

TAMHSC women's cancer prevention program receives CPRIT funds

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Texas A&M Health Science Center will provide breast and cervical cancer education and prevention efforts in the Brazos Valley with support from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.

Texas A&M Health Science Center (TAMHSC) recently received a \$1.5 million grant from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) to fund women's cancer prevention efforts in the Brazos Valley. The three-year grant will support multidisciplinary research aimed at improving access to breast and cervical cancer education prevention, screenings and diagnostic services for low-income women living in the area.

According to data from the Texas Cancer Registry, low-income and medically underserved women residing in rural areas of Texas, like the Brazos Valley, suffer from significantly lower survival rates associated with breast and cervical cancer, bringing prevention and care to the forefront of concern across the state.

"The grant will address a critical unmet need for breast and cervical cancer screening and prevention activities in the Brazos Valley," said David McClellan, M.D., principal investigator on the project and assistant professor of family and community medicine in with the TAMHSC-College of Medicine. "Ultimately, we hope to increase the number of low-income, underserved Texas women who receive clinical breast exams, pap smears and HPV vaccines."

The project will also improve access to follow-up care from community health workers and access to post-diagnosis surgeons and oncologists at significantly reduced rates. Additionally, the grant will provide hands-on practice for family medicine residents and nursing students in a simulated environment, as well as educate public health students in breast and cervical cancer related activities and disease management strategies.

"This funding from CPRIT is vital to advancing our ability to solve complex health problems and disparities through multidisciplinary research approaches," said Jane Bolin, Ph.D., J.D., B.S.N, professor of health policy

and management in the TAMHSC-School of Rural Public Health and co-principal investigator on the grant. “The program will serve as a state and national model to address the overwhelming need for a greater number of providers, nurses, and public health specialists who are prepared to provide evidence-based cancer care in rural and underserved areas.”

The project brings together multiple health care disciplines from across Texas A&M Health Science Center. Anna Lichorad, M.D., assistant professor of family and community medicine with the TAMHSC-College of Medicine, will also serve as co-principal investigator. Marcia Ory, Ph.D., M.P.H., regents and distinguished professor of health promotion and community health sciences in the TAMHSC-School of Rural Public Health; Deborah Arnold, M.S.N., RN, and Trisha Sheridan, WHNP-BC, M.S.N., B.S.N, both assistant professors in the TAMHSC-College of Nursing; Benny Holland RN, M.P.H., director of the Clinical Learning Resource Center at TAMHSC; and Janet Helduser, M.A., senior program coordinator at the Health Policy and Management Department in the TAMHSC-School of Rural Public Health, will assist in the project.

The project will also leverage several unique partnerships throughout the Brazos Valley, including: Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, Health-4-All, Brazos Valley Health Partnership and St. Joseph’s Regional Health System.

CPRIT awarded 10 grants, totaling more than \$10 million, in its latest round of funding for cancer prevention programs and services and to attract top-notch cancer researchers to the state. Texas voters approved a constitutional amendment in 2007 establishing CPRIT and authorizing the state to issue \$3 billion in bonds to fund groundbreaking cancer research and prevention programs and services in Texas.

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