

Events to Know

March

21 “March Madness” Texas Medical Center postdoctoral fellows party. 5-7 p.m., The Commons. Contact Leslie Shields at 713.500.6612.

27 Walter M. Kirkendall, M.D., Endowed Lecture Series: Dr. Herbert DuPont (SPH, Center for Infectious Diseases) to present “Emerging Infectious Diseases – Has the U.S. Become a Developing Country?” Noon, MSB 2.103.

30 Book signing: Dr. Carin Hagberg (Department of Anesthesiology) will sign her new textbook, *Benumof’s Airway Management: Principles and Practice, 2nd ed.* 11 a.m.-1 p.m., MSB 5th Floor Gallery. Lunch provided; 10 percent off listed book price. Event sponsored by UT Bookstore and Abbott Laboratories.

April

2 Faculty Development Leave Proposals due. Office of Faculty Affairs, MSB G.300. Proposals can be submitted twice a year. Find guidelines at http://med.uth.tmc.edu/administration/faculty_aff/guidelines-faculty-leave.html. Contact Faye Viola at 713.500.5101.

In Memoriam – Jephtha W. Dalston, Ph.D., FACHE, a leader in the health care field, lost his battle with cancer March 2. Dalston served for 22 years as chief executive officer of three teaching hospital systems in academic medical centers: The University of Oklahoma Hospitals (1970-1975); The University of Michigan Hospitals (1975-1985); and The Hermann Hospital & Trust, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (1985-1991). He also held faculty positions at the University of Oklahoma School of Public Health, the University of Michigan Medical School and School of Public Health, and the UT Health Science Center at Houston.

Medical School to get grab ‘n’ go

Folks in the Medical School Building won’t have to wait long to grab a hot cup of coffee or a quick bite to eat – right here in the building – because the ground floor’s grab ‘n’ go project is well under way.

Soon to be located in what used to be the temporary bookstore on the ground floor, construction to convert the space into a café began over the last few weeks. At February’s MSB Facility Advisory Council Meeting, members learned from Senior Project Manager **Judson Lloyd** that the project is slated for a May 1 completion and that mechanical, electrical, and plumbing subcontractors had been chosen.

Faculty, staff, and students first learned that food would be coming back to the Medical School at the Sept. 14, 2006, town hall meeting where interim Dean **Jerry Wolinsky** reported that the empty room on the ground floor would be converted into a coffee shop or “grab ‘n’ go” establishment sometime during the course of the academic year.

“Having a coffee shop adjacent to the Leather Lounge and Webber Plaza is a natural catalyst to facilitate student, faculty, and staff interactions in an attractive and collegial setting,” Wolinsky said. “I don’t recall that our school has ever had anything quite like this, and I look forward to seeing how it may change where and how we meet to exchange ideas.”

The French Corner is on board as the food vendor of choice and will serve pre-made salads and sandwiches. **Diane Collard**, manager of food and travel services, noted the Medical School location will not have the capabilities to prepare fresh food. Therefore, catering services will not be available at the café. Individuals are encouraged to call The French Corner Café at the School of Nursing, 713.500.9103, for catering needs.

Collard added that a specific menu for food and beverages is currently in the works, but some beverage choices will include fresh brewed coffee, tea, and soft drinks. The grab ‘n’ go also will have a small amount of tables and chairs for diners.

Business hours for the grab ‘n’ go are yet to be determined.

-C. Webb

AMA president-elect talks about reforming health care

Medical students learned how the American Medical Association (AMA) is working to improve America’s health care system and keep people healthy from AMA President-Elect **Dr. Ronald Davis**, who spoke Feb. 26 at the Medical School on “Health Care Reform: How to Cover Everyone and Keep Them Healthy.”

Davis, also a preventive medicine specialist from East Lansing, Mich., spoke to students about the AMA’s 2007 health care advocacy agenda, which includes expanding medical coverage for the uninsured and promoting healthier lifestyles. The UT-Houston AMA Chapter sponsored Davis’ talk at the school, which was a preview of his presentation given to The Houston Forum later that day.

From Davis, students learned that 47 million Americans have no health coverage. Of those, 5.5 million people in Texas are uninsured. Each year, 18,000 uninsured Americans die from preventable illnesses that could be avoided if they were insured to seek appropriate preventive medical care.

The AMA has both short-term and long-term goals to expand coverage for the uninsured and increase access to care. Davis said the AMA’s simple plan was to “give people money to allow them to buy health insurance.” The AMA proposes to push for the adoption of a consumer-driven, market-based plan to expand coverage through tax credits and insurance market reforms. Additionally, the AMA will advocate so that individuals can choose the health plan that will work

(Cont’d. on back)



Dr. Ronald Davis



CCTS seeks applicants for K12 program

The Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences (CCTS) is now accepting applications for the K12 training program, which will support the training and career development of young medical and health professionals conducting clinical or translational research. The application deadline is 8 a.m. Monday, April 16.

The program provides salary support for up to 75 percent protected time for up to three years for instructors and assistant professors and up to two years for fellows. Research funds – \$25,000 for faculty and \$15,000 for fellows – also will be provided. One to two medical fellows, one to three medical or clinical instructors or assistant professors (with MD, DO, DDS, or DSN degrees), and one health professional instructor or assistant professor (with a PhD, DPH or PharmD degree) with a strong interest in clinical or translational research are expected to be selected. All applicants must be engaged in or preparing to conduct clinical or translational research and able to complete the entire funding period at the UT Health Science Center at Houston or M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. Each applicant's department chair must confirm the applicant will have up to 75 percent protected time as defined by the UT Health Science Center and the National Institutes of Health if accepted into the K12 program. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

Each trainee will conduct a clinical or translational research study under the supervision of one to two senior faculty mentors and complete the core curriculum at UTHSC-H (Clinical Research Curriculum) or at MDACC. (Projects involving animals alone are not acceptable). The K-12 Advisory Board will select awardees based upon the qualifications of the trainee and mentor(s) and the scientific merit of the research proposal and training plan.

Call **Drs. Jon Tyson** or **Robert Lasky** at 713.500.5651 with questions.

HCMS Pictorial Roster for sale March 30

Place your order for the new 2007 HCMS Pictorial Roster, available March 30, from the Harris County Medical Society. The roster is an incredible resource for faculty and staff and includes the entire HCMS membership, which consists of 80 percent of the physicians in the Harris County area.

Download an order form at www.hcms.org and select Medserv/ Practice Services. UT faculty and staff receive the HCMS member rate of only \$27.50 plus shipping.

Contact **Nancy Boone**, roster coordinator, at 713.524.4267 ext. 221 or nancy_boone@hcms.org with questions.

Run for the Rose set March 25

This year's Run for the Rose, held at Reliant Park Astrodome at 8 a.m. Sunday, March 25, will celebrate its five-year anniversary honoring the legacy of **Dr. Marnie Rose**, a 2000 Medical School graduate and pediatric resident who lost her battle with brain cancer Aug. 23, 2002.

The run will benefit brain tumor research at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, as well as pediatric initiatives at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital. Last year's festivities raised \$223,000, bringing the total funds generated for the two institutions to more than \$500,000.

The Run for the Rose is a sanctioned 5K race/walk; other race-day activities include a 1K family walk and a post-race party on the floor of Reliant Astrodome for all participants.

Event information and registration are available at www.runfortherose.com or by calling race headquarters at 713.993.9288.

Casas named COO of UT Physicians

Richard Andrassy, chair of the board of UT Physicians, has announced the appointment of **Andrew Casas** as chief operating officer (COO) of UT Physicians – the nonprofit physician corporation affiliated with the practice plan of the Medical School.



Andrew Casas

"Mr. Casas has been instrumental in the business activities of UTP for many years and has been leading our efforts in contracting, billing, and joint venture projects such as UT Imaging and others," said Andrassy, who also is chair of the Department of Surgery at the Medical School. "He is very knowledgeable about the health care sector of business and has been sought after by many other health care groups. It has been a pleasure and education to work closely with him."

UT Physicians manages the Medical School's clinical practice, while carrying out the school's three-part mission of education, research, and clinical care. Casas said he is honored to be named COO and that the new role will allow him to facilitate the organization's business and operations more efficiently.

"Being named chief operating officer of UT Physicians allows me to function more strategically to ensure the continued growth and success of UT Physicians," Casas said. "While my change in position will initially bring little change in the day-to-day operations of UT Physicians, I feel the responsibility and authority that accompany the title will streamline the making of strategic business decisions and allow UT Physicians to implement new initiatives more quickly. My personal goal is to ensure the Medical School physicians prosper and our patients receive the best care possible in a setting that accomplishes the goals of UTHSC-H."

-C. Webb

AMA, cont'd.

best for them.

"There's building momentum to obtaining health care coverage for the uninsured," Davis said, adding that the AMA's partnership with the Health Coverage Coalition for the Uninsured (HCCU) will help with its plan to cover the uninsured.

The HCCU is a diverse group of 16 national organizations that are committed to changing America's health care system by supporting income-related tax credits to help individuals purchase coverage of their own choosing.

"Once we get everyone covered, how do we keep them healthy?" Davis asked the group. He said that when talking to his patients about improving their health, he encourages healthier lifestyles by focusing on the adverse health effects from tobacco, alcohol, and obesity.

Overall, about 60 percent of adults are overweight or obese in the United States. Davis reviewed two popular resources that talk about the health effects from overeating and obesity – the documentary *Super Size Me* by Morgan Spurlock and the book *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser.

He then reviewed some AMA strategies for reducing the obesity epidemic, including treatment programs for obesity, increasing exercise programs in schools, environmental changes, requiring nutritional information (such as calories and fat content) on menus and menu boards, and the importance of being good role models.

He concluded his talk by encouraging students to lead by example. By becoming individual role models, students can help change the future of America's health care system and improve the health of their patients.

-C. Webb