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## **Comprehensive Crohn's & Colitis Program at UT Southwestern first in the Dallas area**

DALLAS – March 22, 2011 – Dorothy Stockstill was taking eight pills a day, and her severe abdominal pain and persistent diarrhea weren't improving. The Denton resident had seen multiple physicians throughout the Dallas area. Her attacks were so severe, she couldn't successfully travel from the front of a retail store to the restrooms in back.

"My husband had to drive me everywhere, never knowing when an episode would occur," she said.

A friend recommended UT Southwestern Medical Center, and gastroenterologist Dr. Prabhakar Swaroop diagnosed Mrs. Stockstill with Crohn's disease, one of two types of inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) whose symptoms can include weight loss, severe abdominal pain and frequent bloody diarrhea. Since Dr. Swaroop prescribed medication, Mrs. Stockstill is able to shop and travel peacefully, and has fewer Crohn's-related disruptions in her life.

"Dr. Swaroop was knowledgeable and patient with me, even when I was in a lot of pain, and he vowed to get to the root of my 14-year-old problem," she said.

Dr. Swaroop, assistant professor of internal medicine, directs the new Crohn's and Colitis Program at UT Southwestern. The only program of its kind in the Dallas area, it provides comprehensive clinical care from doctors who specialize in gastroenterology, colorectal surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, hematology, imaging and pediatrics. The program also includes a basic-science laboratory for researching the diseases and developing better treatments.

"Having this in Dallas gives thousands of IBD patients direct and immediate access to a wide range of specialists under one roof, without having to travel from doctor to doctor," Dr. Swaroop said.

In IBD, the walls of the digestive tract can become inflamed and irritated. With the correct treatment these chronic diseases can be well controlled with periods of remission. The two primary forms are Crohn's disease, which can affect any part of the digestive system, and ulcerative colitis, which primarily affects the large intestine and rectum.

Both forms of IBD increase a patient's cancer risk, and both also affect a person's quality of life. Patients often have concerns about pregnancy, malnutrition and side effects of treatments.

Andrea Reeves, 25, was diagnosed with Crohn's disease as a teen. Before her UT Southwestern

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referral, doctors told her breastfeeding would not be an option because of her medication.

“I was upset that I couldn't breastfeed because, statistically, breastfed children are less likely to develop Crohn's disease, and I wanted to protect my son any way I could,” Ms. Reeves said. “Dr. Swaroop was extremely knowledgeable about medication, answered questions other doctors couldn't, and even selected and worked with my delivery doctor. I trusted them, had a great experience when I was pregnant and now have a healthy, breastfed baby.”

Dr. Swaroop said it's common for IBD patients to have a wide range of concerns.

“Inflammatory bowel diseases affect the whole person,” he said. “That's where we come in. We have a global approach to a patient's global problems.”

Specialists involved with the program include Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, president of UT Southwestern and an international authority on physiologic mechanisms and treatment of IBD.

“We are determined to ensure that UT Southwestern is offering to all of its patients the very best in patient-centered care and with a level of innovation that really is on the same extremely high level of the research programs at UT Southwestern that are international in stature,” Dr. Podolsky said in 2010 while announcing the program's establishment.

In addition to a team approach to care, UT Southwestern provides the most recent treatments for the diseases, including surgery, medications and other new therapies.

The program also formed a support group for patients and anyone else affected by the disease, including family members and friends. Speakers from the medical field give information about IBD-related topics.

“This group is a forum where patients and their relatives can learn from each other to cope with their difficult disease,” Dr. Swaroop said.

For an appointment call the clinic at 214-645-3070.

Visit <http://www.utsouthwestern.org/digestive> to learn more about UT Southwestern's clinical services for digestive disorders, including IBD.

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