FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Antonio Medical Foundation Awards $1.2 Million to Advance Collaborative Research and Community Health

Six grants bring together leading San Antonio institutions to address cancer, trauma care, traumatic brain injury, Alzheimer's disease and community health

SAN ANTONIO, Texas, September 2026 - The San Antonio Medical Foundation (SAMF) has approved nearly $1.2 million in 2026 grant funding to support six collaborative research and community health initiatives involving institutions across San Antonio and South Texas.

"SAMF was founded to advance healthcare and biomedical science in San Antonio, and these grants are a direct investment in that mission," said Gabriele G. Niederauer, Ph.D., FAIMBE, Chair of the San Antonio Medical Foundation Board of Trustees. "These projects bring together exceptional expertise from across our community to address significant healthcare challenges and create knowledge and solutions that can ultimately improve the lives of patients in San Antonio, South Texas and beyond."

The awards include five Collaborative Grants totaling $1 million and one Community Health and Education Grant of $200,000. The projects bring together researchers, clinicians, universities, healthcare organizations and community partners to address important healthcare challenges while strengthening collaboration across San Antonio's healthcare and bioscience community.

2026 Collaborative Grant Awardees were:

- **AI-Guided Mapping of PD1-AXL-STAT3 Networks for Precision Cancer Therapies**
  Dr. Josephine Taverna, M.D., UT Health San Antonio and Dr. Mario Flores, Ph.D., UT San Antonio
- **Effects of Transport on Physiology and Coagulation of Whole Blood**
  Dr. Donald Jenkins M.D., UT Health San Antonio, Aashish Rajesh, MBBS, UT Health San Antonio, Dr. Samantha Gomez Ngamsuntikul M.D., South Texas Blood & Tissue Center and Eric Epley, Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council
- **Development of Novel Recombinant Protein of Oxygen-Carrying Volume-Expander**
  Dr. Gang Huang, Ph.D., UT Health San Antonio and Dr. Lusha Xiang, M.D., Ph.D., United States Army Institute of Surgical Research (USAISR)
- **Language as a Window into Traumatic Brain Injury: Using AI to Identify Markers of Cognitive Processing**
  Dr. Vivian P. Ta-Johnson, Ph.D., UT San Antonio, Dr. Alicia A. Swan, Ph.D., Department of Veterans Affairs South Texas Veterans Health Care System and Dr. Rocio S. Norman, Ph.D., UT Health San Antonio
- **From Molecule to Mind: Identifying Early Markers of Alzheimer's Disease**
  Dr. Kimberley Phillips, Ph.D., Trinity University, Dr. Eric Vallender, Ph.D., Texas Biomedical Research Institute and Dr. Adam Salmon, Ph.D., UT Health San Antonio

2026 Community Health and Education Grant Awardee was

- **Building Resilience in South Side Midlife**
  Dr. Chia (George) Hsu, Ph.D., UT San Antonio and Dr. Hector Garcia, PsyD., Texas A&M University-San Antonio

"Collaboration has always been central to the Medical Foundation's role in our community," said Richard Perez, President of the San Antonio Medical Foundation. "These grants provide resources that allow our

institutions to combine their expertise, pursue innovative ideas and build partnerships that can have a meaningful and lasting impact on healthcare in San Antonio and South Texas."

Together, the six awards connect investigators and organizations from UT Health San Antonio, UT San Antonio, Trinity University, Texas Biomedical Research Institute, Texas A&M University-San Antonio, South Texas Blood & Tissue Center, Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council, the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research and the Department of Veterans Affairs South Texas Veterans Health Care System.

"San Antonio has tremendous healthcare and scientific expertise," Niederauer said. "SAMF's role is to help connect and support that expertise in ways that strengthen our healthcare and bioscience sector and, most importantly, benefit the people and communities we serve."

About the San Antonio Medical Foundation

The San Antonio Medical Foundation supports the advancement of healthcare, biomedical research and education in San Antonio. Through collaborative grants, community health initiatives and stewardship of the South Texas Medical Center, the Foundation works with institutions across the region to strengthen San Antonio's healthcare and bioscience ecosystem and improve health outcomes for the community.

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