from the President



As we begin a new year in the health care field, this issue of the *Texas Medical Center News* focuses on the topic of rehabilitation.

We are fortunate in Houston and Harris County to have a number of agencies and institutions committed to rehabilitative treatment. Right here within the Texas Medical Center institutions, we have some of the world's best, such as The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research, Shriners Hospital for Children, and Texas Children's Hospital. These are just a sampling of this area's high-quality facilities.

Last year, TIRR Systems saw some 1,200 inpatients and more than 75,000 outpatients. Numbers like these are a testament to the high quality of care TIRR provides. And this carries over to other TMC institutions as well. The Texas Medical Center is proud to provide such excellent health care not only to the Houston area, but also to the world. The care that the doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, psychologists and others in the rehabilitation field provide is unmatched.

Pain management is another important area of rehabilitation. As of Jan. 1, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations is requiring all hospitals in the United States to regularly measure a patient's pain at the time of arrival, just as any other vital sign would be measured. Pain is assessed by asking patients to rate their pain on a scale of zero, no pain, to 10, the worst pain imaginable. Small children use pictures to rate their pain. The score determines the hospital's plan of action.

Proper pain relief must begin as soon as possible or hospitals could risk losing their JCAHO accreditation. According to the new standards, facilities must recognize patients' rights to appropriate pain assessment and management, record the results in order to facilitate individualized pain management, educate health care providers about pain management, establish policies and procedures that support ordering appropriate prescriptions and pain medications, ensure that pain does not interfere with participation in rehabilitation, educate patients and their families about the importance of effective pain management, include patients' needs for symptom management in the discharge planning process, and collect data to monitor the appropriateness and effectiveness of pain management.

Statistics compiled by the American Pain Society show that some 9 percent of Americans suffer from some type of chronic pain, and that four of every 10 people with moderate to severe pain don't get adequate relief. It is also estimated that 40 percent of cancer patients have undertreated pain, and one in four elderly cancer patients in nursing homes get no daily pain treatment.

With these and other exciting developments in the health care industry, 2001 should prove to be one of the most significant years yet for medical treatments and research.

Dr. Richard E. Wainerdi is president of the Texas Medical Center and publisher/ editor of the Texas Medical Center News.

Houston YWCA Names Outstanding TMC Physician

The YWCA of Houston recently honored Dr. Mariam Chacko at a luncheon as an "Outstanding Woman of Achievement" in the medicine, science and technology category.

The Outstanding Women's Luncheon has been a YWCA of Houston tradition for 24 years. Since 1976, the YWCA has saluted women for their accomplishments and service to the Houston community.

Dr. Chacko is an associate professor in the Department of pediatrics, Section of Adolescent Medicine and Sports Medicine at Texas Children's Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine. She is also medical director of the Baylor Teen Health Clinics, a hospital and community-based health care system comprised of four reproductive care clinics serving adolescent and young adult women and one school-based clinic at a local high school.

Dr. Chacko received her medical school training at Christian Medical College, University of Punjab, Ludhiana, India. She immigrated to the United States in 1974 and in 1979 completed her residency training in pediatrics at Baltimore City Hospitals in Maryland. She completed her Adolescent Medicine Fellowship training in 1982 at the University of Maryland Hospital, also in Baltimore, and in 1984, she moved to Houston.



Dr. Mariam Chacko

For the past 16 years Dr. Chacko's academic activities have been a reflection of the strength of teams who address challenging health problems. In collaboration with several other Baylor faculty members, she has assisted in building a hospital and community-based adolescent medicine training and service program. The school-based clinic in the Fifth Ward is just one example of how she has provided a variety of primary care and specialized health care services including sports medicine, gynecological, prenatal and counseling services to high school students.

Women of Achievement in other specialized areas include Alice E. Valdez, executive director of Multicultural Education and Counseling through the Arts for the arts; Sheryl Swoopes of the WNBA Champion Houston Comets for athletics; Heida Thrulow, president of Chantal Cookware for business; Gigi Huang, restranteur for community service volunteer; Angela Blanchard, president and CEO of Neighborhood Centers Inc. for community service professional; Alice C. Johnsen, coordinator of the International Baccalaureate Program at Bellaire High School for education; Amy Dunn Taylor, president of the Houston Bar Association for law and government; Monique Nation, host of *The Black Voice* and reporter for Fox 26 News for media; and Robin Mueck, president and CEO of Heritage Texas Properties for real estate. ■

DeBakey Among MD "Toast to Texas" Honorees

By KATHY KRAMPOTA
Houston Muscular Dystrophy Association

Houstonians and other Texans recently celebrated at the "Toast to Texas" Gala, benefiting the Muscular Dystrophy Association, which honored people who have helped put Texas on the map. This year's recipients were Dr. Michael DeBakey, Chancellor Emeritus, Baylor College of Medicine; Charles T. (Ted) Bauer, founder of Texas-based AIM Funds; and Cynthia Woods Mitchell, philanthropist.

The Gala featured a menu designed by some of Texas' best chefs. Those participating included Certified Master Chef Fritz Gitschner of the Houston Country Club, Executive Chef Jim Mills of The Houstonian, Certified Master Chef David Kellaway of the Four Seasons Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, Executive Chef Mercer Mohr of the Omni Hotel Houston, and dessert by Susan Molzan of Ruggles. To add to the evenings activities, dozens of Texas items were auctioned, including trips, artwork and one-of-a-kind items, proceeds going to the MDA and Jerry's Kids.

The Muscular Dystrophy Association currently assists more than 1300 Houston-area families who are affected by one of 43 neuromuscular diseases. ■

