



Scoop

Oct. 15, 2004

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

October

18 Dr. Kathleen Beckingham, noon, "A Proper Sense of Gravity; Investigating Gravid Perception with the Fruit Fly *Drosophila Melanogaster*," MSB 2.135.

20 Discover U Information Session, UH reps to speak on completing or starting a bachelor's or master's degree, noon, MSB 3.001.

29-30 School of Nursing and Student Community Center Open House, 6901 Bertner noon - 6 p.m., Oct. 29; 9 a.m. - noon, Oct. 30. All UT personnel welcome. For information go to <<http://www.uthouston.edu/sonsc/openhouse.htm>>.

UTMost Interest

Dr. Bryant Boutwell was the invited speaker for UT-Austin's Plan II Honors Program speaking on the topic of **Sir William Osler** and professionalism in medicine. He also was invited to speak at the American Medical Writer's Association on the topic of research techniques for writing medical histories and tips for using the John P. McGovern Historical Collections and Research Center located in the Houston Academy of Medicine/Texas Medical Center Library...**Dr. Eugene Boisaubin** was interviewed online for a PBS cover story on transplant ethics (<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week804/cover.html>).



NOTE -The fall edition of *UT-Houston Medicine*, produced by the Office of Community Affairs and Public Education, is now available. Call 713-500-5109, for copies.

MOORE GARNERS \$8M TRAUMA CENTER GRANT RENEWAL

Dr. Frederick Moore, program director and principal investigator for a Trauma Center Grant study titled, "The Role of the Gut in Postinjury Multiple Organ Failure" is delighted that the \$8 million dollar grant has been renewed for a five-year period. The Trauma Research Center was founded in 1988 by **Dr. Frank Moody** and is in its 16th year of funding by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS).



Dr. Frederick Moore

"We have the expertise to look at gut inflammation and dysfunction at the laboratory level and to translate it to bedside patient care in a way that no other trauma center can," Moore said.

Within the division, there are three people who have been awarded KO-8 grants: **Dr. Chuck Cox**, **Dr. Rosemary Kozar**, and **Dr. Emily Robinson**. "That's a nice feather in our cap," Moore said. "We are also involved in several multi-institutional investigations. One is attempting to define the genomic response to injury; the other two are focused on optimizing resuscitation."

Severely injured patients are at high risk for gut inflammation and dysfunction, which contribute to multiple organ failure or MOF. "We take patients who undergo major traumatic shock

(Continued on back)

THE CRISIS OF AMERICA'S UNINSURED IN PHOTOS

Dr. Julieana Nichols, assistant professor, Department of Pediatrics, and a steering committee member of Health Care for All Texas (HCFAT), announced that Mayor Bill White and HCFAT are sponsoring the photography exhibit "Denied: The Crisis of America's Uninsured." This is a photo documentary of individuals suffering the consequences of a failed health-care system by nationally renowned photographer Ed Kashi and writer Julie Winokur.



A family in Texas struggles and is bankrupt due to a downturn in the economy and a battle with breast cancer.

The exhibit is being shown at the Houston Public Library, Central Branch, 500 McKinney, second and third floors, through **Oct. 18**. Viewing hours are 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. today and Saturday; 2 - 6 p.m. Sunday; and 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Monday.

According to HCFAT, almost 5 million Texans have no health insurance and many more are poorly insured. The exhibit, which has traveled from the California State Capitol to the Empire State Building, has toured six cities in Texas this fall.

Multiple organizations, including the Gulf Coast CHIP Coalition, Memorial Hermann, St. Luke's Episcopal Health Charities, Baylor College of Medicine, the Harris County Hospital District, the Rothko Chapel, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, U.S. Representatives Gene Green and Sheila Jackson Lee, are co-sponsoring the photography exhibit. For more information, visit <<http://www.healthcareforalltexas.org>>.



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A part of The University of Texas
Health Science Center at Houston

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E-Scoop online:
http://www.med.uth.tmc.edu/community_affairs/escoop.htm
Produced weekly by the Office of Community Affairs and Public Education





(L. to R.) **Monique Bell, Chris Rodriguez, Jean Garza, and Debbie Lampl**, Dental Branch, were on the winning side.

“SOME LIKE IT HOT” AT FUN FEST

“Some Like It Hot” was the grand prize chili cook-off winner at Founders’ Fun Fest, Oct. 8.

The Silent Auction raised \$3,198 for the University Classified Staff Council’s scholarships for classified staff children.

TC GRANT RENEWAL, CONTINUED

and we resuscitate them out of that.”

“Unfortunately, while they survive the initial insult, the standard care that we provide in the ICU is very bad for the gut,” Moore explained.

Moore pointed out that the fluids and drugs administered during treatment cause more inflammation and swelling in the GI tract. The question for caregivers then becomes do you give colloids or crystalloids? Moore indicated that the fluids and early administration of enteral (intestinal) diets improves patient outcome and maximizes tolerance of early nutrition via the gut. Moore indicated that about 70 severely injured patients a year are put through a standardized resuscitation process. Bioengineers and informatic experts assist bedside clinicians, and a unique computerized decision-support system helps to direct resuscitation.

“This grant gives us the critical mass to keep a team of top-notch investigators all working together,” Moore said. Other investigators on the grant include: **Dr. Dave Mercer**, associate program director, **Dr. Bruce Kone**, **Dr. Bruce McKinley**, **Dr. Charles Miller**, **Dr. Elizabeth Dial**, **Dr. Lenard Lichtenberger**, **Dr. Rosemary Kozar**, **Dr. Norman Weisbrodt**, **Dr. Frank Moody**, and **Dr. Jon Tyson**.

The trauma center grant is heavily directed at basic research. “We have four funded basic science projects, and all of them relate to some aspect of care,” Moore said. “Dr. Kone, for example, is interested in the molecular events that regulate gut inflammation and how we can therapeutically intervene to improve what’s happening. I am looking at hypertonic saline resuscitation. We’ve shown that to be very protective to the GI tract.”

“Dr. Mercer is interested in how different traumatic stresses such as shock and sepsis cause the stomach to become dysfunctional and how anesthetics affect this. Dr. Betsy Dial is interested in developing a novel phospholipids (lecithin) solution to protect the hydrophobic (water-repellant) barrier of the stomach during stressful conditions such as sepsis (severe bacterial infection).”

Every Friday there are open presentations of ongoing studies and different experts are asked to share their research. “Recently my brother, **Dr. Ernest E. Moore** from Denver, who I still do research with, stopped by,” Moore said. Moore’s brother discussed how lipid mediators in the mesenteric lymph prime the systemic inflammatory response that causes acute lung injury. “We’re planning to collaborate with **Dr. Hazim Safi** to determine the clinical relevance of these mediators in patients undergoing complex thoracoabdominal aortic aneurysm repairs.”

“**Thomas Page** was here recently, as well,” Moore said. “He’s a Ph.D. from Rice University and an expert in hemoglobin solutions. **Dr. Robert Hunter** stopped in to discuss a new polymer solution that is being tested in sickle cell crisis. This polymer could be a unique adjunct to standard of care trauma resuscitation solutions.”

“Collaborations such as these are thought-provoking and the direct by-products of this grant renewal,” Moore said.

- C. O’Brien

WILLERSON NAMED THI PRESIDENT-ELECT

The Board of Trustees of the Texas Heart Institute at St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital has announced the selection of **James T. Willerson, M.D.** as the president-elect of the Texas Heart Institute.

Dr. Willerson, a world renowned cardiologist, has been involved in research and education at the Texas Heart Institute since 1989 and has served as its medical director since 1993.

He is also chief of Cardiology, director of Cardiology Research, and co-director of the Cullen Cardiovascular Research Laboratories at the Texas Heart Institute. He is the chief of Cardiology at St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital and the president of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.



“I am extremely gratified that Dr. Willerson has accepted the position of President-Elect,” said **Dr. Denton Cooley**, founder, president, and surgeon-in chief of the Texas Heart Institute. “His considerable talents, his extraordinary commitment to research and education, **James T. Willerson, M.D.** and his unparalleled dedication bode well for our Heart Institute, and I look to the future with a strong sense of optimism.”

“I am committed to help build the Texas Heart Institute to even higher levels of excellence in research, education, and patient care,” said Dr. Willerson. “I also believe that we in Houston have an unequalled opportunity to solidify our leadership position in cardiovascular medicine by working even more closely with both medical schools and all of the Texas Medical Center institutions.”

- D. Bates

ERC ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

The following are the new officers for the Medical School’s Employee Relations Committee (ERC) Committee:

President - **Sheila Donnell**

Vice President - **Kathy Merceri**

Secretary - **Anne Starr**

Treasurer - **Vicci Sanders**

President Elect - **Tiffany Sheffield-Lopez**

APPLY FOR ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON HEALTH POLICY FELLOWSHIPS

The deadline to apply to the Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellowships program is Fri., **Nov. 19**. The program is designed to develop the capacity of outstanding mid-career health professionals in academic and community-based settings to assume leadership roles in health policy and management, to gain an understanding of the health policy process, and to contribute to the formulation of new policies and programs.

Up to 10 fellows will be selected for the 2005 program. The fellowship includes a one-year residential experience in Washington, D.C., that features an intensive orientation followed by hands-on work assignments.

See the RWJF full text of this program and application information, at <http://rwjf.org/publications/publicationsPdf/cfp-healthPolicyFellows05.pdf>.