

UCSD Medical Center Receives NIH Contract To Set Up National Tuberculosis Educational Curriculum

January 7, 2004

Eileen Callahan

The University of California San Diego (UCSD) Department of Medicine, Pulmonary Division, was recently awarded a 5-year, \$6.2 million contract by the U.S. National Institutes of Health to establish the Tuberculosis Curriculum Coordinating Center (TCCC).

"This disease can be controlled," said Antonino Catanzaro, M.D., Professor of Medicine, and Principal Investigator for the TCCC. "The development of a tuberculosis curriculum for education and working with Public Health can greatly help to control TB nationally; then we can look globally. The TCCC will have a worldwide effect on tuberculosis through higher awareness."

The TCCC will coordinate the activities of a multidisciplinary team of faculty members who are physicians, nurses, and health care leaders from allied health schools to develop and implement curriculum, using state-of-the-art technology for education. The TCCC will also work with a network of professional organizations to impact TB education throughout the United States.

The Consortium will consist of the TCCC (headquartered at UCSD Medical Center, Hillcrest), five curriculum centers, and 23 partner schools. The Consortium includes faculty members representing 12 medical schools, six nursing schools, and 11 allied health schools.

The five coordinating centers nationally are: University of Southern California; Wayne State University; University of Texas Health Sciences Center; University of Arkansas, and Columbia University.

The 23 Partner Schools were selected because of either a very high or very low incidence of tuberculosis cases, as well as strong collegial involvement with Public Health Departments.

"San Diego saw a resurgence of TB cases 20 years ago followed by a decrease in new cases, but now we are seeing a post-resurgence period in San Diego as well as the U.S.," said Dr. Catanzaro.

Global statistics show every second someone is infected with TB; every day 25,000 people develop active TB, and 5,000 people die of the disease. Catanzaro, who has studied TB his entire professional career, explains these staggering statistics are preventable. "We have the knowledge to prevent TB, and very effective medications to cure the disease so that it does not spread."

The TCCC Core Group includes UCSD faculty members Dr. Catanzaro, Project Director; Marguerite Jackson, Ph.D., R.N., Administrative Unit Director; Shawn Harrity, M.D., Curriculum Unit Director; and Helene Hoffman, Ph.D., Educational Technology Unit Director. The combination of their experiences provides the TCCC with management, research, teaching and outreach expertise. Dr. Catanzaro began working in 1966 with the TB branch of the U.S. Public Health Service, receiving intensive training in the prevention, management, and control of TB. He joined the UCSD School of Medicine in 1972 as the director of the TB Control Program, providing care for patients as well as skin testing. He continues to oversee TB activities such as screening, managing, and

following health care workers at UCSD for nosocomial TB infection. As the Director of the UCSD Multidisciplinary TB Clinic, he also provides care and management of active TB and HIV patients from Southern California.

Recognizing that the community plays an important role in TB control, Dr. Catanzaro has always been involved in community-based organizations and with local and state agencies to improve TB patient care.

The Center for Indochinese Health Education was founded in the late 1970s by Dr. Catanzaro as a result of an influx of refugees. This program provided comprehensive health screening and education to refugees about health care in San Diego.

As Director of the TCCC Dr. Catanzaro will provide leadership at all levels within the Consortium, coordinate its activities, and guide the development of a rigorous TB curriculum.

Dr. Jackson, TCCC Administrative Unit Director, was formerly the administrator for the UCSD Infection Control Program at UCSD Medical Center. Her responsibilities included all aspects of infection prevention and control as well as tuberculosis education for health care workers and patients. She also chaired the San Diego Chapter of the American Lung Association's Tuberculosis Elimination Task Force for several years, and was a technical consultant for the California Healthcare Association, responding to various regulatory effects by both the federal and California Occupational Safety and Health Administration related to TB. Dr. Jackson is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN) and is Certified in Infection Control (CIC). As the administrator of the TCCC she will manage the administrative activities for the project.

Shawn Harrity, M.D., TCCC Curriculum Development Unit Director, is a clinical professor in the UCSD School of Medicine. She is a past director of the third year core internal medicine clerkship and currently serves as Director of the Introduction to Clinical Medicine course, which includes the two-year pre-clinical curriculum for the first and second year medical students. She also serves as director of the fourth year medical student sub-internship in inpatient ward medicine, and chairs the Clinical Practice Examination Committee (CPX). The CPX is a multi-station clinical assessment examination, which is developed by the California Consortium for the Assessment of Clinical Competence (CCACC) and given to all students at seven medical schools in California.

Dr. Harrity will lead the TCCC Curriculum Development Unit, which will include compiling and collating existing curricular and educational resources on TB, developing needs assessments, creating evaluation instruments, and ensuring the quality of education and training materials.

Helene Hoffman, PhD, TCCC Educational Technology Unit Director, is Adjunct Professor in the UCSD Department of Medicine and Assistant Dean for Curriculum and Educational Computing at UCSD School of Medicine.

The instructional technology activities at UCSD are under her direction and she is responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of all technology-based resources and services for the UCSD School of Medicine undergraduate medical program. Under her direction, the Office of Educational Computing provides technology-based resources for all aspects of the UCSD School of Medicine curriculum.

Dr. Hoffman will be responsible for the TCCC Educational Technology Unit. She will coordinate the development and maintenance of the TB website, which will in part be used to facilitate communication and interaction among Consortium members and committees. She will administer online surveys to instructors and students and capture responses into databases. She will also provide distance-learning opportunities, and monitor the range of access to the TB website and the extent to which the Consortium materials are integrated into different programs by users outside of the Consortium.

Media Contact: Eileen Callahan (619) 543-6163

