State Resources..... Page 3

Former Surgeon General to Speak ..... Page 4



### The Leader Remembers ...

Mike Jimenez, former vice president and chief human resources officer, who died from prostate cancer in June. We will miss his intelligence, his insight, his humor, his caring nature, his perseverance and his smile. Thanks, Mike, for all you did for the betterment of the UT Health Science Center at Houston.



THE UNIVERSITY  
of TEXAS  
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER  
AT HOUSTON

# Willerson Provides Health Science Center Update at Medical School

During an update session for all Medical School faculty, staff and students, James T. Willerson, M.D., president of the UT Health Science Center at Houston, provided early morning and late afternoon briefings June 28 at the school.

At both sessions, all in attendance received a comprehensive update covering topics such as fund-raising activities, legislative outcomes, recruitment of new scientists, current and future construction plans within the health science center, Brown Foundation Institute of Molecular Medicine for the Prevention of Human Diseases (IMM), Texas Heart Institute, and much more.

Noting his confidence in the leadership of the deans of each of the six schools, Willerson emphasized a continual theme of raising the bar to make outstanding programs even better. High on his list for raising that bar is an aggressive construction program that includes much needed research space.

"The Coordinating Board says we (UT Health Science Center at Houston) are 800,000 square feet below our research space needs," he noted, while itemizing a long list of campus growth initiatives. Those include the Medical School's new Research Replacement Building, recently completed

School of Nursing and Student Community Center, and the Sarofim Research Building that will open next spring to house the IMM. Additionally, the university is planning new buildings for the Mental Sciences Institute and the Dental Branch. And, he reminded the audience of his efforts to secure Tuition Revenue Bond funding for the new clinic building now owned by the UT Health Science Center.

Recruiting additional faculty identified as among the world's best in their fields is essential for our future, Willerson noted. These world's best scientists, he said, will complement the health science center's outstanding faculty, including the only Nobel Laureate of Medicine and Physiology in residence in the Texas Medical Center, and will help in many ways to define the institution's future.

Of the \$7 million requested in the last session of the Texas Legislature for recruiting world's best scientists, we received \$2.5 million annually to add to the \$3 million annually received two years ago. "We are already talking to some outstanding individuals about joining our enterprise," he said.

On the topic of university leadership, Willerson affirmed his working relationship with Chief Operating Officer Mike McKinney,

M.D. Willerson noted that as president, he is accountable for the university's success or failure, and while he works closely with McKinney, the chief operating officer is responsible for implementing Willerson's decisions.

- On a related topic, Willerson emphasized his accountability to the UT System Board of Regents, and the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs. He emphasized his dedication to both the UT Health Science Center, with all of its six schools, and the Texas Heart Institute, where he currently serves as president-elect. "I don't plan to go anywhere," he said. "I want to keep doing what I'm doing and be helpful."
- In an effort to answer questions about fundraising, Willerson discussed the challenge of asking donors for financial contributions, noting that even with a vision and a person they believe in, donors are not always inclined to give. Willerson has an impressive track record of cultivating private donors — many of them his own cardiology patients. His fund-raising efforts have translated into \$193 million in private philanthropy for the UT Health Science Center over the last three years.
- Willerson also explained that his vision for the IMM — which he conceived in 1989 as he came to the UT Medical School

as chairman of internal medicine — was rooted in the belief that a new institute not tied to any one school would benefit from financial management by a director not burdened with issues outside the IMM and from opportunities for collaboration with multiple UT schools and other Texas Medical Center institutions.

The June 28 update was the first of a new noontime President's Forum series during which Willerson will talk with health science center faculty and staff.

## President's Forums

Wednesday, Aug. 17 — Institute of Molecular Medicine, Second Floor Auditorium

Wednesday, Aug. 31 — UT Harris County Psychiatric Center Auditorium

Thursday, Sept. 8 — School of Public Health Auditorium

Wednesday, Sept. 14 — Dental Branch, Room 207

Wednesday, Sept. 28 — University Center Tower, Room 1505C

Thursday, Sept. 29 — School of Nursing and Student Community Center, Auditorium

Wednesday, Dec. 14 — Operations Center Building, Room 2200. ★

## Centennial Ceremony Highlights HSC Commencement Line-Up

continued from page 1

"doctors" in the families made their mothers proud.

— Erika Durham

### Medical School

The University of Texas Medical School at Houston celebrated its annual 32nd annual commencement May 28 at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

One hundred and eighty seniors received their medical degrees during the ceremony, which featured guest speaker Catherine DeAngelis, M.D., editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and editor-in-chief of the AMA Division of Scientific Information and Multimedia.

DeAngelis had sage advice for the graduates — to use their intellect for wisdom and take great responsibility in the power they have as physicians.

"Think of yourself as a healer," DeAngelis said. "That's what you are. Patients may not remember your face or what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel. Make them feel good. You may not be able to cure



L-R, Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs Kenneth Shine, M.D., UT System Regent H. Scott Caven, and President James T. Willerson, M.D., of the UT Health Science Center, share a moment of conversation during the Dental Branch festivities.

them, but you can always make them feel good."

Stanley G. Schultz, M.D., dean of the UT Medical School, echoed DeAngelis' remarks and reminded graduates to responsibly manage the awesome power that comes with a doctor's right to invade the minds and bodies of others.

Class president Craig Messick said Tropical Storm Allison and Sept. 11 united his fellow classmates as Americans and as a class. Beyond

lessons from textbooks, four years of medical school taught them life lessons in team building, leadership and success.

"We learned that you cannot change the wind, but you can always adjust the sails," Messick said.

— Meredith Raine

### School of Public Health

Nearly 70 students from 12 countries were

awarded degrees from The University of Texas School of Public Health at Houston at the 35th annual graduation ceremony May 6 at the TMC Edwin Hornberger Conference Center.

Students were recognized by Guy S. Parcel, Ph.D., UT School of Public Health dean, and James T. Willerson, M.D., UT Health Science Center president, for earning graduate and doctoral degrees in the theory and practice of public health.

"I'm extremely proud of you and the school of public health," said Willerson. "Enjoy this day and realize what it has taken to get here. Realize this is not the end of anything, but the beginning. You have the talent, respect and opportunity to do something special in your lives."

Commencement Speaker Darwin R. Labarthe, M.D., Ph.D., associate director for Cardiovascular Health Policy and Research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and former SPH epidemiology professor, emphasized the significance of future public health leaders. "Public health holds itself responsible for (society's) health and that responsibility must be fulfilled by the work that we do," Labarthe said. ★

— Melanie Hillis

## Lack of Resources and Faculty Cause Nurse Shortage, Says Starck

By Shannon Rasp, Public Affairs

Contrary to popular belief, America's nursing shortage cannot be blamed on a lack of women and men wanting to be nurses, says prominent nursing educator Patricia L. Starck, D.S.N., dean of The University of Texas School of Nursing at Houston. Instead, the problem can be traced to a lack of space and resources to train all of the people who want to become nurses, along with an ever-shrinking pool of people willing and able to turn down higher-paying nursing jobs to become educators.

"Texas nursing schools turned away 4,200 qualified applicants last year because they lacked the faculty, equipment and space with which to educate them," said Starck. "Our school alone had to turn away 10 applicants for every one we accepted, because of limited resources."

Texas is far below the national average of the nurse-to-population ratio of 782 nurses per 100,000 population in the US. In Texas, the ratio is 609 nurses per 100,000 people. By some estimates, Texas will need 138,000 additional nurses in the next seven to 10 years.

Widespread media coverage of the criti-

cal need for qualified nurses and Johnson & Johnson's \$20 million, multi-year campaign to attract more people to the nursing field have triggered a boom in the number of applicants to nursing programs.

Over the last five years, the school's applicant pool has increased 247 percent, resulting in a large number of qualified, motivated aspiring nurses unable to get into school.

Even though its entrance requirements are extremely high — including a 3.7 grade point average in previous college classes, letters of recommendation, extensive science prerequisites, and in-person interviews — the school still had to deny entry this year to over 1,200 people who met all of the requirements.

"It's frustrating," said Starck. "We are trying new things to increase the number of students we can educate, including an accelerated nursing program, using hospital nurses as on-the-job educators, and many other programs, but there is only so much we can do. We've increased the number of bachelor of nursing students we graduate by 56 percent over the last five years, but there's still a criti-

cal nursing shortage. Without an increase in state funding, we won't be able to solve this problem. Add in the fact that we can't pay faculty members as much as the private sector can, and we are really stuck," she said.

By the time nurses have acquired enough knowledge to be nursing educators, they are earning much more than a university can pay. That means that many people who would otherwise be interested in teaching cannot enter academia because of financial considerations.

"Every \$150,000 spent annually on a faculty member and their classes, allows us to train 10 more students," said Starck, who has been dean of the UT School of Nursing at Houston since 1984. "We know how much it costs to train a student, and increased state funding would be an economic investment in educating Texans for jobs that are ready and waiting."

Daniel Stoneking, who just completed his first year of nursing school, knows this all too well. After completing two years of core requirements at Texas A&M University, Stoneking applied to the UT School of Nursing at Houston, explicitly because it is

so highly ranked. His grades were excellent, he had glowing letters of recommendation, and he did well in his personal interview. So Stoneking was stunned to find out that he had been wait-listed for the school.

"I honestly didn't know what to think," he said. "I had wanted to be a nurse for years, and being wait-listed shocked me. I soon found out I was actually lucky — other friends of mine were rejected, even though we were all qualified. I stuck with it, calling the school for updates and basically just being persistent. Luckily, just before school started, a space opened up and I was next on the list. The school called me immediately, and two weeks later I started nursing school."

The prospect of motivated, qualified, caring students like Stoneking not becoming nurses because there is nowhere for them to go to learn is especially troubling to Starck. "It takes a special person to be a good nurse," she said. "And the fact that every year, thousands of these smart and caring people are prevented from reaching their dream through no fault of their own is very frustrating." ★

# We Are Responsible for State Resources

By Pamela Lewis, Public Affairs

Sometimes it's hard to figure out just what's allowed and what isn't at a place as large and policy-ridden as the UT Health Science Center at Houston. So, the staff in the Office of Legal Affairs and Institutional Compliance would like to offer some reminders:

Each faculty and staff member is responsible for protecting and preserving health science center property, equipment and supplies, according to Elisa Fallows, manager of compliance. "As state employees, faculty and staff are responsible for conserving state resources as trustees for the citizens of the State of Texas. Public resources may not be used for personal benefit or gain," she says, providing questions and answers to help clarify some issues.

**Q: My child calls me at work when he gets home from school to let me know he is okay. Is that against the rules?**

A: No, as a general rule, the personal use of any university property or asset is prohibited; however, incidental personal use of e-mail, the telephone, or the Internet that complies with applicable university policies, and does not result in additional cost to the university, is okay.

However, using your long distance access code to the university's long distance service to make a personal long distance call is prohibited because this would result in additional cost to the university. For more information, consult the Handbook on

Operating Procedures, HOOP 17.02, Telecommunications Usage.

**Q: I have a personal e-mail account that is available via the Internet that I would like to check at work. Is this permitted?**

A: The Internet should be used only for legitimate state business. However, brief and occasional Internet browsing of a personal nature is okay so long as the use conforms to the permissible use and prohibited use sections of HOOP 17.05, E-mail and Internet Usage. Only incidental amounts of employee time — time periods comparable to reasonable coffee breaks during the day — should be used to attend to personal matters. All Internet access is logged and could be subject to further review.

**Q: I tried to access an Internet site for work purposes and a block screen with a display informing me that I was attempting to visit a potentially inappropriate site popped up. What should I do?**

A: The block screen is triggered if you access sites containing material that members of executive management have decided is inappropriate. If you have a legitimate mission-related reason to access the site, you may do so by certifying the need. The certification process requires users to enter their health science center username and password at the time of access. If you do not

know your health science center username and password, contact the Office of Academic Computing, (713) 500-3501.

Just remember the basic rules — limited use of university resources for personal purposes, such as telephone calls and e-mail, is permitted under the following circumstances. The use is brief and does not:

- result in a cost to the health science center;
  - interfere with job duties and responsibilities;
  - disrupt or distract from the conduct of official business;
  - compromise the security or integrity of private confidential information; or
  - violate university policy regarding discrimination and harassment.
- Never use university resources for illegal activities, or to:
- conduct an outside business;
  - campaign for or support a campaign for political purposes; or
  - support, promote or solicit from an outside organization or group without advance approval.

## Fraud and Abuse

It is every faculty and staff member's responsibility to prevent fraud and abuse of university and state resources by themselves or others.

- Fraud is "knowingly or willfully attempting to gain any benefit which does not

belong to you." The University of Texas System Fraud Policy, Business Procedure Memorandum 50 at <http://www.utsystem.edu/bpm/50.htm> details individual responsibilities and actions regarding the prevention and reporting of fraud.

- Abuse is "activities that result in excessive or unreasonable cost to the university, or other state or federal agencies."
- Fraud and abuse of university and/or state resources may be a criminal offense.

**Q: What are some examples of fraud?**

A: Falsifying any type of record, such as payroll or timekeeping, medical or scientific research by:

- providing false receipts and documentation for any type of reimbursement from the health science center, such as travel;
- billing for procedures or services not performed or rendered with inadequate documentation;
- overstating the percentage of effort that personnel actually work on research grants funded by federal or state agencies.

**Q: What are some examples of abuse?**

Examples of abuse include:

- Using sick leave when not sick;
- Taking products or supplies that belong to the health science center;
- Taking a long lunch or break without approval. ★

## Insurance Choice Options for FY06

### UT Select PPO Percentage Paid by State and UT

Employee only — 100%.\*  
Employee and spouse — approximately 78%.  
Employee and children — approximately 75%  
Employee and family — approximately 69%

\*This plan includes Basic Life Insurance of \$10,000 and Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) of \$10,000 for employee only or Basic Life Insurance of \$3,000 for retiree only.

### HMO Blue Availability

Employee Group Insurance will continue to offer an HMO plan option (HMO Blue) in most areas for the 2005-2006 plan year, although not in Galveston County.

- If you live in Galveston County but work in the HMO Blue Houston service area, HMO Blue will continue to be a medical plan option for you. Please read your Annual Enrollment materials to learn more about this special enrollment opportunity.

As with UT SELECT, EGI and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas have worked diligently to ensure that most areas of the state continue to offer two medical plans and that your HMO Blue out-of-pocket premium rate increases remain below the actual growth trend; therefore, rates for the HMO Blue plan will increase for Fiscal Year 2006 by an average of 14%. HMO Blue rates are available online at <http://www.utsystem.edu/egi>.

### Prescription Plans

Plan benefits, including co-payments and applicable co-insurance and deductibles for both health plans will remain the same, but each plan may have different medications on its Preferred and Non-Preferred Drug lists. Please compare each plan's Preferred Drug list with any medications you or your dependents are currently taking. The Preferred Drug lists are available online at <http://www.utsystem.edu/egi/providers.asp>.

### Dental, Vision and Other Insurance

Monthly premium rates will remain unchanged for the 2005-2006 plan year for the

- UT Dental Select plan (administered by Delta Dental),\*
- Assurant Dental HMO,
- Superior Vision plan,

- Fort Dearborn Group Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment plans,
- The Hartford Long Term and Short Term Disability plans, and
- the CNA Long Term Care plan\*\*.

\*For the next plan year, your UT DENTAL Select plan will provide a larger annual maximum and orthodontic lifetime maximum, raising both benefits from \$1,000 to \$1,250 per person.

\*\* Current participants enrolled in the LTC Guaranteed Benefit Increase Option have a special opportunity to increase their level of benefits without the standard medical underwriting review. The premium increase for those taking advantage of this opportunity to increase your long-term care coverage will be based only on the participant's attained age (the difference between your current age and your age upon initial LTC enrollment). In addition, your lifetime maximum benefit will increase in proportion to your new daily benefit.

**If you choose not to increase your level of coverage, your premium and benefit levels will remain unchanged, however, future opportunities to increase your long-term care coverage may be subject to medical underwriting review.**

A letter from CNA will arrive during the enrollment period detailing this opportunity. Consult the 2005 Annual Enrollment booklet or <http://www.utsystem.edu/egi> for more information.

### New Medical Management Programs for FY06 with UT Select\* Disease Management Programs for Your Health

If you're living with a chronic health condition, you may face daily challenges in managing your condition. You want to have the best knowledge and tools available to help you stay as healthy as possible. Help is available with comprehensive disease management programs offered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas for UT Select members. \*The program is already available to HMO Blue Texas members.

These voluntary programs are designed specifically for those who have been diagnosed with

- asthma,
- diabetes,
- congestive heart failure,
- coronary artery disease,
- metabolic syndrome (high blood pressure, high cholesterol),
- lower back pain or
- end-stage renal disease.

When you enroll in one of the programs, you'll receive helpful information about your condition, at no out-of-pocket cost to you.

Disease management programs work together with your health plan, doctor and you to help identify the best way to manage your condition more effectively. Enrolling in a program can help:

- Decrease the intensity and frequency of your symptoms
- Enhance your self-management skills
- Minimize missed days at work
- Enrich your quality of life.

Each program addresses your specific needs, based on the severity of your condition, complications and risk factors. If the severity of your condition is mild, you'll receive:

- Coverage for targeted preventive screenings
- Seasonal mailings with educational materials related to your condition
- Annual contact calls to encourage medication compliance
- Tools to help you better self-manage your condition.

If the symptoms of your chronic condition are moderate to severe, your program will be tailored to provide you with:

- Personalized self-management planning
- Regularly scheduled monitoring by a registered nurse
- 24-hour-a-day phone access to specialty nurse
- An audio library of topics related to your condition, available by telephone around-the-clock
- Assistance in getting durable medical equipment covered under your health plan
- Home health visits and social service consultation, if needed.

Additional details about the disease management programs are available during Annual Enrollment. For now, you can get more information about your specific health condition by visiting the Web site at [www.bcbstx.com/ut](http://www.bcbstx.com/ut).

Log on to Blue Access for Members and follow the links to Diseases A-Z to get up-to-the-minute information on health care.

### Special Beginnings Program

Prenatal education, regular obstetric check-ups, and lifestyle awareness are key factors in helping pregnant women deliver healthy babies. The UT System and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Texas will offer the Special Beginnings prenatal care program.

The program

- provides prenatal risk assessment education and
- coordinates with the patient's physician to provide case management services to help reduce the chance of low birth-weight infants and/or premature delivery.

Ideally, a pregnant woman is enrolled in the Special Beginnings Program during her first trimester. A confidential assessment helps determine if her pregnancy is at risk.

The program's success stems from frequent contact between the same Special Beginnings obstetrical nurse and the patient over a period of time. The nurse will help guide the patient through her pregnancy by:

- Assessing the woman's health and lifestyle factors
- Discussing prenatal care
- Providing education relevant to her risk factor
- Helping her physician develop treatment plans and alternatives
- Encouraging the use of other resources, as appropriate.

To enroll in Special Beginnings, or ask questions about the program, call toll-free at 800-462-3275.

### CareWise 24-Hour NurseLine

A staff of trained, experienced registered nurse counselors is available 24/7 to answer health care questions and provide information about a wide variety of health care issues and medical, non-emergencies for all UT Select members. To talk to a CareWise nurse, call toll free: 1-888-315-9473.

### UT FLEX Accounts

UT FLEX accounts let you set aside money from your pay before taxes are withheld. As you incur eligible health care expenses or dependent day care expenses through-

continued on page 4

# Insurance Choice Options for FY06

continued from page 3

out the year, you submit a claim for those expenses and are reimbursed with tax-free dollars from your account or for health care expenses only use the Flex Convenience Card to pay with tax-free dollars from your account.

- The UT FLEX Medical Expense Reimbursement Account (MERA) reimburses you for qualified out-of-pocket health care expenses for medical, dental, vision, hearing and pharmaceutical expenses including certain eligible over-the-counter medications.
- The UT FLEX Day Care Account reimburses you for qualified dependent day care expenses you incur in order to allow you and, if married, your spouse to work or to attend school full-time. When you use these accounts, you reduce your taxable income, so you will pay less in income taxes.
- You must re-enroll for UT FLEX during this Annual Enrollment period if you want to be enrolled for plan year 2005-2006.
- If you elected the Flex Convenience® Card, do not discard it. If you re-enroll for plan year 2005-2006, the card will be “reloaded” with your new UT FLEX contribution amount for the new plan year.

## Relaxed IRS Rules Allow Grace Period for Medical Expense Reimbursement

The IRS has modified the “use-it-or-lose-it” rule for flexible spending accounts. The result of the change is the creation of a grace period of 2.5 months beyond the end

of the immediately prior plan year for participants to incur eligible expenses against their unused medical account contributions. If you are currently enrolled in the MERA, you can file a claim for reimbursement only from your remaining FY2005 plan year account for eligible expenses incurred through Nov. 15. This should result in a significant reduction in plan forfeitures.

- Current participants should consider the effect of carryover MERA expenses during the grace period before making elections during annual enrollment for the next plan year.
- The grace period does not apply for the Day Care Reimbursement Account.

NOTE: The UT FLEX Card cannot be used for any expenses incurred during the grace period if you want to be reimbursed from your current FY2005 account. After Aug. 31, 2005, the UT FLEX Card can be used only for FY2006.

## Remaining Health Insurance Meetings

- Operations Center Building second floor Rio Grande Room — noon, Friday, July 15
- Harris County Psychiatric Center Auditorium — noon, Wednesday, July 20
- LBJ Hospital East Wing — noon, Wednesday, July 20
- University Center Tower, Room 1505C — noon, Tuesday, July 26
- Retiree session: Operations Center Building, second floor Rio Grande Room — 11 a.m., Friday, July 22

## Class Registration & Late Registration Schedules

- **Dental Postgraduates**  
now through Aug. 19  
Late registration — Aug. 20-26
- **Dental Hygiene** — Students with no holds already have had their registration processed. Those with holds will need to clear them and then call (713) 500-3335 and request to be registered.
- **Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**  
**Medical Clinical**  
**Research**  
**Nursing**

## Health Information Sciences School of Public Health

By first letter of last name, initially; then open registration for the categories above is July 16-Aug. 26. Late registration is Aug. 27-Sept. 2.

- A-D (past)
- E-J — July 15
- K-Z (past)

Access the Class Schedule Online at:  
<http://registrar.uth.tmc.edu/>

## National Student Conference Meets Here, Features Former Surgeon General

M. Joycelyn Elders, M.D., former Surgeon General of the United States, will deliver the keynote address during the American Medical Student Association's Achieving Diversity in Dentistry and Medicine 2005 Primary Care Leadership Training Program. Elder's presentation, a Dental Branch Centennial Event celebrating diversity, will be 10 a.m., Wednesday, July 27, in the Dental Branch auditorium. Her speech is open to all Health Science Center employees and students and will be followed by a question and answer session.

Other speakers include Charles Terrell, Ed.D., vice president for diversity and policy and programs with the Association of American Medical Colleges. His presentation, “Advancing Diversity in Medicine — Never Compromise the Dream,” will begin at 1:30 p.m. in DB 207. Richard Haught, D.D.S., president of

the American Dental Association, will speak at 3 p.m. on “Improving Access to Oral Health Care: A Challenge We Must Face as a Society.”

All health science center employees and students are invited to these presentations, as well as to that of Tawara Goode, director of Georgetown University Medical Center's internationally known National Center for Cultural Competence. Goode will speak at 10 a.m., Monday, July 25, on “Achieving Cultural and Linguistic Competence: Implications for Medical and Dental Students.”

The University of Texas Health Science Center student hosts for the conference are Alice Luan, a fourth-year dental student and Rowena Reyes, a fourth-year medical student. Visit <http://www.db.uth.tmc.edu/> for full program information: Contact: Paula O'Neill at [Paula.N.ONeill@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Paula.N.ONeill@uth.tmc.edu). ★



**The Leader** is published monthly for faculty, staff and students of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston by the Office of Public Affairs, 7000 Fannin, Suite 1200, Houston, Texas 77030, <http://theleader.uthouston.edu>.

### DEADLINES

Submit information to be considered for publication in *The Leader* by the 15th of the month one month prior to the desired time of publication. Requests for feature articles require a longer lead time and will receive strategic consideration. Send electronic information in Word format (no PDFs or posters) and digital photos as unedited, high-resolution images at 300 dpi or better. E-mail to [Pamela.Lewis@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Pamela.Lewis@uth.tmc.edu). Include a contact name, phone number and e-mail address. Mail hard copy to *The Leader*, c/o Pamela Lewis, Office of Public Affairs, University Center Tower, 1200, or fax to (713) 500-3037. For information regarding *The Leader*, call Pamela Lewis at (713) 500-3040.

**James T. Willerson, M.D.**  
President

**C. Gwin Morris, Ph.D.**  
Vice President for Public Affairs

**Jane Brust**  
Assistant Vice President for Public Affairs

**Ina Fried**  
Director of Communications

**Pamela Lewis**  
Editor

**Eli Gukich**  
Designer

**Advisory Committee**  
Richard D. Bebermeyer, D.D.S.

Dental Branch Faculty

Marsha Brody-Silva

Human Resources

Barbara Legate

Administrative & Professional

Ronda K. Lowe

University Classified Staff Council

Christy Marshall

Student Intercouncil

## CALENDAR

### JULY 15 – AUGUST 14

Please submit calendar items for the **August 15 issue** of *The Leader*, which covers **August 15- Sept. 14**, to [Pamela.Lewis@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Pamela.Lewis@uth.tmc.edu), by **July 17**.

★ **July 21** — “**Legal Issues in Complementary and Integrative Medicine**” is the subject of Michael H. Cohen, J.D., assistant professor of Medicine and director of Legal Programs, Harvard Medical School Osher Institute, **noon**, UT M. D. Anderson Cancer Center Hickey Auditorium, sponsored by the Integrative Medicine Program, directed by Lorenzo Cohen, Ph.D., adjunct associate professor of behavioral sciences at the UT School of Public Health at Houston. Free and open to the public. Contact: Lisa Gower, (713) 563-8953, [lgower@mdanderson.org](mailto:lgower@mdanderson.org).

★ **July 27** — **2005 Achieving Diversity in Dentistry and Medicine Leadership Training Program** features former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn

Elders as keynote speaker, **10 a.m.**, Dental Branch.

★ **July 27** — Lt. Col. Robert Morecook, Ph.D., the executive officer of the Houston Medical Response Group of the Texas Medical Rangers, will speak on **Public Health Service Opportunities with the Texas Medical Rangers**, the Medical Reserve Corps of the Texas State Guard, **noon**, School of Public Health, Room 102A. For more information on the Rangers, visit <http://swc2.hccs.edu/texasmedicalrangers/>.

★ **July 28** — “**Stem Cells in the Mammalian Skeleton**” is the topic of Paul J. Simmons, Ph.D., program head, Stem Cell Research, Peter MacCallum, Cancer Institute, Melbourne, Australia, during the IMM Seminar Series, **11 a.m.**, Institute of Biosciences and Technology Building, 2121 W. Holcombe, 11th Floor Boardroom. Contact: Ruby. T.McFarland@uth.tmc.edu, (713) 500-2461.

## New Certification at School of Public Health

A new 16-hour program leading to a graduate certificate in public health is now available through the UT School of Public Health. Application deadlines are Aug. 1 for the fall semester; Nov. 1 for the spring semester and May 1 for summer 2006. Those who seek formal training in public health are encouraged to apply. The program of study consists of five courses covering the core disciplines of public health. Classes will be offered at Houston, the four regional campuses, at the UTSPH Regional Office in Austin, and as online courses.

The certificate is suitable for:

- Those who work in public health, but who lack formal public health training;
- Future students who intend to apply these courses toward their public health degree

program at the School of Public Health;

- Those delivering health care who need knowledge and skills in the core public health disciplines, but do not need the full master's of public health curriculum;
- Exceptional students currently enrolled in affiliated undergraduate degree programs.

Certificate students may apply for the MPH or other degree programs at the school. If they are admitted, courses taken as a certificate student during the previous five years and in which they received a grade of A or B will count toward completion of their MPH degree program.

Visit <http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/cert/> for applicant criteria, curriculum and course requirements. ★

## UT Health News You Can Use

### Diabetics with High Blood Pressure Benefit from Older, Cheaper Pills

In people with diabetes, traditional diuretics work as well as newer medications — ACE-inhibitors and calcium channel blockers — in protecting against heart attack and improving survival, and may offer more protection against heart failure, according to results from the largest hypertension clinical trial ever conducted.

The latest findings from the “Antihypertensive and Lipid-Lowering Treatment to Prevent Heart Attack Trial” or ALLHAT, sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, are published in the June 27 issue of *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

The multi-center ALLHAT study is conducted under a National Institutes of Health contract with The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Barry R. Davis, M.D., Ph.D., professor of biostatistics in the UT School of Public Health is the principal investigator and a co-author of the *Archives of Internal Medicine* article. ALLHAT Project Manager Sara Pressel, a faculty associate at the UT School of Public Health, also is a co-author.

Study results showed that people 55 or older with type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure have a reduced risk of heart failure and stroke if they take diuretics to control their blood pressure.

“These findings confirm ALLHAT's original conclusion that diuretics — rather than newer, more expensive drugs — should be the preferred first therapy for high blood pressure,” Davis said. “We might be able to save 40,000 to 50,000 serious illnesses per year, including heart failures and strokes, if people with high blood pressure incorporate a diuretic into their regimen.”

About 73 percent of adults with diabetes have high blood pressure — for diabetics, defined as greater than or equal to 130/80 mm Hg or use of prescription medications for hypertension. Both diabetes and high blood pressure are major risk factors for coronary heart disease, and the combination puts people at particularly high risk for developing heart disease and renal disease.

— **David R. Bates**