UTMB officially signed the lease on the former Bay Area Regional Medical Center in Webster on Oct. 25. Since then, teams from all disciplines across UTMB have been working hard to get the new UTMB Health Clear Lake Campus ready to open in early 2019. In addition to partnering with more than 100 community physicians who will integrate their expertise into our Health System and Academic Enterprise, staffing the hospital, ensuring the facility is clean and making sure all equipment is evaluated and calibrated have been top priorities.

The Bay Area is one of the fastest-growing locations in the state. Opening the Clear Lake Campus will bring approximately 200 inpatient beds back into the community, a benefit for patients who would like to receive their health care close to home. It will also help UTMB immediately increase its bed capacity on the mainland as League City Hospital’s new five-story south tower is completed, which will open in 2020 and include 60 beds. Another great benefit of the new campus is that it will support UTMB’s academic mission by expanding clinical training sites and clinical research opportunities.

Clinical service planning for the Clear Lake Campus and League City Campus is underway. Plans are being based on community need and focus on providing optimal patient care. Where it makes sense, some services on the mainland will be consolidated to one hospital or the other, while other services will be provided at both locations. For example, because the Clear Lake Campus is already equipped with spaces for heart procedures, there will be an opportunity there for cardiac care, including cardiac catheterization procedures. The Clear Lake Campus also has a Labor & Delivery floor, so Mother & Baby services on the mainland will move from the League City Campus to the Clear Lake Campus. This transition will allow for the conversion of existing patient rooms in League City Hospital into much-needed intensive care and acuity-adaptable space. This will help us care for patients through our collaboration with MD Anderson who need inpatient care, as well as individuals who may be

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Pharmacists are an integral part of the health care team, adding value as members of interdisciplinary care teams by aiding in clinical decision-making and optimizing patient-centered health. For example, one study published in 2003 showed that clinical pharmacy interventions reduced the incidence of ventilator-associated pneumonia from 40 cases per 1,000 ventilator days to 12 cases (Intensive Care Medicine 2003;29:691).

In honor of the contributions of pharmacists and technicians make to patient care, UTMB’s Department of Pharmacy held week-long festivities in honor of National Pharmacy Week (Oct. 21-27). Events included a manager dance-off competition, Harry Potter Day and a “wear-your-camouflage-to-work” day.

On Oct. 23, the department’s residents, Blake Bennie and Celine Zhong, organized a Medication Safety Booth for providers and patients. Participants played Plinko to win prizes by answering questions about medications and the profession of pharmacy. They also hosted a “How Fast Can You Count the Pills?” game using a 62-ounce jar filled with M&Ms (also the grand prize).

The Medication Safety Booth wasn’t only fun and games; the take-away message that our pharmacists hoped to spread was as simple as the name of the booth itself: Medication Safety. Although the count-the-pills game used M&Ms in place of real medication pills, in real life, many medications can be dangerous if not taken as prescribed or if they are prescribed incorrectly. Pharmacists play an important role in helping patients avoid adverse drug interactions by providing advice on how to take medications safely.

For prescribers who visited the booth, the residents introduced themselves as the Post-Graduate Year 1 (PGY-1) Doctors of Pharmacy who specialize in the proper usage and dosing of medication.

For the patients and families that visited the Medication Safety Booth, brochures and handouts were available, compliments of Eugenio Alvarez from the Southeast Texas Poison Control Center (SETPC). The SETPC is a 24-hour poison emergency treatment and information resource for health care professionals and the public in southeast Texas. It is located within the Emergency Department at UTMB-Galveston.

The profession of pharmacy is very diverse and is expanding. In fact, the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists estimates there are approximately 300,000 pharmacists in the United States. Career prospects range from the pharmaceutical industry to academia, long-term care facilities, community-based pharmacies, and hospital and clinical specialty settings.

If you’re curious about what we do, just ask! Pharmacists are available 24/7 at (409) 772-1171 for any questions that physicians or nurses may have about medications. You can also learn more about UTMB’s Department of Pharmacy at http://www.utmb.edu/rxhome.
Congratulations to Drs. Preston Kerr, Ali Mohammad, Gulshan Sharma and Stephen Williams, along with UTMB Medical Students Jennifer Espinales and Megan Swonke and Data Analyst Paula Townley for their first-place recognition by the High Value Practice Academic Alliance for their abstract, “Appropriate Use of Sequential Compression Devices: A High Value Based Care Initiative.”

Sequential compression devices (SCDs) are routinely used to treat venous thromboembolism (VTE), which is when a blood clot forms in a deep vein, usually the leg, groin or arm. Current guidelines recommend SCD use in specific orthopedic populations or when the risk of bleeding prohibits pharmacologic treatment.

The team sought to define utilization patterns and potential quality-of-care predictors regarding SCD use at UTMB. They observed a variance in SCD use across medical, intensive care and surgical units with up to 75 percent of patients at-risk for inappropriate use when SCD orders are in place. As a result, an intervention is being implemented to ensure the appropriate use of mechanical treatment in the prevention of VTEs. This will help ensure UTMB delivers high quality, evidence-based care without compromising outcomes or value.


Left to right: Steven Williams, Gulshan Sharma and Preston Kerr at the High Value Practice Academic Alliance’s annual High Value Health Care Conference. The High Value Practice Academic Alliance is a Johns Hopkins-led national consortium of faculty leaders from more than 80 academic medical centers working to advance high-value practice through collaborative quality improvement, research and education. Learn more at hvpaa.org.

Becoming a High Value Practicing Organization is part of UTMB’s Best Care initiative. Best Care is the sum of all interactions shaped by UTMB’s culture that influence patient perceptions across the continuum of care. It encompasses the critical elements of health care from quality, safety and service to value and population health issues that drive decisions, impact access and ensure equity. It reaches beyond the clinical encounter to all interactions one has with the UTMB Health System. Best Care means we are committed to delivering the right care, at the right time, in the right way, for the right person, and have the best possible results for every patient, every time.

The High Value Practicing Organization component of Best Care is a key way we are working to improve the value of the care we deliver for our patients, payor and the organization. Being a High Value Practicing Organization means we work to ensure our patients receive the appropriate tests and treatments that result in the best outcome for a given clinical situation. It is “care that is tailored for optimizing health and well-being by delivering what is needed, wanted, clinically effective, affordable, equitable and responsible in its use of resources” (Lown Institute).

There are five stewardship pillars related to this work:

- Antimicrobial Stewardship to reduce microbial resistance.
- Laboratory Stewardship to ensure appropriate testing.
- Blood Management to increase patient safety.
- Imaging Stewardship to ensure appropriate testing.
- Opioids Stewardship to ensure appropriate prescribing and prevent substance abuse.

To learn more about creating high value patient care and what UTMB is doing to improve in each of the stewardship pillars above, please visit http://intranet.utmb.edu/best-care/
Did you know that prostate cancer is diagnosed in 1 in 9 men? With early detection, however, a patient’s chances of survival is better than 98 percent.

In the past, there was no way for doctors to remove prostate cancer without removing the whole prostate gland. This is because the available imaging technology was not powerful enough to illuminate the cancer, and the available laser ablation technology at the time was not focused enough to remove the cancer without damaging surrounding tissue.

Technology has improved significantly, and today a relatively new non-surgical prostate cancer treatment is available; however, only a few physicians in the world can perform the groundbreaking procedure. UTMB’s Chairman of Radiology, Dr. Eric Walser, is one of those physicians. Since 2013, he has performed the procedure more than 300 times.

Known as focal laser ablation (FLA) treatment, Dr. Walser, who is a board certified interventional radiologist, uses a state-of-the-art, MRI-guided laser to treat the cancer without removing the prostate. This method offers men who are candidates for the procedure much more peace of mind than traditional treatments, which are more invasive. FLA treatment also virtually eliminates the side effects of impotence and incontinence that can occur when patients receive traditional treatments.

For those patients whose prostate cancer is large, aggressive or has spread outside of the pelvis, ablation therapy may not be able to fully eliminate it. In those cases, UTMB’s Department of Urology offers patients a wide range of minimally invasive surgical options, including a highly advanced robotically-assisted laparoscopic option for prostate removal. UTMB’s radiation oncology department also has methods to treat prostate cancer with focused radiation therapy.

For more information, call (409) 772-0987 or visit https://utmb.us/32g.

Movember (a combination moustache and November) is an annual event involving the growing of moustaches during the month of November to raise awareness of men's health issues, such as prostate cancer, testicular cancer and men's suicide. It is run by the Movember Foundation, the only global charity focused solely on men’s health. For more information, please visit https://www.pcf.org/take-action/movember-pcf.

**Caregiver Timeouts December**

*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.

**December 5 - Essential Oils and Cooking**
*Presented by: Charlene Nieten, BSN, CCRN*

Don’t have all the fresh ingredients for your favorite dishes? No need to worry when you have essential oils as a substitute! Learn how to use essential oils in your favorite holiday goodies using pure ingredients.

**December 12 – Breathe**
*Presented by: Rebecca Castro, LCSW*

Providing care for a loved one can cause extensive stress and keeps us from caring for ourselves. During this session, we will provide relaxation techniques and tips to help caregivers and families relieve stress and reconnect with themselves.

**December 19 – Patient and Caregiver Zen Hour w/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 massage chair.

**December 26 – No session this week**

*For more information, contact Patient Resource Specialist Savannah Parks at (409) 266-7542 or sjparks@utmb.edu.*
The following is an excerpt from a letter submitted by a patient’s caregiver. The patient had an extensive cardiac profile and suffered a heart attack. He was admitted to UTMB’s League City Hospital:

Dr. Sendil Prasad was proficient, knowledgeable and showed compassion...he sat and talked to us at the bedside. We didn’t feel rushed; we felt reassured. We felt that he took the time to answer the patient’s questions. We would like to thank him, and we have selected him going forward as the patient’s cardiologist. We are optimistic for the future.

Nurse Latoya Guillory was a wonderful part of our experience. She was truly a patient advocate. Her communication during the entire stay will remain with us. Issues were handled promptly. She listened to our concerns and performed many instances of patient encouragement when necessary, as the patient at some points became saddened by his condition. When she left the room, we both had a smile on our faces and within. Overnight, the patient went into atrial fibrillation with rapid ventricular response. Latoya was prompt in her response and was able to successfully normalize his rhythm. She was highly respectful and maintained her professional demeanor with empathy for the patient. I stayed overnight and was cold—Latoya was kind and provided me with a hot blanket from the warmer, and it was the best! We’d like to thank her.

After discharge, we were faced with a few issues, but Nurse Victoria Castro assisted. Once we made it to the pharmacy, we had an issue with finding the correct syringes as ordered...but eventually, I was able to locate some. The other issue, which was a big one, was the medication was $240—we didn’t have this. I called and spoke to Nurse Victoria, and within a small period of time, I received a call back with a coupon that assisted us in at least getting enough medication for five days. This all took place late at night.

Nurse Jomar Patawaran completed a return-to-work slip for us after discharge and had a staff member to deliver it to us downstairs (we didn’t even ask for this, he offered). This was wonderful.

The Case Manager, Suzette Cerrillo, called to check on the patient following discharge. She listened to us and followed up with the clinics to rectify medication issues, as well as any concerns we had.

We would like to thank UTMB for this wonderful experience with the hospital stay and after discharge. Please let them know that we highly appreciate them for everything that they did to make the patient’s hospital stay one to remember (beyond the reason for the stay).

Polysomnographer Mr. Anthony Azagidi certainly functioned beyond exemplary. As his patient, I knew immediately when introduced to him that my sleep apnea study was going to be a positive experience. And it sure was! Mr. Azagidi was informative, gracious, concerned and attentive to my questions and assistive to my requests. He made my stay in your Sleep Center an enjoyable one. Having the requirement that I get to the realm of deep sleep as much as possible was facilitated by the way he structured my immediate environment. Anthony was better than any sleeping pill (Sleep Lab).

Dr. Bagi Jana is an amazing physician. He took my concerns seriously and didn’t just look at me like “one body system;” he took into account my entire medical, surgical and lab result history. By doing this he was able to give me a definitive diagnosis. Dr. Jana reviewed each option with me, explaining the risks and benefits. I am thankful that he seemed to “collaborate” with me about my plan of care and didn’t just give me a prescription and rush me out the door (UHC Hematology).

I wanted to make sure that you all know what our absolutely wonderful nurses Kelly O’Donnell, Danielle Troia and Brianna Robinson did this morning (these three always go above and beyond ALL the time, but I want to point out this morning). They worked together as a team in a very serious situation when one of our residents had a severe allergic reaction. It gave me chills to see the true wonder of these three nurses, who worked so calmly and quickly (Multispecialty Care Center at Town Center).