2015-2016 was a year of great change for our department. So much so, that when I gave my annual “State of the Department” address in November my theme was to “embrace change.”

The University of Texas Medical Branch is continuing to grow, and this past year we opened not one but two new hospitals. The new Jennie Sealy Hospital opened on our Galveston Campus. The beautiful new hospital offers state-of-the-art surgical and medical care facilities, 310 patient rooms, and 60 dedicated ICU beds, all with a patient-centered and family-friendly design. With a carefully coordinated plan, we moved our family medicine patients onto the 10th floor of the new hospital in April 2016.

UTMB Health also opened its League City Campus Hospital this year. This hospital is located in League City, Texas, in northern Galveston County. Our faculty members have partnered with the faculty of the Department of Internal Medicine to care for adult patients in this hospital. Currently it is relatively small, only 20 beds, but UTMB Health has an ambitious growth plan for it in the coming years.

In addition to these changes, UTMB Health has been aggressively improving its quality and
reporting systems, and internally we are working hard to focus on objective measurement and reporting of, and improving accountability for, quality of care.

Throughout all of these changes, the Department of Family Medicine continues its strong commitment to its educational and scholarship missions.

Our faculty are dedicated to teaching family medicine tenets to all medical students, and carefully mentoring those students interested in primary care. We continue to see the outcome of our outreach in a higher percentage of UTMB Health students pursuing residency training in primary care than the national average, and this spring we expect an even greater percentage than previous years.

Our residency program is highly successful, with all 2016 graduates board-certified prior to completion and remaining in state to practice or pursue further training. We have also implemented a research scholarship program that partners residents with faculty, with great results. All residents are on track to complete their training, having drafted and revised at least one scholarly publication, and some of these will be published or presented nationally.

In addition to education and scholarship, we also continue our activism and participation in the national discussions of family medicine. In 2015-2016, Tricia Elliott, MD served as President-Elect of the Texas Academy of Family Physicians, and continued her chairmanship of the Academic Family Medicine Advocacy Committee (AFMAC) and roles with the American Academy of Family Practice (AAFP) and Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM). I continued to be active in the Association of Departments of Family Medicine (ADFM) and to represent UTMB Health on the Council of Faculty & Academic Societies. Victor Sierpina, MD served on the Senior Leadership Advisory Council for the Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine & Health, and on the Board of Directors of the American Board of Integrative and Holistic Medicine.

While the pace of change is sometimes daunting, I can only see bright things in our future as we continue to evolve and grow in the coming years.

In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, we faced high expectations of our ability to generate revenue. While we did not exceed those expectations, we were able to call the year a success through our strong revenue generation and careful control of expenses. Overall, we increased our patient visits and our revenue over the previous year.

Recruitment continues to be a strong administrative focus, and in 2015-2016 we continued to see a trend of retirement among our more senior faculty and staff. While we’re confident our staff have mostly stabilized, we do expect this trend to continue among faculty and are continuing to aggressively plan for succession and support the promotion of our early- and mid-career faculty members.

In 2016-2017 we expect at least one change to our leadership – Tricia Elliott, MD will be leaving UTMB Health, and Jamal Islam, MD will assume the role of Director of the UTMB Health Family Medicine Program beginning January 2017.
OUR LEADERSHIP
and Faculty

Department Leadership

Barbara L. Thompson, MD
Professor, Chair

Jamal Islam, MD
Associate Professor, Director, Residency Program

Ashlyn Baker, MBA
Administrator, Primary Care Services

Syed Azhar, MD - Medical Director, Family Medicine Clinic - Dickinson

Alish R. Cass, MD, SM
Professor, Vice Chair, Academic Affairs

Victor S. Sierpina, MD
Professor, Director, Medical Student Education Program, Director, Faculty Development

Debra Chambers, MBA
Assistant Administrator, Primary Care Services

Alish R. Cass, MD, SM - Medical Director, Family Medicine Clinic - Island East, UTMB Employee Health Clinic, Galveston Independent School District and Student Wellness Clinic

Angela Shepherd, MD
Professor, Vice Chair, Clinical Affairs

Susan C. Weller, PhD
Professor, Director, Research Program

Debra J.A. Walters
Business Manager, Primary Care Services

Angela Shepherd, MD - Medical Director, Family Medicine Clinic - Island West

All Faculty

Saleh Elsaiid, MD
Medical Director, Inpatient Services

Kyu Jana, MD
Medical Director, Gulf Health Care Center

Tuana Coulter, MD
Associate Director, Residency Program Medical Director, Ball High Teen Prenatal Clinic

Kathryn Leckie, PhD
Director, Behavioral Health

Cassandra Aronononaux, MD, MPH
Syed Azhar, MD
Katherine Billingsley, MD
Alish R. Cass, MD, SM
Tuane Coulter, MD
Saleh Elsaiid, MD
Breit Howrey, PhD

Jamal Islam, MD, MS
Kyu Jana, MD
Madiha Khan, MD
Kathryn Leckie, PhD
Juliet McKee, MD
Laura Porterfield, MD
Harun Qureshi, MD

Jennifer Raley, MD
Angela Shepherd, MD
Victor S. Sierpina, MD
Barbara L. Thompson, MD
Karen Welch, MD
Susan C. Weller, PhD
UTMB Health is among the largest medical schools in the United States, and our Medical Student Education Program focuses on teaching family medicine to our large student population and advocating for practice in primary care. In addition to required courses, we offer a variety of electives that allow further experience in family medicine. As part of our mission, program faculty are piloting innovative primary care education modalities and continuing to update curricula to include new methods and techniques, such as motivational interviewing.

In 2016, program faculty, in partnership with the Associate Dean for Educational Affairs and the Departments of Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, Preventive Medicine and Community Health, and Obstetrics and Gynecology, received additional funding from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s Primary Care Innovations Grant Program. This funding will support the Student Continuity of Practice Experience (S.C.O.P.E.) and expand the roster of faculty mentors to include community-based faculty, as well as expand the primary care areas to include obstetrics and gynecology. This additional funding will support the student experience through 2019, and we hope that this model of education can be replicated at other universities.

OUTREACH
Outreach to students and our community is a large part of our mission. While much of that outreach is done through support of the Family Medicine Interest Group and its activities, our faculty are also involved in other ways. Medical Student Education Program members volunteer as supervising physicians on a rotating basis at the Student-Run Free Clinic that is operated in conjunction with St. Vincent’s House, a social service mission.

In 2015-2016, Jennifer Raley, MD took over as faculty advisor to the Family Medicine Interest Group, bringing a renewed sense of energy and enthusiasm to the group. With her support the group continued offering many opportunities for all students to gain new skills through hands-on workshops and see the many facets of primary care practice through guest lecturers and volunteer events in the community.
The UTMB Health Family Medicine Residency Program is a 36-month 10-10-10 program with continuing accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

Ten physicians completed their family medicine training in 2016, each having successfully passed the American Board of Family Medicine certification examination and obtained a full Texas medical license. All ten have remained in Texas to either continue their training or practice.

In 2015-2016, our residents had the rare experience of participating in the transition of patients as the new Jennie Sealy Hospital opened in April 2016. Our residents were invaluable in preparing and practicing for the move, and for providing reassurance and care to our patients throughout the transition. In addition to the roughly 15,000 ambulatory patient visits they record in our family medicine clinics each year, our residents care for patients on our 16-bed family medicine service in Jennie Sealy Hospital, providing about 4,000 patient days of care each year.

Our residents also participate in scholarly projects each year. First-year residents focus on identifying and writing up case reports, while second-year residents develop a quality improvement project. Third-year residents are partnered with faculty members to research and write a scholarly publication. These publications then proceed through the peer review and editorial process with the Family Physicians’ Inquiries Network (FPIN) and the residents receive editorial feedback and participate in a rigorous revision process. We encourage all of our residents to submit their projects for presentation or publication, and provide both mentorship and financial support for those who are successful in having proposals accepted.

In addition to their training, our residents have a strong history of advocacy and participation in the wider family medicine community. Charvi Shah, MD, a third-year resident, is currently serving as Chair of the Resident Section of the Texas Academy of Family Physicians (TAFP). Dr. Shah served as Chair-Elect as a second-year resident in 2015-2016, while Soraira Pacheco, MD, a third-year resident in 2015-2016, served as Secretary of the section.
OUR RESIDENTS

PGY 3 Residents

Naeji Abana, MD
Nicole Stan, DO
Shahnawaz Khan, MD
Tracey Angadicheril, DO
Chuan Chen, MD
Meryann Corzo, MD
Nicole Merli, MD
Dimple P. Desai, MD
Charvi Shah, MD
Jonathan Soto, MD
Bela Toth, DO, MT-ASCP
Shahnawaz Khan, MD

PGY 2 Residents

Taylor Alexander, MD, MBA
Carin Lindberg, MD
Francisco Bueso, MD
Nathaniel De La Cruz, MD
Mercedes Giles, MD

PGY 1 Residents

Ndidi Abara, MD
Taylor Alexander, MD, MBA
Francisco Bueso, MD
Nathaniel De La Cruz, MD
Mercedes Giles, MD
Carol Linebarger, MD
Anne Mikhail, MD
Carmel Simpson, MD
Chris Simpson, MD
Michael Allen, MD
Ali Charif, MD
Marquyn Dow, MD
Aditi Ghosh, MD
Karthik Jayakumar, MD
Grant Pierre, MD
Pradeep Pramanik, MD
Robert Rakowczyk, MD
Thanh-Thao Truong, MD

Kristen Herrera, MD

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In 2016 we recruited our second fellow, Robert Slater, III, MD. Dr. Slater began his fellowship in July of 2016 and is already showing great promise. Dr. Slater brings a strong interest in public health, health disparities, and nutrition to the program. He has been given the opportunity to present at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, a local community-based organization providing inexpensive adult education to seniors. He has also submitted several articles for publication in the Galveston Daily News, the local newspaper, and the Houston Medical Journal.

In 2016 we received recognition of the fellowship from the American Board of Physician Specialties and the American Board of Integrative Holistic Medicine. We expect to continue the fellowship and are developing a strategic plan to sustain and expand the program for future years.

In 2015 we launched the UTMB Health Integrative and Behavioral Medicine Fellowship, with support from the W.D. and Laura Nell Nicholson Family Chair in Integrative Medicine and Charles H. and Mary Campbell.

The fellowship is lead by Victor Sierpina, MD with the assistance of Kyu Jana, MD and Juliet McKee, MD. Fellows work closely with faculty to develop a personalized plan of study with a diverse range of training opportunities. The fellowship offers family physicians the opportunity to increase their knowledge of the bio-psychosocial dynamics that affect wellness, as well as to develop new skills to elucidate patients’ values, desires, and health goals.

Our first fellow, Karen Welch, MD, completed her training in June 2016. As part of her fellowship, Dr. Welch presented at the 2015 Forum for Behavioral Science in Family Medicine, published several articles, and co-wrote a chapter in an upcoming edition of Integrative Geriatrics. Following the completion of her fellowship, Dr. Welch joined our faculty.
RESEARCH and Scholarship

Our faculty have continued to contribute scholarly work to the body of family medicine, publishing articles in the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine, Annals of Family Medicine, Journal of Gerontology: Medical Science, Texas Medicine, Explore, and other publications.

Jamal Islam, MD began a project in concert with the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center to improve primary care for cancer survivors, funded by the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT). In his project, Dr. Islam is working to improve practice processes and create care teams for cancer survivors that include oncologists as well as their primary care team, and improve communication with and participation of patients in their care.

Several faculty submitted applications for funding grants, including a project, led by Julie McKee, MD and resident alumna Naomi Jamal, MD, aimed at preventing teen pregnancy through education of parents, who are shown to have the greatest influence on teens. This project will be funded in 2016-2017 by the UTMB Health President’s Cabinet, which awards small but unrestricted gifts to individuals to advance and enhance the UTMB mission.
This year was a busy year for our practices. We performed nearly 48,000 ambulatory visits in our practices while providing about 4,000 patient days of care on our inpatient service. We also transitioned our inpatient service from John Sealy Hospital to Jennie Sealy Hospital in April 2016, and partnered with the UTMB Health Department of Internal Medicine to provide care to the medicine (non-surgical) service at the newly opened League City Campus Hospital in League City, Texas.

We continue to pilot new processes to improve clinical care. In 2015-2016 we began a pilot project to determine if medical scribes could be both cost-effective in freeing up physician time and improving efficiency, in addition to improving physician morale. This pilot project continues, and we anticipate an analysis of its results in 2016-2017.

As part of our medical home, we continue to emphasize the importance of behavioral medicine in our practice. We have behavioral providers in all three of our practices, and offer group visits in support of behavioral change at our two island-based practices.

Patient and Family Advisory Board

Patient Members
- Martha Alonzo
- Margaret Brooks
- Lucy Clay
- Rose Daniels
- Leah Fanuel
- Robert Gard
- Raynelle Pipes
- Freddie Scott
- Lucille Vasquez
- Edith Watson
- Sandra Williams
- Carol Zanheh Del

Departmental and Health System Members
- Mathon Brown
- Meryann Corzo, MD
- Luisa Hernandez, RN
- Stephanie Perez

Non-voting Members
- Amy Barrera-Kovach, LCSW, CCM
- Zanita Gaither
- Bret Howrey, PhD
- Martha Livance
- Angela Shepherd, MD
FAMILY MEDICINE SERVICES

AMBULATORY SERVICES
Family Medicine Clinics:
- Island West
- Island East
- Dickinson
  GISD Teen Prenatal Clinic

BEHAVIORAL COUNSELING
Family Medicine Clinics:
- Island West
- Island East
- Dickinson

INPATIENT SERVICES
UTMB Jennie Sealy Hospital
UTMB League City Campus Hospital
Gulf Health Care Center

INSTITUTIONAL HEALTH SERVICES
UTMB Employee Health
UTMB Student Health
Employee Access 2 Care

Family Medicine Clinics:
Island West
- 12 Exam Rooms
- Counseling Room
- Procedure Room
- 2 Care Teams
- 16 Providers
- 6710 Stewart Rd.
- Galveston

Island East
- 20 Exam Rooms
- Counseling Room
- Procedure Room
- 2 Care Teams
- 23 Providers
- 400 Harborbridge Dr.
- Galveston

Dickinson
- 12 Exam Rooms
- Counseling Room
- Procedure Room
- 2 Care Teams
- 15 Providers
- 2410 W. FM 646
- Dickinson
DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY MEDICINE

Barbara L. Thompson, MD
Professor
Chair

Alvah R. Cass, MD, SM
Professor
Vice Chair

Angela Shepherd, MD
Professor
Vice Chair for Clinical Affairs
Medical Director, FMC-Island West

Jamal Islam, MD, MS
Associate Professor
Residency Program Director

Victor S. Sierpina, MD
Professor
Medical Student Education Program Director

Susan C. Weller, PhD
Professor
Research Program Director

301 University Blvd.
Galveston, Texas 77555-1123

(409) 772-0620
http://fammed.utmb.edu