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## **Cultural/linguistic competence self-assessment draws praise**

San Antonio (March 19, 2007) — Three faculty members of The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and two administrators at the University Health System (UHS) have won the American College of Healthcare Executives' 2007 Edgar C. Hayhow Award for their article on a cultural and linguistic competence self-assessment of the University Health System.

Co-authors from the Health Science Center are Martha A. Medrano, M.D., M.P.H., professor of psychiatry and director of the university's Medical Hispanic Center of Excellence; Raymond M. Costello, Ph.D., clinical professor of psychiatry; and Viola Benavente, M.S.N., R.N., former assistant professor of acute nursing care in the School of Nursing. UHS co-authors are Jean Setzer, Ph.D., vice president of strategic planning, and Steve Enders, F.A.C.H.E., senior vice president of ambulatory services. Many Health Science Center faculty physicians teach and provide care in UHS facilities.

Dr. Medrano and Enders will receive the award Wednesday (March 21) at the College's 50th Congress on Healthcare Leadership in New Orleans.

"We conducted a 360-degree self-assessment for the inclusion of cultural and linguistic competence," Dr. Medrano said. "We found that UHS has several strengths that enabled it to meet the medical needs of its target population. These included the number of Spanish-speaking health care providers and staff, and locations of ambulatory centers downtown and in the West Side where many of these patients reside."

Dr. Medrano said site visits, focus groups, surveys and in-depth interviews of patients, providers, staff and key stakeholders in the community showed that a surprising number of languages — at least eight — are spoken among the groups.

The Health Science Center has one of the strongest contingents of Spanish-speaking faculty physicians in the U.S. "The fact that 16 percent of Health Science Center faculty members are Hispanic really does allow us to address the cultural and linguistic needs of our community," Dr. Medrano said. "In other academic institutions that have 1 percent Hispanic faculty and large Hispanic patient populations, you might risk cultural and language misinterpretation leading to medical errors."

The assessment was conducted within the context of standards outlined in the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services 2001 Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services.

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