



UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER
OF EL PASO

February 26, 2010

Great News! For the first time in local history, El Paso finally has a medical fellowship program! UMC, Texas Tech-El Paso and our West Texas Regional Poison Center received word this week that our application to begin a Fellowship in Toxicology has been approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. What a huge milestone in our campus' development!

Beginning this summer, physicians who have completed their residencies in emergency medicine will begin extensive training in the field of toxicology. There will be a total of four fellows in the program at any one time. Two will be chosen to enter the 24-month fellowship every academic year. Upon completing it, the physicians will be eligible to sit for board certification, which for all intents and purposes, means they are exceptional in their field.

The program will focus on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness or injury caused by overdoses, envenomations (poisonous bites), adverse drug reactions, chemicals and plant life. It will make our campus a regional referral center for medical toxicology and provide unparalleled support for El Paso Children's Hospital. It also will beautifully complement UMC's West Texas Regional Poison Center, America's first 24-hour bi-lingual poison center and the only certified poison center along the entire 2,000 mile U.S./Mexico border.

Congratulations to everyone who worked so hard to make El Paso's first-ever medical fellowship a reality. They have paved the way for what's to come...we're now preparing to apply for fellowship programs in Imaging and Sports Medicine!

More Good News: The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education also announced this week that its Emergency Medicine Residency Review Committee has re-accredited our Emergency Medicine Residency Program – this time for four years, the longest achievable accreditation cycle!

Established in 1982, our UMC/Texas Tech Emergency Medicine Residency Program is the oldest in the state. It has continuously won re-accreditation throughout its 28-year history. That is testament to the incredible teaching program Texas Tech has developed and the wide ranging experience its resident physicians receive in UMC's always busy Emergency Department and Level I Trauma Center.

Speaking of trauma, we also received word this week from the New Mexico Department of Health EMS Bureau that we are now officially designated as a Level I Trauma Center in the New Mexico Trauma System. That accomplishment speaks to the level of expertise on our campus.

We are the only facility in the region to meet the stringent criteria established by the American College of Surgeons for U.S. Trauma Centers. As a Level I facility, UMC is able to provide a full range of medical procedures 27/7, meaning board certified neurosurgeons, orthopedic and cardiovascular surgeons, trauma surgeons, anesthesiologists and specially trained nurses are in-house all day, every day to immediately handle any emergency.

Great work to everyone involved in ensuring the highest level of care is available to residents of West Texas and Southern New Mexico!

Black El Paso Democrats: I had the honor of attending the 27th annual Black El Paso Democrats Awards Banquet last weekend where U.S. House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn was the keynote speaker. It was quite an inspiring event! Representative Clyburn captivated the audience as he drew parallels between some of the major issues of our day and those that occupied Congress and the country in the 1960's.

Back then, the struggle for civil rights and attempts to expand healthcare coverage via Medicare were the big debates. He recalled how neither issue was decided in a single Congressional session. In fact, he said, it took years of work and numerous bills to finally produce comprehensive equal rights legislation as well as legislation that created the Medicare program we know today. From that, he said, we should take heart that despite the current Congress' inability so far to agree on immigration reform or to gain passage of a healthcare reform bill, neither initiative is dead. Both topics, he said, will undoubtedly be addressed incrementally over several Congressional sessions.

I completely agree with the Majority Whip's assessment. While neither issue will be easily resolved, history teaches us that what's worth attaining often takes longer than we may like. Perhaps yesterday's bipartisan healthcare summit by the White House and House and Senate leaders will help move us toward the first bill of what will undoubtedly be many bills required to comprehensively reform America's healthcare system.

On another note, I'd like to thank the Black El Paso Democrats for presenting University Medical Center's physicians, nurses and ancillary staff with the group's 2010 Humanitarian Award for their ongoing work on behalf of the community. Well deserved!

Weekend: What a streak! The UTEP men's basketball team has won 11 straight conference games, a school record, after coming from behind to beat Southern Miss Wednesday night. The win stretches the Miners' Conference USA lead to two games with just three remaining in the season. Now ranked #25 in the nation, UTEP is 21-5 on the season and 12-1 in conference play. Next up is Rice (8-19 overall and 1-12 in C-USA). Tip off time at the Don Haskins Center is at 7:00 p.m. Go Miners!

The 2010 Winter Olympics wrap-up this weekend when the world's athletes gather for the Closing Ceremonies on Sunday. It's been a great two weeks. Team USA remains atop the medal count in its best showing ever at a Winter Games! Enjoy!

- Jim

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