

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

Media contact: Ione Echeverria

214-648-3404

ione.echeverria@email.swmed.edu

UT SOUTHWESTERN BROADENS MENTORING PROGRAM TO ASSIST MINORITY- AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

DALLAS – October 22, 1999 – A mentoring program at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas has helped a large contractor join forces with a minority-owned business in a symbiotic relationship that could significantly increase purchases from minority firms.

The program that links national product suppliers with historically underutilized businesses (HUB) – minority- and women-owned businesses – now will include a St. Louis-based supplier of research chemicals with a Dallas minority-owned distributorship.

The partnering initiatives are expected to redirect \$3 million from major manufacturers to the HUB community, said Joe Behrens, assistant vice president of materials management at UT Southwestern.

“The program is a win-win situation for all the parties involved, including our community,” Behrens said.

A UT Southwestern purchasing representative approached the St. Louis company, Sigma-Aldrich Research, with the idea of working with MPA General Service Co.

“At first I was a little hesitant. Other companies have asked us to join similar programs before, but we felt that it didn’t add any value to our relationship with our customers,” said Jim Brown, a sales manager for Sigma-Aldrich. “The program at UT Southwestern, however, created an opportunity for everyone to come out ahead.”

Sigma-Aldrich provides research chemicals for a variety of scientific disciplines. By teaming with MPA, which distributes medical and laboratory supplies, the company established a local presence.

“The advantage of working with MPA is that we have a professionally managed program one block away from campus,” Brown said.

Sigma and MPA developed an on-site stocking program that allows researchers to access

(MORE)

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL CENTER AT DALLAS

Southwestern Medical School • Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences • Southwestern Allied Health Sciences School
Affiliated teaching hospitals and outpatient clinics

Office of News and Publications • 5323 Harry Hines Blvd., Dallas TX 75235-9060 • Telephone (214) 648-3404 • FAX (214) 648-9119

MENTORING PROGRAM – 2

products, at discounted prices and with no delivery fees.

Obie Mbakwe, vice president of MPA, said his company was fortunate to be selected for a distributing partnership with Sigma. "If we succeed, perhaps this will encourage them to enter into this type of program with other companies," said Mbakwe. "We feel very fortunate, but at the same time it is also a very big challenge."

The HUB partnership program was initiated five years ago and has been refined, UT Southwestern officials said. Under the program a large corporation can furnish equipment and provide the advanced technical support that a small company needs to accomplish complex work. In turn, by developing customer partnerships with start-up companies, the established firms have improved opportunities to enter new business territories.

Businesses needing information on the UT Southwestern program should contact Judy Owens, HUB coordinator, at 214-648-6037.

###

This news release is available on our World Wide Web home page at
http://www.swmed.edu/home_pages/news/

To automatically receive news releases from UT Southwestern via e-mail, send a message to
UTSWNEWS-REQUEST@listserv.swmed.edu. Leave the subject line blank and in the text box, type
SUB UTSWNEWS