

# GA

GUEST ARTICLE

*E. P. C. M. S.*

## El Paso Healthcare Heroes (EPHH) partners with the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine (PLFSOM) to Infuse Humanism

Monica Reyes

“It is a miracle that I get to see the best physicians in El Paso who so compassionately and diligently work to provide the assistance I need despite my financial constraints. These ‘unsung heroes’ provide a better quality of life for patients like me who do not have access to healthcare,” remarked a participant of El Paso Healthcare Heroes (EPHH). Many residents in El Paso County have been given hope and a new outlook in life because specialty providers participating in EPHH, an access to care program for the uninsured, have agreed to see patients who are referred by the program. Another component of the program is to move primary care out of the emergency department (ED) by establishing medical homes for uninsured patients at local federally qualified health centers.

After two years of operation the program has been successful in decreasing unnecessary ED utilization by emphasizing the medical home concept, a partnership that connects the patient, provider, and family. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, the provision of medical homes allows for better access to comprehensive health care, increased satisfaction with care, and improved health outcomes (2007). “Our patients respond better because our providers genuinely care and listen to their unique healthcare needs”, said Monica Reyes, Program Director of EPHH.

A tremendous wellspring of humanism, altruism and innovation resides within our medical schools and teaching hospitals. As such, early this year EPHH partnered with Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Paul L. Foster School of Medicine (PLFSOM) to host the curricular social worker experience as a process of evaluating patients with special needs. Eight students from the charter class (MS1 – Cynthia Garza, Scott Grant, Cindy Huang, Omar Khateeb, Grace Ng, Jason Ross, Thomas Tullius and Chau Vu) participated in four-hour sessions with EPHH to bring to light the “human voice” behind the uninsured crisis in El Paso.

Students witnessed the human dimensions of care - positive attitudes, actions that demonstrate interest and respect for the patient while also addressing the patient’s concerns and values – needed to improve the delivery of health services for uninsured El Pasoans. The curricular activity further provided the opportunity for the medical students to describe how social work complements the care given by the physician in addition to how physicians can help support the role of social workers and other members of the healthcare team. EPHH will con-

tinue collaborating with the PLFSOM to create a climate that fosters personal growth within a patient-centered curriculum.

EPHH is a multi-sector partnership with Las Palmas and Del Sol Regional Healthcare System, University Medical Center of El Paso, Centro San Vicente, Project Vida, Adventist Family Clinic, The Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce, and the El Paso County Medical Society. For more program information please contact Monica Reyes at (915) 534-0559 or via email at [mareyes@elpaso.org](mailto:mareyes@elpaso.org).



(L to R) Cynthia Garza, MS1; Omar Khateeb, MS1; Thomas Tullius, MS1; Erika Marquez, Program Coordinator, EPHH; Monica Reyes, Program Director, EPHH; Chau Vu, MS1; and Grace Ng, MS1.

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Monica Reyes is the Program Director for El Paso Healthcare Heroes.