

# SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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## **Dallas couple gives \$5 million anonymously to establish community health initiatives program at UT Southwestern**

DALLAS – Aug. 8, 2005 – An anonymous couple has given \$5 million to establish a program at UT Southwestern Medical Center that will develop and test the effectiveness of model community health initiatives in Dallas.

The gift, which will help the medical center and its affiliated hospitals address important health-care needs in the community, was given through a philanthropic fund established by the couple for the “encouragement of informed risk-taking.” The contribution, which will endow a new Program for the Development and Evaluation of Model Community Health Initiatives in Dallas, was given to Southwestern Medical Foundation as part of the medical center’s \$500 million *Innovations in Medicine* campaign.

“We take a great deal of pleasure in being able to make this gift, and we are committed to doing what we can to help those who don’t have access to quality medical care,” said the donor. “We believe in community empowerment and recognize that sometimes a leap of faith is required when initiating some of the most innovative population-based programs. Dallas’ underserved groups have an immediate need for better care and preventive services, and we know that UT Southwestern has the ability to get the job done if it is given the resources.”

The gift will support and accelerate a variety of pilot projects that will be coordinated and delivered through the division of Community Medicine in UT Southwestern’s department of Family and Community Medicine and the departments of Pediatrics, Internal Medicine and Psychiatry.

Programs bolstered by the gift will be aimed at areas where people have limited access to preventive care. These will potentially include current projects such as diabetes screening and case management; early cancer detection through Pap tests and mammograms; a pediatric asthma project designed to study and improve the environment in schools; a proactive school-based program for treating disturbed adolescents, with counseling involving the entire family; and an innovative program designed to diagnose and treat hypertension in African-American men (a seriously at-risk population) by bringing blood-pressure screening to barbershops in their community.

“We are honored to be the beneficiary of such a wonderfully generous and helpful gift. It will certainly make quality health care available to many more people in the Dallas community,” said

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W. Plack Carr Jr., president of the Foundation.

The endowment will serve as “philanthropic venture capital” – enabling UT Southwestern to continually develop and expand new community projects in multiple areas of medical and preventive care. Early-stage investments in a variety of experimental programs are expected to yield new approaches for improving community health, many of which may eventually attract additional funding from other sources.

Historically, the initiation of such programs has been opportunistic, rather than systematically planned, and government funding is characteristically uncertain, explained Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of UT Southwestern.

“These kinds of outreach programs are vital to the community, but they are deemed ‘high-risk’ by government and other traditional funding sources, making it increasingly difficult to find the resources to establish new models of care to the people who need it most,” Dr. Wildenthal said. “This is where private philanthropy can make a tremendous difference, and it is why we are immensely indebted to the couple responsible for this generous gift.”

Health care for underserved populations in the Dallas community is centered on services provided by the Dallas County Health and Hospital District. These programs include well-established emergency and specialty care at Parkland Memorial Hospital, where physician services are provided by UT Southwestern faculty and residents.

Over the years a number of preventive and population-based outreach programs have grown out of the UT Southwestern/Parkland partnership. Previous notable successes have included the Dallas County Maternal Health Clinics, which have dramatically lowered the complications of pregnancy in indigent mothers; the Children and Youth Project, which developed proactive immunization programs in public schools and significantly improved the percentage of immunized children; and an AIDS prevention program, which lowered the rate of new HIV infections in Dallas. The new endowment will enable model programs such as these to be initiated and tested on a regular basis.

“This gift will create an invaluable resource for Dallas and will enable UT Southwestern to improve care to thousands of underserved people within our community,” said Dr. Wildenthal. “We feel certain that many of the innovative approaches to health care that will be begun and evaluated through this program will ultimately produce positive and permanent impacts in Dallas and beyond.”

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