



CHARTING PROGRESS

SAN ANTONIO MEDICAL FOUNDATION • *Founders and Directors of the South Texas Medical Center*

Admiral Blumenthal Speaks at Annual Education Program Health Expert Cites Current and Future Healthcare Needs

Retired Rear Admiral Susan Blumenthal emphasized a holistic approach to healthcare in her remarks at the San Antonio Medical Foundation's annual educational lecture.

A global health expert and recognized giant in women's health issues, Blumenthal's public service includes more than two decades as a senior government health leader in the administrations of four U.S. presidents.

Blumenthal says that we must build a culture of health and she cites 21st century challenges to healthcare in three areas of needed effort:

C - covering all Americans so they receive quality healthcare
P - prevention as a means of reducing the need for healthcare
R - research and innovation to expand knowledge

Currently 92 percent of Americans are covered by health insurance but Blumenthal says there are still challenges, since 8 percent of the population is still uninsured, some of whom have elected to pay the penalty instead of buying insurance.

Blumenthal says that currently there seems to be "no cohesive vision" concerning health care. Speaking on March 23, the day when a new healthcare law was scheduled for a vote, she cited problems with the proposed law that include cuts to Medicaid, reduced taxes for the wealthy and lack of coverage for all.

Prevention is a cornerstone for a good healthcare system at a time when a small portion of the healthcare budget is spent on the need. "Chronic disease, such as obesity, has become a pandemic and 50 percent of killers are behavior related," said Blumenthal. "Diabetes and heart disease are happening earlier in life."

Prevention can include attention to environmental factors, such as air pollution, that create health hazards. Transportation policy can have an effect on exercise levels, she said.

Citing the benefits of research, Blumenthal said that science provides the foundation for advances. "We have learned more in the last 60 years than ever before and rates of disease have gone down as a result." At a time when science can provide needed answers and lead to a new era in treating disease, Blumenthal says science is "under siege."

"We are on the brink of a new era in treating disease," said Blumenthal, citing the potential for individual treatments produced by the new field of genome medicine. "Stem cell research also may lead to new treatments."

Technology, such as 3-D printing can be used to print cells and computers can collect large amounts of data that then is used collaboratively to translate information into medical solutions. In addition, she has seen firsthand the potential for transferring technology used by the CIA to use in detecting breast cancer. "We have the tools; what we need is commitment and funding," said Blumenthal.

Not only does good healthcare benefit individuals but also provides an economic return. "Healthcare has a \$24.5 billion annual impact in San Antonio," said Blumenthal. "In 2012 the National Institutes of Health were responsible for 400,000 jobs around the U.S. Now, however, there's a proposed 18 percent decrease in NIH funding."

A believer in the benefits that can result from partnerships to solve problems, Blumenthal points to the success achieved with smoking campaigns that included local laws and privately funded education programs. She wants to see more of these kinds of partnerships and collaborations.

Blumenthal served as the first Deputy Assistant Secretary for Women's Health and Director of the Office on Women's Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She also has been Assistant Surgeon General of the U.S. and Senior Global and E-Health Advisor in HHS and has held positions at the National Institutes of Health.

She was named by the Medical Herald and the National Library of Medicine as one of the most influential and important women in medicine and by *The New York Times* as one of the top doctors in the women's health field.

Blumenthal attended medical school at the University of Tennessee School of Medicine, completed a residency program at Stanford University School of Medicine and did a post-doctoral fellowship at the National Institute of Mental Health. She received a master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University School of Government.



Susan Blumenthal
*Retired Rear
Admiral*

Foundation's Research Project Website Grows

The San Antonio Medical Foundation's website dedicated to cataloging bioscience research projects in San Antonio, has grown to include 1,055 projects being pursued by 13 participating organizations.

Launched in September 2016, the San Antonio Bioscience Research Database at www.sabioscienceresearch.org began with about 595 bioscience research projects underway at public, private and military organizations in the city. Projects are organized according to the type of research, such as basic research, drug discovery and medical devices. Projects are then further divided into 12 focus areas, such as aging, cancer or trauma, and finally by research organization.

The website allows local scientists and researchers to connect and collaborate with other San Antonio research groups and for scientists around the country and world to seek collaborative

opportunities. The project will foster economic development by showcasing the capabilities of San Antonio organizations and will serve as a recruitment tool for local research groups as scientists nationally and internationally learn about the research work being done in San Antonio.

The website can be updated by each participating institution or company through a password-protected system. The project information provided by the research organizations typically includes the subject matter, status of the project, funding, principal investigators and other data.

"San Antonio is a dynamic hub of research," said Dr. Bryan J. Alsip, chair of the Foundation when he introduced the new endeavor. "Nothing like this website exists elsewhere; it will foster collaboration here and around the world."



UT Health San Antonio Receives Alzheimer's Grant

A three-year \$2.3 million grant to UT Health San Antonio will provide funds to purchase high-powered radiological equipment to diagnose Alzheimer's disease and other age-related conditions. The grant comes from the John L. Santikos Charitable Foundation, a fund of the San Antonio Area Foundation.

The new John L. Santikos CT and Nuclear Medicine Suite at UT Health San Antonio's Biggs Institute for Alzheimer and Neurodegenerative Disease will include high-powered magnetic resonance imaging and state-of-the-art nuclear medicine systems called SPECT-CT and PET-CT. The Biggs Institute is the first of its kind in South Texas.

The equipment will substantially enhance physicians' ability to accurately diagnose patients who suffer from age-related neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's and dementia.

UT Health Launches Health Library

UT Health has launched a new Patient & Family Health Library, an online tool containing comprehensive health information.

With sections on wellness and prevention, conditions and diseases, the library offers information on various procedures and tests, natural and alternative treatments, drug information and providers.

The service is provided through Ebsco Health, a leading provider of evidence-based clinical information.

University Health System Receives CPRIT Grant

University Health System has received a \$1.24 million grant from the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas that will allow increased screening for hepatitis C and ultimately prevent development of liver cancer.

South Texas has the highest incidence of liver cancer in the nation, due largely to hepatitis C. University Health system researchers have found that persons born between 1945 and 1965 had more than twice the rate of hepatitis C infection as the nation as a whole. Hispanics are also at higher risk.

In collaboration with UT Health San Antonio, the program will expand screening for hepatitis C, provide education to both patients and healthcare providers and eliminate cultural and linguistic barriers to care. The increased screening for hepatitis C ultimately will prevent the development of liver cancer, leading to a reduction in healthcare costs long-term.

The award is the eighth CPRIT grant awarded to University Health System for cancer prevention since 2010, bringing the total to \$9 million. Other projects have included a breast and cervical cancer education and outreach initiative, as well as a program to increase colorectal cancer screening.

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