**STARNet Initiates New Board of Directors**

This spring, in order to facilitate communication between practicing physicians and the Health Science Center, a STARNet Board of Directors was organized. At a recent board meeting, the board members deliberated and created a Mission Statement for STARNet:

*To conduct & disseminate practice-based research that results in new knowledge and improves the health of patients in South Texas.*

Dr. Van Winkle is a founding member of STARNet, and a former president of the Texas Academy of Family Physicians. He is currently chairman of the American Academy of Family Physicians Committee on Communications. He is in private practice in Castroville, Texas.

Dr. Munoz completed his Family Practice residency at the UT Health Science Center in San Antonio. He practices at the Munoz Family Health Clinic in Austin, Texas. He will work with Dr. Oates on a STARNet project studying diabetes and dental disease.

Dr. Cigarroa is a former member of the Residency Research Network of South Texas (RRNeST), and helped produce an important study on complementary and alternative medicine. He is currently Vice Chair of the Council on Scientific Affairs for the Texas Medical Association. Dr. Cigarroa is in practice in Laredo, Texas.

Dr. Reyes is a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Family & Community Medicine at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio. He is currently in private practice in Helotes, Texas.

**Practice “Footprints” and Cancer Prevention**

Often people who are the highest risk for diseases are the least likely to be screened, because social disadvantage is a risk factor for both disease and poor access to care.

The concept of a “practice footprint” allows practices to understand the service footprint of their practice in surrounding communities, the various levels of disease risk in those communities, and how the practice is performing in delivering preventive care to patients from those communities. Practices can then make sure that they are delivering appropriate preventive services to those at highest risk.

STARNet physicians who are interested in seeing their practice's community footprint with regard to colorectal cancer and colorectal cancer screening can contact the STARNet office at (210) 358-9875 for more information.

Robert Ferrer, MD

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**Mark Your Calendar!!**

**Next Meeting: Saturday, 4/16/2005, 9:00-1:00**

- Renew acquaintance with or meet STARNet physicians, faculty researchers and staff.
- Presentation and discussion of research questions by member physicians.
The NIDDK (The National Institute for Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Disorders), an institute within the NIH, has awarded funding for a pilot study to be conducted in four STARNet practices by Dr. Michael Parchman, Dr. Walter Calmbach, and Dr. Jackie Pugh.

The funding comes in the form of a two-year planning grant. This grant will allow the research team to collect the information needed to submit a much larger grant proposal for a study designed to improve cardiovascular risk factors among patients with type 2 diabetes in primary care office settings. Over the next two years, Dr. Parchman will lead an effort to develop a collaborative of practice-based research networks, like STARNet here in South Texas, across the United States in places like Oklahoma, Colorado and Florida. In addition, the research team will conduct a pilot study of the proposed intervention in four practices in STARNet to evaluate the feasibility of the intervention and test the data collection instruments. This pilot study is slated to begin in January 2005.

For more information contact Dr. Parchman at (210) 617-5300 ext. 4028 or Raquel Romero at (210) 617-5300 ext. 2229.

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**BIEN Pilot Study**

**Behavioral Intervention for Exercise & Nutrition**

Obesity is a major health problem in the United States, caused in part by poor diets and lack of physical activity. The primary care physician is ideally placed to be an advocate for change in patient behavior, but is often overwhelmed with the demands of a busy practice.

The purpose of this pilot study is to use information technology in the primary care physician's office to assist with patient recruitment and individualized counseling regarding healthy diets and healthful levels of physical activity.

Adult patients 18 years of age and older will be recruited from 4 targeted STARNet practices. Patients will be approached as they sign in for routine visits with their family physician. Each patient’s “readiness to adopt physical activity,” current “physical activity,” “safety for adopting physical activity,” and “diet history” will be assessed and rated using various questionnaires.

Regarding physical activity, subjects in the “contemplation” or “preparation” stages of “readiness to adopt physical activity” will receive a stage-specific intervention shown to increase physical activity and advance subjects’ readiness to adopt physical activity. PDA’s will be used to assist physicians and nurses apply stage-appropriate counseling regarding physical activity.

PDAs will also be used by physicians and nurses to conduct individualized counseling designed to assist patient alter behavior and adopt healthy diets.

To determine ease of use and acceptability, patients, physicians, and nurses will complete questionnaires detailing their experiences using PDAs for patient counseling about diet and physical activity.

Data from this pilot study will be used to design and test the efficacy of a multi-site intervention to promote healthy diets and increase physical activity among Hispanic and non-Hispanic white patients in South Texas.

Walter Calmbach, MD

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**Results of September Meeting**

The Fall 2004 STARNet Physicians Convocation was held September 25. The meeting started an exciting period of planning. Upcoming projects were presented, including:

- Practice “Footprints” and Cancer Prevention – Robert Ferrer, MD (see article page 1)
- Adolescent Physical Activity - Sandra Burge, PhD
- NIDDK Study – Michael Parchman, MD (see article top left)
- Diabetes and Dental Disease - Thomas Oates, DDS
- Behavioral Intervention for Exercise & Nutrition – Walter Calmbach, MD (see article bottom left)

In addition to project discussions were two informational presentations.

- Use of PDAs in Daily Practice – Ramon Reyes, MD
- Library Resources: online resources for evidence-based medicine

Edited by: E. Mikaila Adams