



R. K. Whittington
President – Trustee
Nolan E. Perez, M.D.
Vice President – Trustee
Anne Shepard
Secretary – Trustee
Manny Vela
Treasurer – Trustee

*Growing Healthier Communities
through Medical Education*

Elena Marin, M.D.
Trustee
Rene Capistran
Trustee
Rosemary Breedlove
Trustee

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Re: Psychiatry Residency Program -- Joint Announcement by UT Health Science Center at San Antonio and Valley Baptist Health System
February 1, 2013

The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA) and Valley Baptist Health System have jointly announced their partnership to establish a new five-year residency program in psychiatry as part of an expansion of medical education programs at the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC). The residency program, which will start with five (5) resident physicians in 2015 and will eventually grow by 2018 to eighteen (18) resident physicians in adult psychiatry and four (4) residents in child and adolescent psychiatry, is an important step toward the creation of a new medical school in the Rio Grande Valley. Valley Baptist has been one of the primary education partners with UTHSCSA in the development of the RAHC, and its Harlingen hospital has been designated as the primary teaching hospital for medical students and internal medicine residents for the last twelve years. The new psychiatry residency program will be based at the Valley Baptist hospital in Brownsville but will also include teaching programs with other partners across the region including the Rio Grande State Center, a campus of the Texas Department of State Health Services, and the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System.

R. K. Whittington, President of the South Texas Medical Foundation, greeted the announcement with enthusiasm. Whittington said, “The announcement of the new psychiatry residency program is a major step toward the creation of the new medical school. It is the culmination of several years of dedicated work by UT and local education partners in the Valley and is also evidence of the continued commitment to medical education by UT and by Valley Baptist Health System. It is especially significant that the first new residency program to be announced is in psychiatry. We have severe shortages of physicians and other primary care healthcare professionals in the Valley but the lack of psychiatrists and other mental health providers in our region is truly alarming. The participation by the VA is critical because of the increasing need for mental health services among our veterans, especially young men and women returning with serious injuries from Iraq and Afghanistan.”

According to UTHSCSA and Valley Baptist, there are fewer than three psychiatrists for every 100,000 residents of the Valley compared to more than six times that many psychiatrists in the rest of the United States. Whittington also complimented UTHSCA and Valley Baptist for making the psychiatry training program a priority because of those severe shortages and increasing need. He said, “The creation of residency programs in connection with a new regional medical school is the key to improving the quality of and access to healthcare here in the Valley. If we cannot recruit and attract enough psychiatrists and other doctors to our area, we will, with the help of UT, develop our own home-grown doctors and train them ourselves at the RAHC and at the new medical school. That is what the focus of this effort has been since the very beginning and what it always will be about.”

For further information or comment, please contact:

R. K. Whittington
President / Trustee
South Texas Medical Foundation
(956) 491-1505
email – chagofuentes@rkwlaw.com