UTMB’s celebrates full recognition of its National Diabetes Prevention Program by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Pictured left to right: Dr. Raquel Pena, Dr. Hanaa Sallam, Gene Felter, Dr. Nicola Abate and Michael Washburn.

TURNING THE TIDE ON DIABETES

UTMB’s Diabetes Prevention Program Receives Full Recognition from CDC

Paving the way for diabetes prevention, UTMB is now the only institution in the Greater Houston Area—and 1 of only 5 in the State of Texas—to have a Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) fully recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

More than 84 million U.S. adults have prediabetes, a condition where blood sugar is higher than normal but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as diabetes. People with prediabetes are at high risk for type 2 diabetes (the most common type of diabetes), heart disease and stroke. In the last 20 years, the number of adults diagnosed with diabetes has more than tripled as the U.S. population
has aged and become more overweight.

The good news? DPP providers like UTMB can help people with prediabetes prevent or delay type 2 diabetes and other serious health problems by offering evidence-based, affordable and high-quality lifestyle change programs.

UTMB has implemented the CDC’s approved, one-year structured lifestyle change curriculum, PreventT2, that promotes a healthier diet and increased physical activity. Such interventions can reduce the incidence of diabetes by 58 percent among adults with prediabetes and by 71 percent in those aged 60 years or older, according to the CDC.

The journey to national recognition began with Dr. Nicola Abate, professor and chief in the UTMB Division of Endocrinology, who had a vision of better health for his patients that paved the way to where UTMB’s program is today. “Diabetes prevention and care is a key focus of UTMB’s Endocrinology program,” says Dr. Abate. “Diabetes is a disease that affects so many people, and it’s a tremendous contributor to morbidity and mortality in our population. Our recognition by the CDC makes a big difference in terms of receiving the support we need to expand this initiative to our greater patient population.”

Dr. Hanaa Sallam, a research scientist and coordinator of UTMB’s Diabetes Prevention Program, is certified by the American Association for Diabetes Educators as a lifestyle coach. She has been implementing PreventT2 for more than two years. “We are extremely proud of this achievement; however, this is just the beginning!” she says. The next step is to complete an application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to become a Medicare DPP provider. “With approval, UTMB will be able to receive reimbursement whenever a Medicare participant is enrolled in the program. Other private insurance entities also cover participation in DPPs,” she explains.

UTMB recently expanded the DPP with the certification of two additional lifestyle coaches, Michael Washburn, program manager of UTMB’s Angleton Danbury Campus Community Resources, Wellness and Volunteer Services, and Dr. Raquel Pena, a research scientist in the UTMB Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science. With CDC’s recognition, UTMB now has the capacity to not only provide DPP services to our population with prediabetes but also to be contracted by other institutions. Dr. Sallam plans to partner with other University of Texas System institutions in the future through a contract with the Texas Department of State Health Services. She also wants to train more lifestyle coaches to continue the program’s growth.

Dr. Ann Albright, director of the Division of Diabetes Translation at the CDC, applauds UTMB’s program, noting efforts like UTMB’s are turning the tide in the fight against the epidemic of type 2 diabetes.

Dr. Abate and the UTMB’s DPP would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions and support in gaining full recognition by the CDC:

- Dr. Ben G. Raimer, senior vice president, Health Policy and Legislative Affairs, for his leadership and outstanding support to the program.
- Dr. Michelle Sierpina, founding director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), for hosting the program and her help in pursuing funds for the program. The DPP aligned well with OLLI’s mission and Dr. Sierpina’s passion for healthier population—this was a key to the success of the program.
- Dr. Cynthia Judice, chief medical officer for UTMB’s Primary Care Services and Community-Based Clinics, for her help promoting the program to CBC physicians and her assistance in initializing a referral system to the program.
- Dr. Hani Serag, research fellow, Health Policy and Legislative Affairs, for his hard work and perseverance helping the DPP obtain a Texas Department of State Health Services contract which guarantees the program continuity and expansion for years to come.
- The administrative support of Gene Felter, business manager, UTMB Divisions of Cardiology and Endocrinology; Ann Varghese, director of Ambulatory Operations; the OLLI staff members; and Julie Kuper, business coordinator, Division of Endocrinology for her hands-on contribution to the success of the program.

Congratulations to the team on this recognition!

See the national registry of recognized diabetes prevention programs at https://nccd.cdc.gov/DDT_DPRP/Registry.aspx

---

**PREVENTING TYPE 2 DIABETES**

If you have prediabetes, losing a small amount of weight if you’re overweight and getting regular physical activity can lower your risk for developing type 2 diabetes. A small amount of weight loss means around 5 percent to 7 percent of your body weight, just 10 to 14 pounds for a 200-pound person. Regular physical activity means getting at least 150 minutes a week of brisk walking or a similar activity. That’s just 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

Learn more about diabetes prevention and lifestyle changes at https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/index.html

Learn more about PreventT2 at UTMB at https://www.utmbhealth.com/services/diabetes/news-events/events
As many as 1 in 7 women experience depression during pregnancy or the postpartum period, which not only impacts the mother's health, but can affect the baby during development and cause problems with family relationships, breastfeeding and the child's future medical treatment. It is one of the most common and costly obstetric complications in the U.S. when left undiagnosed and untreated, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Souby George, a nurse who works in UTMB's Mother & Baby Unit, and Dr. Sara Nowakowski, assistant professor and licensed psychologist in the Behavioral Health and Research Division of the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, recognized the need for mental health support for new mothers. Together, they launched a therapy support group, MOMents, thanks to funding by UTMB's President's Cabinet. The course is facilitated by psychologists, nurses and lactation consultants who are trained to address issues surrounding motherhood. A key intervention includes cognitive behavioral therapy and interpersonal therapy, which have the potential to reduce mood and anxiety symptoms and improve maternal well-being.

The cause of depression in expectant and new mothers is attributed to fluctuating levels of estrogen and progesterone. The hormones, which are associated with mood, rise during pregnancy; then, within 48 hours after the baby arrives, they decrease dramatically. This may cause the mother to feel a variety of symptoms, including anxiousness, exhaustion and irritability, extreme tiredness or insomnia. While less severe symptoms are common and often resolve within 10 days of delivery (sometimes referred to as “baby blues”), in some women, depression persists much longer. In rare cases, the symptoms of depression can become intense, causing suicidal thoughts or thoughts about harming the baby.

Clinical risk factors that may be associated with the development of perinatal depression include a personal or family history of depression, a history of physical or sexual abuse, an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, stressful life events, pregestational or gestational diabetes or complications during pregnancy (e.g., preterm delivery or pregnancy loss). Social factors, such as low socioeconomic status, lack of social or financial support and adolescent parenthood, have also been shown to increase the risk of developing perinatal depression.

Key stakeholders and policymakers recommend all women be screened for depression during pregnancy and the postpartum period. While depression screening is an important first step in addressing women's mental health, it poses new challenges of what to do with the increasing number of women reporting depressive symptoms to their primary care providers or obstetricians.

“Our mothers don’t have to suffer in silence when we can help,” says Souby George. “We are not just worried about our moms, but we also need to consider the mental health of our next generation, as well; they can be affected by the mother’s depression. It is important for these mothers who feel they are struggling with depression to know they have someone they can reach out to—this is something they can overcome.”

Women interested in learning more about the MOMents guidance and support program are invited to call Dr. Sara Nowakowski at (409) 772-3996 or email sanowako@utmb.edu. To register for the program, please call (409) 772-9507. Sessions are held on Mondays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the UTMB Pediatrics Clinic at Bay Colony, located at 2785 Gulf Freeway South, Suite 2.200 in League City. Babies are welcome!
Inpatient Culture of Safety Survey Launches February 22

As part of UTMB’s ongoing effort to ensure a safe healing environment for our patients, all clinical faculty and staff members who work in inpatient care settings or in support of inpatient care are invited to please participate in this year’s Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Culture of Safety Survey. This assessment is the healthcare industry’s best tool for understanding, promoting, and maintaining a culture of patient safety. (An assessment of primary and specialty care clinics was conducted in 2017.) Beginning February 22, the survey tool will be open for four weeks; it should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Individual responses will be completely confidential.

Once all results are returned, the results will be shared with departments and other clinical groups to address opportunities for improvement. Your input is very valuable to us as we strive to provide the safest possible patient experiences in the communities we serve. Thank you for completing this important survey for UTMB! Please take the survey at https://utmb.us/36y. Information on the survey may be accessed at http://intranet.utmb.edu/QHS.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this survey, please contact Stephanie Ramos, patient safety specialist, in the Department of UTMB Quality, Safety & Performance Improvement at (409) 772-1701 or stramos@utmb.edu.

FREE EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS FOR CAREGIVERS AND FAMILIES

Every Wednesday at 2 p.m. in Jennie Sealy Hospital Conference Room 2.506A, UTMB's Health Resource Center offers 30-minute “Time Out” sessions focused on caregiving, caregiver support, self-care and other related topics. Sessions are open to all. For more information, contact Patient Resource Specialist Savannah Parks at (409) 266-7542 or sjparks@utmb.edu

March 6 – Diabetes BINGO
Presented by: Kelly Ferguson, RN BSN CEN
Learn more about diabetes while having fun!

March 13 - Practical Everyday Advice for Dementia Caregivers
Presented by: Kristen Carlson and Julia Sherrod from Right at Home Galveston
Kristen and Julia will discuss everyday practices and approaches to caring for a person or loved one with dementia, including communication, behavioral concerns, personal care and physical activity.

March 20 – Patient and Caregiver Zen Hour with Pet Therapy
Caregivers take on many responsibilities, and often their emotional and self-care needs go unmet. Caregivers, family members and patients are invited to participate in the “Caregiver Zen Hour” which offers relaxing and comforting activities to decrease stress and provide a little quiet time. Other activities include: aromatherapy, adult coloring, conversations with Pastoral Care, inspirational reading and a chair massage.

March 27 – Integrative Medicine and Your Health
Presented by: Samuel Mathis, MD, Integrative and Behavioral Medicine, UTMB Department of Family Medicine
Integrative medicine is an approach to care that puts the patient at the center of their care and addresses the full range of physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual and environmental influences that affect a person’s health. Join us as Dr. Samuel Mathis provides information on how integrative medicine can advance your health, reduce stress and improve quality of life for you and your loved ones.
Your feedback is requested on the functionality of intensive care and medical/surgical room designs for the future five-story South Tower on the League City Campus! The South Tower will connect to the existing hospital and adds 60 patient beds to the campus.

The first two floors of the tower will house diagnostic and treatment services, environmental services, linen, transportation, materials management, a centrally-located dining hall, kitchen, an inpatient pharmacy, clinical laboratory and office space. The third and fourth floors will each contain 30-bed patient care units. The fifth floor will serve as shelled mechanical space and provide a buffer for future upward expansion. The South Tower is expected to be operational in mid-2020. It is designed to eventually hold 12 floors and 240 patient beds.

View the rooms on Thurs., March 7 from 9:00 a.m. to noon in Jennie Sealy Hospital, Floor 12. Please take the elevators to Floor 11 where you will be escorted by a member of the Design and Construction team to Floor 12.

JOHN SEaly MODERNIZATION: OVERVIEW & UPDATE PRESENTATIONS

See what the future holds for John Sealy Hospital! Topics include a project overview, a description of the second-floor pedestrian walkway that will connect R. Waverley Smith Pavilion to John Sealy Hospital and any related construction impacts to the John Sealy Hospital Circle Drive. An introduction to the AB Wing Move Plan will also be provided, as well preview of art to be installed. The modernization is slated for completion in 2020.

Presentations will be held on the following dates:

- Tues., March 5 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in Research Bldg. 6, Auditorium 1.206
- Wed., March 6 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Jennie Sealy Hospital, Conference Room 2.506B
- Thurs., March 7 from 9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. in Research Bldg. 6, Auditorium 1.206

FEEDBACK NEEDED! LEAGUE CITY HOSPITAL SOUTH TOWER PATIENT ROOM DESIGNS

Call Access 2-CARE (2-2273) or (409) 772-2273 for an appointment with a specialist within seven days or a primary care provider within 24 hours for your immediate-care needs. Accessible appointments are offered for all active employees and their dependents.
As a participant in the Texas 1115 Medicaid Transformation Waiver’s Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) program, UTMB strives to achieve certain measures that help us improve the health of our patient population. UTMB is focused on several categories within the DSRIP program: managing patients with diabetes, managing patients with heart disease, ensuring pediatric patients receive important components of primary care, and ensuring patients receive certain types of preventive care, such as screenings and vaccinations.

Much of this work overlaps with Best Care and UTMB’s efforts in the Vizient Ambulatory Quality and Accountability Study, where we strive to ensure patients get the right care, at the right time and in the right setting.

This month, UTMB’s Population Health leadership recognized Pediatrics, Island East Clinic for achieving exceptional results under an important DSRIP metric, Weight Assessment and Counseling for Nutrition and Physical Activity for Children and Adolescents. The goal under this metric is to reduce and prevent obesity in children and adolescents by ensuring children’s height and weight are consistently documented and that they receive nutrition and exercise counseling. Other measures within the DSRIP program’s Pediatric Primary Care bundle include ensuring children and adolescents are up-to-date on immunizations, receive appropriate treatment for upper respiratory infections, have tobacco use status documented and receive assistance quitting, if needed, and well-child visits occur in the first 15 months of life.

For more on current Population Health initiatives at UTMB, please visit intranet.utmb.edu/population-health.

**Pediatrics, Island East Clinic recognized for DSRIP program achievement**

UTMB DSRIP program top performer, Pediatrics, Island East Clinic, was recognized Feb. 18 for exceptional performance in the measure Pediatric Nutrition and Exercise Counseling Composite Ranking. Pictured left to right: (kneeling) Maria Reyes, Jennifer Galvan; (front row) Dr. Helen Paradise, Cindy Rodriguez, Karla Boozer; (back row) Heather Ovalle, Jessica Marsh, Daryl Ewing, Crystal Marshall, Clara Miller, Danielle Gonzales, Katherine Golden Beck, Dr. Richard Rupp and Craig Kovacevich.

**Mondays in March 2019**

Mission-Critical: Conversations on the Future of Improving Health

The 2019 Mondays in March program will be a series of panel discussions that feature UTMB leaders at the forefront of guiding our institution in an era of rapid and significant change. Sessions begin at noon in Levin Hall Auditorium on the Galveston Campus. Remote viewing options will be available, and all sessions will be recorded and posted online.

*Monday, March 4—The Case for Growth*

*Monday, March 11—Health Care: Evolution or Revolution?*

*Monday, March 18—The Academic Foundation*

*Monday, March 25—A Look Ahead with Executive Leadership*

For more information on moderators, panelists and viewing information, please visit https://www.utmb.edu/mondays-in-march
**SHOUT OUTS!**

**KUDOS!** Dr. Barbara Bryant, professor and vice chair of Pathology and medical director of Transfusion Medicine at UTMB, has been named as one of 17 members to the Blood Products Advisory Committee of the Food and Drug Administration. The Blood Products Advisory Committee advises the commissioner or designee in discharging responsibilities as they relate to helping to ensure safe and effective drugs for human use and, as required, any other product for which the FDA has regulatory responsibility. She will serve on this committee until Sept. 20, 2023.

“I appreciate everyone who was involved with my care, from the people that brought my food tray, to housekeeping, to the doctors and nurses. My unit ran like a well-oiled machine. UTMB made a huge difference in my view of being in the hospital, and because of everyone that was involved and helped me, my admission was a little more tolerable.”

“The care I was given at Angleton Danbury Hospital was just excellent. From the custodians to the doctors, they were all very compassionate, friendly, caring and professional. I was never in the dark about anything.”

“Six stars for Nurse Cathy Green! My husband went to Urgent Care, Angleton because of the general crud he just couldn’t shake. He had been congested and coughing, but we just thought it was a bad cold or even pneumonia. Turns out, he was much more ill than we knew, and Cathy Green, RN was amazing. She was so compassionate and caring; we have not seen a health care provider like her in a long time. She really went the extra mile to give him the best care, helped us figure out our next move and treated him with dignity and respect. Cathy Green is what a medical professional should be. Thank you!”

“Labor & Delivery nurse Michelle Garza was awesome. She was knowledgeable, caring, proactive, listened well, and advocated for me. She made my labor and delivery experience great.”

“I really do appreciate the care given to me for my stay in the hospital. I would like to thank Shannon Roberson, RN, Nancy Theriault, FNP, Dr. Zuleica Santiago-Delgado and all of the staff who took care of me. They all showed respect and were very knowledgeable about my medical conditions. The room was always clean and food service great. Thanks for the great care given!”

“I loved how Dr. Kevin Merkley took as much time as needed to explain by condition! I thoroughly understand now and feel confident to make better decisions about upcoming procedures. He is very personable and approachable. He made me feel important and understood. I will follow him for care, always!”

“Dr. Randal Reinertson is one of the best at UTMB. He displays care and concern, and always takes his time for individual care and reviews my health record and information. He is outstanding; impeccable patient care.”

“I’m new to the UTMB Health System here in Galveston. I have never experienced medical care elsewhere that was satisfying. It’s the best experience I’ve had in 46 years! I actually look forward to seeing my doctors. The way it’s handled and the professionalism, kindness and friendliness of all staff and doctors is amazing! UTMB, in my opinion, is the best medical care in the world!” (Family Medicine, PCP)

---

$3,000 Employee Referral Bonus - Available Jan. 23 to May 31

All paid UTMB employees who refer an applicant to a Nurse Clinician (II–V) position or an identified hard-to-fill position for the Health System will be eligible for a special $3,000 bonus. If your referral is hired into a benefits-eligible position between Jan. 23 and May 31, you will receive $1,500 when he or she completes six months of service and another $1,500 when he or she completes one year of service.

There is no limit to the number of referrals you can make, which can really add up for you and benefit UTMB. For details about the referral bonus, including applicant requirements and guidelines, see https://hr.utmb.edu/recruit/referral/.