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FEATURES AND ARTICLES

FROM THE PRESIDENT
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Sarah I. Smiley, DO

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Shahar Gurvitz

DELEGATION REPORT

TCMS AUTO SHOW & FAMILY SOCIAL

SUMMERTIME FUN!

TAKE 5: FIBROMYALGIA

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Fellowship
Sarah I. Smiley, DO

What many physicians want most at the end of a typically long and demanding work day is just a little downtime.

For me personally, I just leave my phone in a quiet place near the front door of my house and refuse to talk to anyone on it, including my own extended family members. My husband thought this was a little bit strange when we were first married, but he quickly understood that I needed some decompression at the end of my practice day. After an hour or so of solitude, I can be a normal, verbal human again, and have meaningful interaction with my family and others.

The typical physician’s day is chock-full of multitasking and human engagement – talking, explaining complex medical physiology, making phone calls, touching patients during examinations and, of course, interfacing with smartphones over texts, emails and “news alerts!” If you perform any administrative functions for facilities or your own practice, or do any consulting or peer review, then you have even more points of intrusion into your day.

While physicians may be talented at this multitasking, research has shown, accurately I believe, that it is exhausting. Additionally, the implications of our actions are serious, the stakes are high and the performance pressure is real. We hear that hallowed professor from medical school saying, “Errors can have big implications, even if they are small…”

In the background of all this activity is a level of frustration that I frequently hear expressed by colleagues, whether it be over hassles, like payer issues, or over larger less clear hazards, like the Affordable Care Act and how it is changing the whole practice of medicine.

This pressure and frustration is distilled throughout the long day (or long night on call), and when it’s over, there may be no desire at all for continued busy interaction with other humans. In fact, socializing with colleagues or anyone else may be the last thing you’d look forward to doing.

But for us to have a thriving experience as physicians, as counter intuitive as it may feel, we really need to pursue – yes, pursue – off-duty personal interaction with our colleagues. This creates a fellowship of shared experience, emotion and intellectual ideas. It enriches us personally and professionally. It provides substantive and strong infrastructure that we need to not just practice our profession, but to protect and advance it. As a uniquely trained and privileged group of people, we need to come together for the good of both our patients and our profession. The serendipity is that it also enhances our own personal work satisfaction.

Our TCMS membership is so diverse, culturally and philosophically, that it is in our group interest to explore these differences and to improve our cohesiveness and collaboration as we move into the future. We need to know and support one another based on our commonalities as physicians, which supersede our specialty, practice type, patient population or system affiliation. By coming together socially and professionally, we are a stronger force and better able to collectively address medicine’s important issues.

To facilitate exploring this diversity, TCMS holds a variety of events throughout the year. With few exceptions, participation is free for members due to the generous support of our Friends of the Society program sponsors. These events include CME lectures and business seminars, professional networking and social opportunities, regular membership meetings and joint activities with the TMA to support and enrich the profession and our members.

These activities provide stimulating content and opportunity for cross-specialty discussions and, in the case of educational sessions, a way to interact with experts in practice management and other areas of medicine. They facilitate an atmosphere of learning, the exchange of ideas and collegial fellowship. Social events provide a safe and fun environment for spouses and other family members to enjoy interaction with those who share in the journey and also provide support to our members.

So at the end of that long and demanding day, try resisting the natural temptation to be a bit antisocial. Take a break and check your calendar for the next TCMS event. After your hour of decompression (which I attest can be done while driving to an event in traffic – I just turn up the music!), venture out to enjoy a TCMS lecture, networking social or family event, or just a quiet dinner with a few folks at a Journal Club gathering. It will refresh you.

We need to seek out one another and explore our differences in philosophy, politics, goals and cultural heritage. We need to make the effort to crystallize a message that reflects our collective concerns and supports our patients and our profession. And then, we need to carry that message through our delegation, our board and our offices to the policy makers, lawmakers and to the community in which we have the privilege of serving.

I hope to see more of you and your families at our many events throughout the year! For future events, watch your emails or visit www.tcms.com.

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Marc DeHart, MD was appointed the 2014 President of the Texas Orthopaedic Association (TOA). The TOA represents all orthopedic surgeons in Texas and helps coordinate efforts between lawmakers, insurance companies, ancillary service providers and patients.

Scott Elkin, DO attained Life Fellow Status with the AME Psychiatrist Association and was honored at the American Psychiatric Association invocation in NY on May 14, 2014.

Peggy M. Russell, DO was appointed by Gov. Rick Perry to the STAR + PLUS Facility Advisory Committee for a term to expire at the pleasure of the governor. The committee advises the Texas Health and Human Services Commission on the implementation of the transfer of nursing facility services to the STAR+PLUS Medicaid managed care model.

CONGRATS

New Friend of the Society

With the commitment and support of the Friends of the Society program, the Travis County Medical Society is able to bring its members numerous educational, networking and social opportunities. TCMS is pleased to welcome back Austin Brokerage Company to the Friends program.

Austin Brokerage Company (ABC) has served the insurance needs of companies for over 36 years. Owner Pitt Garrett entered the insurance field as a specialist in disability income insurance for physicians and attorneys. His extensive knowledge in professional disability and overhead expense serves as an asset to ABC clients. Austin Brokerage Company serves clients’ health, employee benefits, life and disability needs. Representing top companies, ABC will match clients’ financial needs to the appropriate benefits. ABC was listed for three years on the Austin Business Journal Lists of Top Independent and Employee Benefit Agencies.

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Each year, the TCMS Public Relations Committee co-sponsors a service project with the Austin Independent School District’s Athletic Department and Student Health Services. The program is designed to provide free athletic physicals to AISD middle school and high school students who are uninsured or do not have affordable access to health care. For many of these students, this is the only time they see a physician for a well-visit.

This worthwhile program provided exams to over 850 students this year – that’s 150 more students than seen in 2013.

Our thanks go out to the 95 physicians who volunteered their time. A number of them committed to participating multiple days and/or shifts over the course of four nights in April and May at the Burger and Delco Activity Centers – special recognition goes to Drs. Joseph and June Spann who worked tirelessly all four nights. It was great to see so many returning faces working side by side with our newest volunteers.

In addition to physicians from numerous specialties, the program would not be successful without the participation of AISD and Dell Children’s Medical Center nurses, student nurses and health educators. TCMS staff were joined by volunteers from the Lend a Hand program at The Blood and Tissue Center of Central Texas to keep the students moving smoothly from exam station to exam station.

A big thank you goes out to University Federal Credit Union (a TCMS Friend of the Society) and Austin Radiological Association. Their generosity provided healthy snacks and bottled water for the students.
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Recognize Your Practice Administrator

Unsung Heroes Program

Stephanie Triggs
Senior Director of Physician Services
and Community Relations

The TCMS Public Relations (PR) Committee has established a new program – Unsung Heroes – as a way to recognize practice administrators/office managers who assist in delivering outstanding quality care to patients. The program is designed to acknowledge their extraordinary abilities and professionalism within the medical community.

The PR Committee will review physicians’ nominations and select an “unsung hero” at the end of each quarter. The administrator recognized for the quarter will receive a gift certificate and be entered into a grand prize drawing at the end of 2014.

For questions, contact
Senior Director of Physician Services and Community Relations Stephanie Triggs at striggs@tcms.com or 512-206-1124.

Travis County Medical Society
Unsung Heroes Nomination Form

The purpose of this program is to recognize practice administrators/office managers who assist physician members of the Travis County Medical Society in delivering outstanding quality of care to patients. A winner will be chosen at the end of each quarter.

Please note: The nominating physician must be a TCMS member and work in the same practice as the nominee.

Complete the form below and provide specific examples as to how expectations of this nominee are exceeded. (Examples are required.)

Nominee’s Information:
(type or print)
Name: ___________________________ Job Title: ___________________________
Practice: ___________________________ Primary Job Duties: ___________________________

Nominee’s Extraordinary Abilities/Professionalism

____ Customer Service  ____ Decision Making/Judgment  ____ Development of Employees

____ Ethics  ____ Finance/Budget  ____ Initiative/Planning

____ Innovation  ____ Quality of Work  Other ___________________________

Provide examples:

________________________
________________________
________________________

Submit additional pages if necessary.

Nominator’s Information:
(type or print)
Date: ___________________________ Submitted by ___________________________
Email: ___________________________ Phone: ___________________________

Deadline for submission is the last day of each quarter. (June, September, December)
Submit nomination form via email to striggs@tcms.com or fax to 512-450-1326.

To nominate your “unsung hero,” complete the nomination form on www.tcms.com and email to striggs@tcms.com or fax to 512-450-1326. The nominating physician must be a TCMS member and work in the same practice as the nominee.
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— Carolyn Perilias
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Inaugural Dean of Dell Medical School

Clay Johnston, MD

Shahar Gurvitz
TCMS Communications Coordinator

Construction of The Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin is now a reality. Leading the charge of creating innovative approaches in teaching, patient care and research for the new school will be inaugural dean, S. Claiborne “Clay” Johnston, MD.

Clay was born in Germany when his father, an academic pediatric immunologist, was serving in the US Army. After completing his service, the family moved to places such as Boston, Birmingham, Denver and New York City for his father’s various academic promotions.

“My father convinced the rest of us that relocating was a part of the career. I’m not trying to convince my family of this,” he said speaking of his wife and two sons, who will move with him from San Francisco to Austin this July. “I’m planning for this to be the only move my kids will make before college.”

Dr. Johnston met his Boston-born-and-raised wife, Clarissa Johnston, MD, an internist, while working in a VA hospital ward that overlooked the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco Harbor. Their sons, Teo, 11, and Nico, 9, were adopted from Guatemala as babies.

Outside of family and work, Dr. Johnston enjoys running, especially in the early morning. “It’s my quiet time, and it’s a good way to discover a new city,” he said. He also enjoys architecture and exploring buildings that may often get overlooked.

Dr. Johnston received his medical degree from Harvard University, and his PhD in epidemiology from the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). However, he was inspired to move into academics because, in his words, “I wanted to go beyond helping the patients that were in front of me; I wanted to be part of changing the system.”

Before moving to Austin, he spent 20 years at UCSF. As the associate vice chancellor of research, he directed the university’s Clinical and Transitional Science Institute and oversaw efforts through a $112 million federal grant to accelerate research advancements.

Dr. Johnston founded the Center for Healthcare Value, an initiative focused on solutions that reduce health care costs and improve quality through various methods, including launching several new educational programs. In addition, as a professor of neurology and epidemiology, he continued to see patients.

The person who most inspired his career was his father, Richard B. Johnston, MD. When his father was medical director of the March of Dimes, he became a champion of folate fortification to reduce spina bifida, an effort which made a lasting impression on Clay.

“Although it seems like so long ago now, he was heavily criticized by some who thought fortification could lead to new health problems, like masking B12 deficiency, and by some who simply believed that governmental regulation was a bad thing,” he remembers. “He powered through it, not with opinion or vitriol, but rather sticking strictly to the evidence. He never left the fully pragmatic and scientific space even as he advocated for change, with improving the health of children his fixed goal. These are the types of voices we need.”

Dr. Johnston commenced his work as dean of the medical school on March 1 of this year, and will welcome its first class in the fall of 2016. He will also serve as university vice-president for medical affairs.

“I hope we create a new model for a medical school that is less stolid than
our forebears and that contributes more directly to adding value to the health care system and to promoting population health,” he said.

Dr. Johnston recognizes that establishing Austin’s first medical school will have its challenges. “To train medical students and meet the community’s mandate to improve health in Travis County, particularly for the underserved, we have to create strong partnerships and build out a very creative and productive faculty,” he said. “The buildings are easy. Everything else takes more complex planning and lots of energy.”

The Dell Medical School presents unique and exciting possibilities as a start-up in an entrepreneurial hub, unrestrained by established traditions and protocol. Dr. Johnston agrees and plans to seize the opportunity to design a curriculum from the ground up, using proven but newer pedagogies that are now being embraced by some of the more traditional medical schools such as flipped classrooms and adaptive learning, as well as incorporating key topics like informatics, system change, implementation sciences and interprofessional education.

On the clinical side, Dr. Johnston says, “We are not reliant on feeding a machine of high-end care, so we can participate actively in testing entirely new models of care delivery.”

As stated in an Austin-American Statesman article, Johnston and UT officials are eager to launch a new multi-disciplinary teaching platform that will include pharmacists, nurses and other health care workers — not just physicians — as integral parts of the educational mix. Furthermore, with less class time devoted to lectures and more for discussions and problem-solving, students will study many of their lessons independently and their educational regimen will be balanced with healthy doses of research and community-based clinical training.

Since the conception of an Austin medical school, physicians in Travis County have voiced strong concerns about potential town-gown conflict which seems to be characteristic of many traditional medical school communities.

However, with a start-up medical school, Dr. Johnston sees opportunities to build an environment that would foster a new model for town-gown collaboration.

“This is critical to me,” he says while acknowledging that there’s “lots of work to do in this space.” Dr. Johnston hopes to be active in the physician community and to develop win-win partnerships between the medical school and local practices.

“We want to better understand the needs of the medical community and be as responsive as we can. We’ve already heard that there is interest in enhancing CME and professional development activities in teaching and care delivery,” he said. “And we will work on that in the coming years. But first we need time to recruit faculty!”

With roots of 160 years and currently over 3,600 members, the Travis County Medical Society established Austin’s first ACGME-accredited residency programs in 1971 through its Central Texas Medical Foundation. Dr. Johnston sees a solid future for TCMS members who are currently teaching residents and students, especially since the need for strong teachers will only continue to increase. There is also room in the school’s vision for those members not currently teaching but who have an interest in medical education.

Continued on page 16.
"We will continue to support volunteer and clinical faculty appointments for those willing to make the commitment," he said. "We are truly appreciative of the efforts of our community partners."

Dr. Johnston will also encourage student involvement in TCMS. "They should understand what it means to be a part of a medical community and the Travis County Medical Society should be a great vehicle for this."

**Editor's note:** We have enjoyed interviewing Dr. Johnston long-distance in the course of preparing this article, and look forward to continuing the dialogue once he's settled full time in Austin.

If there are particular questions or issues relative to the medical school that you would like included in discussions with the dean, please send them to tcms@tcms.com, Attn: TCMS Executive Board.
The Texas Medical Association’s House of Delegates (HOD) met in Fort Worth during TexMed 2014. In the course of the meeting, the HOD elected TCMS Past President Michelle Berger, MD as TMA secretary/treasurer and TCMS member Alex Valadka, MD as a TMA alternate delegate to the American Medical Association. Dr. Valadka joins Drs. Berger and David Fleeger on the TMA Delegation to the AMA. Dr. Fleeger is also a member of the TMA Board of Trustees. TCMS is fortunate to have these qualified leaders in key positions at the TMA.

The House of Delegates adopted a TCMS resolution prompted by member Celia Neavel, MD which resolved that TMA support efforts to repeal the provision in Texas law prohibiting Children’s Health Insurance Program coverage for contraception used for reproductive health.

Delegates also:

• Adopted a resolution directing that TMA “work to permanently delay the implementation of ICD-10.”
• Called for changes in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to prevent recoupment of payments to physicians made during the ACA grace period when physicians have not received adequate notice that the patient has not paid his or her premiums.
• Adopted resolutions to fight air pollution and improve immunization rates.
• Said Congress should permanently adopt Medicare payment parity for Medicaid services provided by primary care physicians and extend that parity to all other specialties.
• Directed TMA to work with other organizations to “aggressively pursue the reduction or elimination of as much of the documentation burden as possible.”
• Called for insurance companies to provide real-time adjudication of claims.
• Approved a phased-in dues increase of up to $12 per year for five years.

To read the full HOD summary report, visit http://bit.ly/TexMed14_HOD.

Michelle Berger, MD - elected TMA secretary/treasurer.  
Alex Valadka, MD - elected to the Texas Delegation to the AMA.

The TMA’s House of Delegates

The Texas Medical Association’s House of Delegates is the representative policy making body that meets to receive reports of the officers, boards, councils, committees and sections of the TMA as well as resolutions from county medical societies or individual members. All of these items, information reports as well as proposals for action, become the business of the House of Delegates.

All business of the House is assigned by the Speakers, according to subject matter, to one of four reference committees. Any member of the TMA (not just delegates) may appear before reference committees to speak for or against any proposal or issue under consideration.

After reviewing (and sometimes consolidating) the reports and resolutions relative to each issue, and after hearing all testimony given by members, the reference committees summarize the information, discussions and testimony. The reference committees then report their recommendations (which may include approval, amendment, disapproval or referral) to the House for action.

For a list of TCMS Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the TMA, see page 8.
TCMS Auto Show & Family Social

Travis County Medical Society members and their families overtook the parking lot at Shoal Crossing Event Center for the Auto Show and Family Social on Thursday, April 10.

A live African-style marimba band filled the cool evening with energetic sounds while families enjoyed burgers from P.Terry’s and treats from Hey Cupcake.

A variety of activities were available for the kids. Members and their families also got a first-hand look at the latest models from participating dealers in the TCMS Auto Program.
Thank you to all who came!

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Contact TCMS Auto Program Director Phil Hornbeak at phornbeak@tcms.com or 512-949-5758.
The Travis County Medical Alliance held its final general meeting of the term at the newly renovated LBJ Presidential Library on April 15. As the result of tireless fundraising efforts throughout the year, the TCMA was able to award over $31,000 in community service grants during this meeting. Representatives from each of the nonprofit organizations gave a short talk on their group’s mission.

2013-2014 Grant Recipients
- Family Eldercare
- Camp Bluebonnet
- Casa Marianella
- St. Louise House
- Volunteer Healthcare Clinic
- Hospice Austin/Camp Braveheart
- Lifeworks

Lara has been a TCMA member for over five years, most recently as VP Membership-Elect on the Executive Board. She has held numerous leadership positions, including VP Programs, Secretary, Toast to Doctors Chair and Gala Chair. Lara also started TCMA’s Chic Ladies Group, which meets for lunch and happy hours, and supports fashion-related events throughout Austin.

“It is great joy to give back to the community, especially when it directly helps women and children, such as setting up the apartments at the St. Louise House. But truly in the end, it is the friendships that I have built with the TCMA that mean the most to me,” Lara said.

Lara worked in the cosmetic/fashion industry as an account executive for over 20 years and served on the Fashion Group International Board for several years. Her husband, Robert Norris, MD, practices family medicine at Austin Regional Clinic. They have a daughter, Larisa, 16, at Westlake High school, and son Logan, 23, who graduated from UT last spring.

For more information about the TCMA, contact Elaine Agatston at 512-810-1253 or email agatston@aol.com.
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**Summertime Fun!**

“Judy and I will be spending two weeks in June in St. Martin. Nothing like catching up on recreational reading under a beach umbrella with a cold drink!”
- Al Gros, MD

“We will be on a river cruise on the Danube starting with three days in Prague and ending in Budapest. We will also be going on a medical mission to Honduras for a week with Honduras Good Works.”
- Brenda Towell, MD and Dennis Tweedy, MD

“When it is over 100 degrees here in August, I am going to be in Portillo, Chile – skiing!”
- Michelle Berger, MD

“I will be traveling back east to NJ & PA with my wife and 5 kids – always a logistical nightmare but worth the effort to visit family (Mom, brothers, sister, niece and nephews), eat some authentic pizza, bagels and Taylor ham. Making memories that will last a lifetime!”
- Daniel Leeman, MD

“My wife, two sons – Taft, 3, and Reis, 11 months – in-laws, niece, nephew and I will be going on a Disney Cruise to Alaska in August.”
- Noah Bunker, MD

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**Summer Fun Around Austin**

- Spend the day at Barton Springs or Deep Eddie Pool. Don’t forget the sunscreen!
- Pack a picnic and fly a kite at Zilker Park.
- Take advantage of Lady Bird Lake – rent a kayak or canoe or enjoy the hike & bike trail!
- Stop for a cool treat – a frozen custard at Sandy’s or a sno-cone at Sno Beach.

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**SAVE THE DATE**

The County Line

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**Thursday, June 19**

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Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a disorder that involves pain and tenderness throughout the body as well many other symptoms.

Fibromyalgia is a complicated condition. It tends to last a long time, although people do get better. It is not life threatening. Although fibromyalgia is considered similar to arthritis because it causes pain in the joints and muscles and can interfere with physical activity, it does not cause inflammation or damage to the body. In addition to pain, the most common symptoms are sleep problems, feeling tired, problems with memory and thinking clearly and depression.

Many people who have fibromyalgia have other conditions as well, such as temporomandibular joint disorder, irritable bowel syndrome, interstitial cystitis, headaches, restless legs syndrome and other chronic pain conditions such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. It is not known whether these conditions are related.

Symptoms

Symptoms of fibromyalgia may include diffuse pain and tenderness; headache; sore throat; stomach pain; memory problems; fatigue; sleep problems; morning stiffness; painful menstrual periods; numbness, burning or tingling of the arms and legs; sensitivity to temperature and sensitivity to loud noises or bright lights.

For More Information

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/fibromyalgia

Causes

The causes of fibromyalgia are not known, but it probably results from many factors that can include a physically or emotionally stressful event, repetitive injury or illness.

Doctors think that how a person's brain responds to pain plays a role, perhaps from inheriting certain genes. People with fibromyalgia are unusually sensitive to pain, heat, noise and scent. Imaging shows that in such patients, the neurotransmitters that control pain and other sensory stimuli may be too sensitive.

Treatment

Try to find the support of a doctor with experience treating fibromyalgia. A team approach may work best, including a doctor, physical therapist and you. You may find help at a pain or rheumatology clinic.

Medications can include tricyclics, gabapentinoids, serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors and painkillers such as aspirin and ibuprofen.

Complementary and alternative therapies exist for fibromyalgia. Many people with fibromyalgia have tried treatments such as acupuncture, chiropractic and massage therapy. There are some data showing that the following may be helpful: tai chi, qi gong, massage therapy, acupuncture and spa treatment, including hydro (water) therapy.

For More Information

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/fibromyalgia

Make copies of this article to share with your patients.
OFFICE SPACE

Medical Office: 4207 James Casey #302, across from St. David’s South Austin Medical Center, 1240 sq/ft, three exam rooms, office, lab, restroom, reception office and waiting room. Contact broker/owner at mpsifuentes@austin.rr.com or 512-797-4977.

For lease: Beautiful Medical Office Condo. 2650 sq/ft. River Place 6618 Sitio Del Rio Blvd Bldg D Suite 102 off of 2222. For information, contact Brian Novy at 512-327-7613 or visit www.briannovy.com.

Medical Office: Approx. 900 sq ft in Medical Arts Square for lease. 3 exam, 2 BR, waiting rm, MD ofc, small business space. Option to share lab and procedure room. $1600/mo+ util. 1 yr lease or more. Contact mejbh@hotmail.com.

Lakeway Medical Office: Lease space available near Lakeway Regional Med Center. Open availability: Monday and Tuesday all day, Wednesday and Friday mornings. $250 per half day. Contact Katie Kelley at 210-888-2115.

Sublease Wanted: NeuroPsychiatrist seeks medical office space 1-2 days per week. Contact Barry Rosson at 512-537-4880 or fax 512-342 8534.

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Wanted to Buy: Old, vintage and antique medical equipment, supplies, models, charts, etc. Contact cecimd@sbcglobal.net or 512-249-6119.

For Sale: GYN equipment including TAB Products chart rack, exam tables, colposcope, cryogun, specula and more. Available in late May. For a complete list and photos, contact dringram@flash.net or 512-970-2564.

OPPORTUNITIES

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