

Media Contact: Russell Rian  
214-648-3404

[Russell.rian@utsouthwestern.edu](mailto:Russell.rian@utsouthwestern.edu)

## UT Southwestern launches global health office

DALLAS – Sept. 9, 2010 – UT Southwestern Medical Center has established an Office for Global Health to direct and develop training and research initiatives with partners around the world. Dr. Fiemu Nwariaku has been named associate dean for global health to oversee the office.

“This initiative is a strategic priority for UT Southwestern and represents an exciting step forward as we seek to expand UT Southwestern’s worldwide presence,” said Dr. Greg Fitz, executive vice president for academic affairs and provost, and dean of UT Southwestern Medical School.

The new office will help expand the institutional mission by integrating existing international activities, establishing new programs and training courses, and serving as a resource for faculty and students who wish to work abroad. Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, president of UT Southwestern, established a task force for global health and care for the underserved as part of the medical center’s strategic planning process last year.

Dr. Fitz said, “International health programs offer enormous potential to reinforce our three-part mission of patient care, research and education. To that end, we would like to develop opportunities on this campus to train students and faculty for careers in international health.”

Efforts in the new office will encompass exchange programs, global research consortia and telemedicine opportunities, as well as identifying funding opportunities to advance UT Southwestern’s global health mission, said Dr. Nwariaku, the new associate dean and associate professor of surgery.

“One of the challenges in health care across the world remains the stark disparities in health indices and outcomes among various populations” Dr. Nwariaku said. “Academic institutions in the U.S. have responded to this challenge by deploying their resources to narrow these disparities through research and education, and UT Southwestern is no exception.”

Dr. Fitz noted that the medical center’s recent affiliation agreement with Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China, to foster scientific training between the institutions is just one example of the types of relationships UT Southwestern officials hope to build.

The strategic task force, headed by Dr. George Lister, chairman of pediatrics, identified the  
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need for a centralized global health office to:

- evaluate the merits and obligations of individual programs;
- develop institutional research and academic expertise in international health and health policy; and
- train students and faculty with international health interests.

UT Southwestern already offers an International Medical Exchange Program, a formal medical and research exchange program with the Université de Paris Descartes. Students who complete this program graduate with an M.D. with Distinction in International Health.

A faculty member since 1998, Dr. Nwariaku said he intends to involve the UT Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and UT Southwestern School of Health Professions as active participants as the Office for Global Health develops new programs.

“One of the advantages of this concept is that it cuts across all levels of our UT Southwestern community, including students, resident trainees and faculty,” he said. “We also hope to involve other health care personnel, including nurses.”

Dr. Nwariaku earned his medical degree from University College Hospital in Nigeria before coming to UT Southwestern as a surgical resident in 1991, followed by a two-year fellowship at UT Southwestern. His expertise is in the field of minimally invasive endocrine surgery. His laboratory research focuses on the cellular mechanisms that regulate endothelial dysfunction during inflammatory and neoplastic diseases with the goal of developing novel therapies.

Dr. Nwariaku also served as president of the Association for Academic Surgery, during which he created the global affairs committee for that association. He has been a leading force in teaching and developing medical training initiatives in West Africa, South America, China, Asia, Australia and the Middle East.

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