



Editor: Henny van Dijk

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UT Health's Consortium on Aging presented its annual Hot Topics On Aging on November 9, 2020. It was a full-day Zoom conference entitled "Mouth, Mind, & Body: Oral Health For Successful Aging." As the title indicates, the conference focused on oral health and its connection to overall health of seniors. There were two keynote speakers, Janet Yellowitz, DMD, MPH of the University of Maryland and Leslie Pelton, MPA of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. Additionally, multi-discipline professionals presented topics on oral health issues related to seniors. I will attempt to summarize some of the topics covered.

Dr. Janet Yellowitz's presentation entitled, "Special dental healthcare needs of vulnerable older adult populations". Dr. Yellowitz began with the basic question. Why Keep a mouth healthy? She explained that our mouths are connected to the rest of our body. There is a bidirectional relationship between general health and oral health. For example, diabetes has a clear relationship with oral health as do many other chronic conditions. However, for seniors there are multiple obstacles in the pathway to maintaining a healthy mouth. Myths about senior oral health need to be dispelled. Such as, I'm going to lose them anyway, so why bother. Unlike medical care, oral care is not covered by Medicare, therefore creating the barrier of costs. However, having a healthy mouth reduces the risk for systemic disease and reduces the use of health services. The specific role for health care providers is dispelling the myths and breaking down silo walls. All senior health care professionals need to work together for better outcomes. Dr. Yellowitz advocates that oral health should be part of overall healthcare for seniors.

Dr. Cameron Jeter, an Associate Professor at the UTHealth School of Dentistry, focuses her research on oral health – overall health link in geriatrics, particularly patients with neurological disorders. Dr. Jeter's talk entertained the audience with her presentation entitled "Oral health is more than clean teeth" in which she even sang to us that old song "Dem Bones." Dr. Jeter provided three learning objectives: 1) Define the components of oral health. 2) Recognize the bidirectional relationships between oral health and systemic diseases.

3) Discuss the role of primary care and community health teams in promoting oral health. She explained that hard tissue in the mouth are the teeth, jaws and hard palate. The soft tissue in the mouth are the lips, gums, tongue, inner cheek and lips, soft palate and Uvula. As we age oral hard and soft tissue experience reduced sensitivity to pain and the enamel hardens and teeth become more brittle, contributing to cracks and microfractures. Dental conditions such as periodontitis, tooth loss and caries have been proven to be related to chronic systemic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, COPD, dementia, psoriasis and lung cancer. Successful aging is dependent on good oral health. Seniors' quality of life is directly related to oral health. Individuals with periodontitis and missing molars are at an increased risk of premature death. The good news is that in 2000 the Surgeon General recognized that too many people outside the oral health community are uninformed about oral health and provided a national call to action. Further that efforts should seek to enhance our understanding of medical considerations of oral health and accelerate science transfer to benefit those in poorest oral health or at greatest risk. Managing older adult healthcare should be an interdisciplinary approach.

The second keynote speaker, Leslie Pelton, MPA is the Senior Director at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and spoke about the Age-Friendly Health Systems Initiative, which promotes the reliable implementation of a set of geriatric evidence-based practice interventions across four core elements, known as the 4Ms, to all older adults. The 4Ms are What Matters, Medication, Mentation and Mobility. What Matters is knowing and aligning care with specific health outcomes including, but not limited to end-of-life, and across settings of care. Age-Friendly medications that do not interfere with What Matters to seniors, Mobility or Mentation across settings of care. Mentation is preventing, identifying, treating and managing dementia, depression, and delirium across settings of care. Mobility is ensuring that seniors move safely every day to maintain function and do What Matters.

Barbara Kelly reporting



In this Issue

Page 1 Hot Topics in Aging—2020
Page 2 What's in a Name; TMC Interesting Fact;
Page 3 After Covid; New Resolutions...?
Page 4 ...and now for something completely different!

Newly Named Geriatric Division



UTHealth has renamed the division as the Joan and Stanford Alexander Division of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine in honor of their gift, which will provide significant resources for the division's clinical, educational, and research priorities.

"We see a tremendous need to ensure that older adults receive the care that will help them enjoy what should be a wonderful time of life," said Joan Alexander. "We believe this is a step in the right direction."

"We are grateful to the Alexanders for their partnership to promote healthy aging and advance the field of geriatric and palliative medicine," said Giuseppe N. Colasurdo, MD. "Their deep commitment to the health of older adults is transforming how we teach the next generation of geriatric specialists, innovate through research, and set the standards of excellence in patient care."

With the COVID-19 pandemic placing restrictions on in-person events, the division held a virtual event on Sept. 30 to reveal the new signage for the Joan and Stanford Alexander Division of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine.

"The Alexanders share the vision that older adults should be treated with compassionate, individualized care," Holmes said. "We are so proud that our division bears their name."

Amidst a national shortage of geriatric specialists—only 2% of physicians qualify as geriatricians even as the number of adults age 65 and older continues to rise—the Alexanders' pledge aims to strengthen the division in three key ways:

- Enhance the Joan and Stanford Alexander Professorship in Gerontology—held by Holmes—to an endowed chair. Funds from the endowment will create an annual mental health and wellness program.

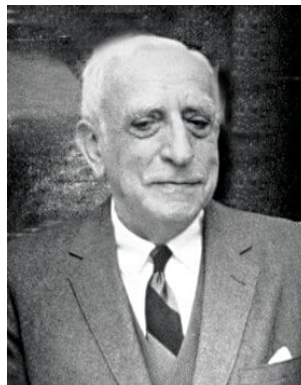
- Establish the Joan and Stanford Alexander Gerontology Education Endowment, which will support an ongoing education program to train providers in geriatric medicine, and educate patients and their caregivers on such issues as dementia and mental health.

- Create the Joan and Stanford Alexander Gerontology Research Endowment which will provide seed grants for junior faculty to conduct pilot studies.

"We have seen the growing importance of geriatric and palliative medicine in our society, and thanks to the Alexanders, McGovern Medical School will lead the way in ensuring older adults receive the care they deserve," said Richard J. Andrassy, Interim Executive Dean of McGovern Medical School. "We are grateful for their generosity."

Interesting Facts about TMC (cont)

Continuing with our Texas Medical Center street names, you may not have driven on a very short street named Taub Loop. It loops from Cambridge back to Cambridge behind Memorial Hermann Hospital and one of the Harris Health hospitals with the familiar name Ben Taub Hospital.



So who was Ben Taub? He was a philanthropist and benefactor to medical institutions in Houston. Ben was the fourth child of Jewish immigrants from Austro-Hungary, born in 1889. His father moved to Texas in 1882 and eventually owned a tobacco store in downtown Houston. Ben grew up in Houston and attended the prestigious Welch Preparatory School (founded and run by the man who eventually established the Welch Foundation, a medical

benefactor). During WW1, Taub served as a captain in the U.S. Army in France. He returned to Houston and engaged in a number of business enterprises, including real estate, banking and American General Insurance Company. At one time he served on 23 boards. Among his passions were the DePelchin Faith Home for homeless children, education, and medical care for the indigent. In 1936, Ben Taub donated 35 acres to establish a permanent campus for the University of Houston and persuaded the heirs of J.J. Settegast to donate another 75 acres to the cause. In 1943, he was instrumental in encouraging Baylor College of Medicine to move from Dallas to the Texas Medical Center in Houston. As chairman of the board of the county's Jefferson Davis Hospital, he and Dr. Michael DeBakey made it a teaching facility for Baylor College of Medicine. Taub never married and spent time visiting patients in the county hospital and helped to run the DePelchin Faith Home. He was a director of the Texas Medical Center, headed the United Way and gave out numerous scholarships. When Houston's new charity hospital opened in 1963, the hospital board, in recognition of his service, named it Ben Taub General Hospital, and it became renowned as one of the nation's leading major trauma centers. Ben Taub died at the age of 92 in 1982.



Don't Forget Now You Hear! ...

The membership fee for 2021 is due Jan. 1, 2021 so please take a minute to pay your dues by sending your check for \$15.00 (retiree or retiree & spouse)

to our treasurer,

Margaret Zambrano,

20903 Imperial Ridge Ln., Spring, TX, 77379.

We are counting on your support.

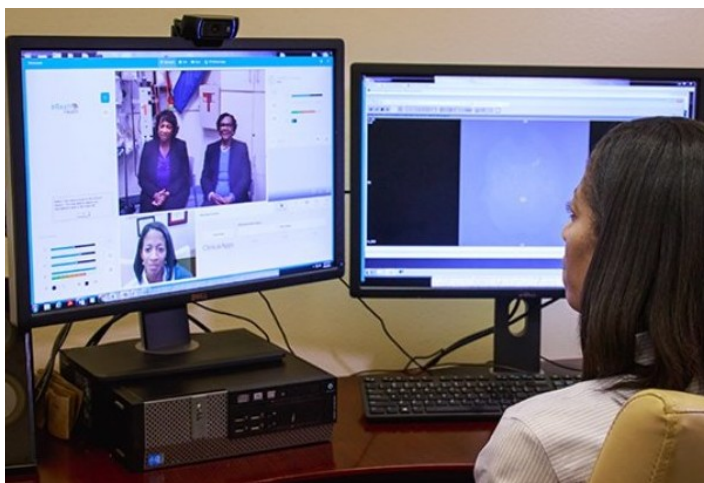
The renewal form can be found at our website

www.uthro.org

Changes Might Come



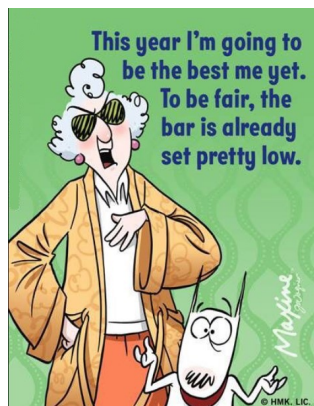
If we learned anything over the past 10 months is the disappearance of the workplace as we know it. In its place we will find more computer enhanced exchanges such as “zoom” for meetings and conferences or videochat with family and friends. The hospitality industry will see a huge drop in business meetings and the airline industry a lot less professionals traveling to and fro. We might even see much smaller hubs or buildings housing people. We found out that things can be done remotely which would not only get rid of congestion, but as California has shown a lot less pollution giving Mother Earth a break and our kids a healthier environment, all thanks to the virus. But even before that our society has shown a preference for growing old at home and so if you remember I wrote an article on an initiative at the School of Nursing about a test program to do just that with technology and gadgets to make that possible. Now the Consortium on Aging is contemplating a Telemedicine outreach



The Age-Friendly Health System Aims are to reach older adults in 1,000 hospitals, practices, convenient care clinics and nursing homes recognized as Age-Friendly Health Systems by 12/31/2020 and to increase that number to 2,500 by 6/30/2023. Locally, UTHHealth has geriatric physicians and nurse practitioners participating in the Age-Friendly Health System initiative which is good news for us all.

Barbara Kelly

What Will 2021 Bring...?



Maxine—by John Wagner

As we know, New Year is coming and we all need some fun and humor these days. Little funny moments can surely turn the entire atmosphere into a hilarious mood. We provide you with the famous sayings of famous people who have had a lot of experience in their lives and have shared their wisdom and experience for us to seek knowledge from them. People celebrate **New Year** by forgetting all the sorrows, painful past and put their trust in a better future. This year that will be prettystified with distancing and masks, but to compensate for that I have turned to several experts on the subject: The best one in my opinion was this advice

“Be Yourself, every one else is already taken”

Oscar Wilde

Or this one from **May West**

“You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough”

And this year in particular

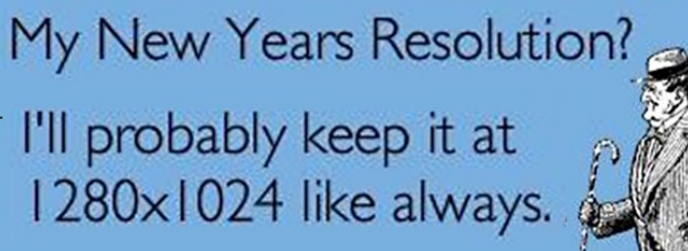
An optimist stays up until midnight to see the New Year in.

A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.” – **Bill Vaughn**

“A New Year’s resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other”

“New Year’s Day now is the accepted time to make your regular annual good resolutions. Next week you can begin paving hell with them as usual” – **Mark Twain**

“And now we welcome the New Year, full of things that have never been” – **Rainer Maria Rilke**

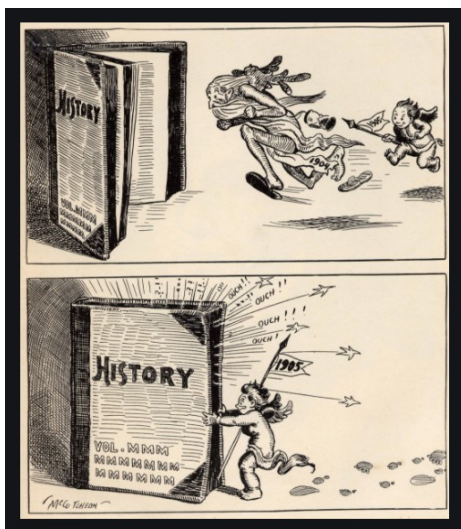


UTHRO

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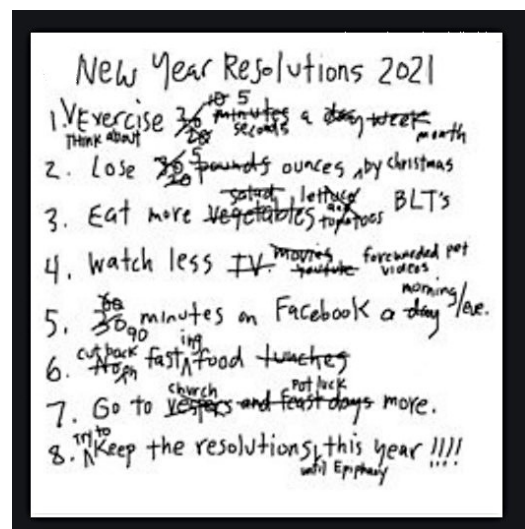
To update your address or phone number
please contact us at 281-655-1983

And Now For Something Completely Different... Reflecting on a year lost...



Cartoon by John T. Mc Cotcheon around 1900

The cartoon on the left clearly reflects my feelings about 2020 and the faster we can get rid of it, the better. With the vaccines being rolled out all over Houston and we as retirees clearly in the bulls-eye for infections I'm gonna get it as soon as available so I can start on my New Year's resolutions (again).



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