

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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UT SOUTHWESTERN AWARDED \$1 MILLION GRANT FOR BURN-REHABILITATION PROJECT

DALLAS — October 28, 1993 — The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas has received a \$1 million grant to establish one of three model systems for burn-injury rehabilitation in the United States.

The U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, which has funded national spinal-cord and traumatic-brain injury model systems, awarded the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at UT Southwestern a four-year research and demonstration grant to establish the North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System.

Dr. Phala Helm, chairwoman of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, is the model-system project director. Dr. G. Fred Cromes, associate professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation, is associate director of the project. This UT Southwestern department is home to the Kimberly-Clark Center for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, which was established recently with a \$1 million gift from the Dallas-based Kimberly-Clark Corp. and \$1 million in matching funds from Southwestern Medical Foundation.

The North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System will be implemented within the Regional Burn Center at Parkland Memorial Hospital. The Regional Burn Center, which has been in operation for nearly 30 years, annually admits approximately 450 patients with major burn injuries and serves an 80,000 square-mile area that includes northeast Texas, southern Oklahoma and western Arkansas and Louisiana.

"In partnership with Parkland's Burn Center, Parkland and UT Southwestern have been at the forefront of new technology in the care and rehabilitation of burn patients," said Dr. Ron Anderson, president and chief executive officer of Parkland. "This grant will allow us to remain on the cutting edge in the follow-up treatment of burn injuries — the most complicated type of trauma a person can experience."

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Burn injuries, sustained by two million people in the United States each year, are a complex national health problem for which rehabilitation plays an integral role. Through the burn-rehabilitation model system, data will be collected to determine the incidence of rehabilitation complications, their impact on long-term psychosocial status and quality of life, the overall cost of burn care, and the effectiveness of specific rehabilitative treatments, Helm said.

The data collected by the North Texas Rehabilitation Model System and the two other newly funded model-system sites, at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and the University of Washington in Seattle, will create a national burn-rehabilitation database, which Helm called one of the most exciting aspects of the program.

"At this time there is no formalized data-collection system in the United States on any aspect of burn rehabilitation or cost of care," said Helm. "We have a well-established burn center here. This grant gives us the opportunity to quantitatively evaluate what we do and to improve national knowledge and understanding of burn care and rehabilitation."

Many aspects of the North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System will include collaborative efforts with other institutions and state agencies. For example, to address vocational rehabilitation and independent living approaches, the North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System will work with the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. To address the needs of people with burn injuries who live in rural areas and have been discharged from rehabilitation at the Regional Burn Center, a quarterly outreach clinic will be conducted at Medical Center Hospital in Tyler.

Through the model system, educational activities for burn-injured people, their families and burn-rehabilitation professionals will be conducted, and educational materials will be produced for dissemination to agencies involved in vocational rehabilitation and community-reintegration activities.

The model system also will conduct specific research projects, either exclusively at the Regional Burn Center or in collaboration with other model systems.