

News

Office of Medical Information
The University of Texas

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****Dr. Al Roberts appointed associate
dean for practice development

DALLAS -- Dr. Albert D. Roberts calls himself a man with "a passion, a conviction and a mission." His passion is teaching and practicing medicine; his conviction, that medical training should include treatment of private as well as non-paying patients; and his mission in his new position as associate dean for practice development at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, to help that happen at UT Southwestern.

"I've felt ever since my first few years of private practice that the absence of private patients was an impediment and an obstacle to the full flowering of the institution and a serious deficit in the training of our physicians," said Roberts, a Southwestern Medical School graduate and longtime faculty member who has also been in private practice since 1960.

"Private patients are very different," Roberts explained. "They tend to seek medical treatment earlier. Often they have only one disease, and their illness is not overlaid and complicated by complex socioeconomic factors. Also, they are more vigorous in their advocacy for their own medical care."

In his new position, Roberts will be working to forge and strengthen links between UT Southwestern and referring physicians outside the institution. He will serve as consultant to the Clinical Referral Network, through which practicing physicians can access UT

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Southwestern clinical services.

"Dr. Roberts will be advising us all on the development of clinical practice," said Dr. Willis Maddrey, vice president for clinical affairs. He will apply his own firsthand knowledge of the information clinicians need and the form in which they need it to help UT Southwestern develop a clinical information system responsive to the needs of the health care provider, and he will be involved in planning for the expansion of the Aston Ambulatory Care Center, where outpatients are seen.

"The main thrust is coordination and integration of clinical practice," Maddrey said. Roberts is the ideal man for the job because his background bridges academic medicine and clinical practice, the UT Southwestern vice president added.

A widely recognized nephrologist who was elected a Master of the American College of Physicians in 1990, Roberts was associate dean and professor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern from 1975 to 1987. In private practice in Dallas from 1960 to 1975, he re-entered private practice in 1987, retaining an academic appointment as clinical professor of medicine at UT Southwestern. Throughout his years in full-time private practice, he continued making teaching rounds at Parkland and UT Southwestern's affiliated teaching hospitals. In January Roberts was appointed professor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern.

He has served as a governor, a regent and vice chairman of the board of regents of the American College of Physicians. He played a key role in the development of "Healthscope," an ACP-sponsored public television series and was co-host of KERA-TV Channel 13's nationally

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syndicated series, "Here's To Your Health."

Roberts is enthusiastic about his new role as associate dean for practice development. "I have a powerful conviction that we must market our skills and services to the medical community -- not to the general public," he said. Roberts also sees practice development, both outpatient and at Zale Lipshy University Hospital, as "a way to help Dallas achieve the international recognition it deserves as a world class medical center. When University Hospital succeeds and UT Southwestern gains an international reputation as a referral medical center, that should benefit the entire medical community of Dallas."

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NOTE: The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas comprises Southwestern Medical School, Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Southwestern Allied Health Sciences School, affiliated teaching hospitals and outpatient clinics.