In summary, Mr. Warren suggested that being prepared for such an initiative here in Texas is required.

"Pay 4 Performance" was the topic for our fall meeting keynote speaker, Kevin Warren, Senior Vice President of Operations at the Texas Medical Foundation Health Quality Initiative in Austin. Mr. Warren reported to the audience that according to a survey conducted by MedVantage Inc., 84 pay for performance programs were conducted by public and private organizations in 2004 and 94% of those programs targeted primary care physicians. The goal of the program is three-fold. First, pay the provider for reporting, second, pay for process and thirdly, pay for outcomes. The purpose of the entire initiative is to improve quality while avoiding unnecessary costs. Mr. Warren presented several demonstration project results that have occurred in primary care practice settings. Preliminary Results (Examples from Clinics)

- Prevention of 160 admissions from January-August 2006
- 20% increase in dilated eye exams from July 2004 to June 2006
- 33% increase in well-controlled cholesterol from July 2005 to June 2006

STARNet directors speak with Kevin Warren and Tara Richardson of the Texas Medical Foundation. Left to right: Dr. Parchman, Ms. Richardson, Mr. Warren & Dr. Calmbach
The Circuit Librarian Health Information Network of South Texas (CLHIN) is a medical library service program provided by The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Libraries for health care facilities across South Texas. This invaluable service provides expert medical library research and clinical support to health professionals for an annual fee based on the size of the facility. CLHIN has been providing assistance to clinicians across the region since 1989 and currently serves staff at 15 hospitals and clinics.

CLHIN's professional medical librarians provide database searches of medical literature as well as patient information. The CLHIN program also provides copies of articles from the collections of the UTHSCSA Libraries and from other libraries in the National Network of Libraries of Medicine. The CLHIN librarians also make regular visits to each CLHIN institution to lead classes and provide consultations. Classes taught by the librarians address how to find reliable health information and perform database searches.

If you are interested in this program or would like more information please contact Julie K. Gaines at gaines@uthscsa.edu or call 210.567.2400.

STARNews Presents Spring Meeting Highlights

The spring 2008 STARNet Physicians Convocation generated a great deal of discussion, and developed new lines of study for the network.

Dr. Mitch Finnie discussed his experience with the pandemic preparedness project, a contract through the Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality. Dr. Finnie reported that in the event of a pandemic influenza outbreak, it is likely that “we’re not ready”. “Working harder” is not a likely option because many practices have few open appointment slots, and are already feeling overburdened.

Dr. Walter Calmbach solicited ideas from the group about how to “get the word out” to patients about pandemic flu symptoms, self-care activities, and shelter in-place options. Ideas from the group included making sure that physicians and practice staff had several options for getting information out to patients, including one-way email, fax, practice-specific automated messages, available 800-number for interactive patient information about pandemic influenza, and customized practice websites with links to patient-oriented information.

Dr. Abilio Munoz presented preliminary results from his “card study” on diagnosis and treatment of CA-MRSA. Working with Mike Parchman, they have collected data on 165 cases with history, physical findings, treatment, and culture results. Among STARNet practices, 75% of cases presented as abscesses, two-thirds of which were new cases, while one-third were recurrences. Dr. Munoz’s slides can be found on the STARNet website at http://familymed.uthscsa.edu/starnet08/index.asp.

Lloyd Van Winkle discussed his experience using the CLOX test to help screen his patients with regard to their “executive function”. Working with Dr. Don Royall, who spoke at the Fall 2007 STARNet Physicians Convocation, Dr. Van Winkle has begun using the simple CLOX test to assess the executive function or higher order reasoning and organizational skills that are required for many activities of daily living.

Dr. Mike Parchman distributed materials from the AAFP National Research Network (NRN), hoping to recruit some STARNet physicians to the NRN study on sleep disorders. For further information on this study, please contact Dr. Parchman at parchman@uthscsa.edu.

In a roundtable discussion about possible future STARNet studies, physician members present were most interested in two areas: 1) using a “best practices” research strategy to assess physicians’ ways of dealing with drug-seeking behavior among their patients; and 2) assessing various disincentives to providing services such as vaccinations, immunizations, and rapid flu testing.