On Nov. 2, 2001, Chris Canales suffered a spinal cord injury (SCI) during a high school football game in San Marcos, Texas. One year later, Chris and his father Eddie Canales turned adversity into a relentless drive to help the families of other high school football players whose lives have been interrupted by catastrophic injuries. In 2003, the father-and-son team started the Gridiron Heroes Spinal Cord Injury Foundation, which helps kids with SCI cope with their life-changing circumstances. Last fall, both men were nominated as CNN Heroes.

Following his injury on the football field, Chris was transported to the Level I Trauma Center at Brackenridge Hospital in Austin, where he spent a month and a half in acute care.

“We almost lost Chris twice due to complications of his injury,” Eddie says. “Once he was stabilized, my wife and I did some traveling around in Austin and San Antonio, visiting rehab facilities. TIRR Memorial Hermann kept coming up in every conversation we had. After a visit to the hospital, we just knew it was the best place for him to be. But it was a hard choice to make because we also knew we’d be spending a lot of time away from home, traveling back and forth to Houston to be with him.”

At all times during his three-and-a-half-month stay at TIRR Memorial Hermann, Chris had a family member by his side. “It was a very trying time for all of us,” Eddie says. “We learned that Chris would be paralyzed from the shoulders down, and that was still sinking in.”

Before he was sidelined by his injury, Chris was an all-conference defensive back and all-state punter.
Imagine an environment in which each patient’s medical record is stored and updated electronically throughout the entire continuum of care – from admission to discharge. Physicians would have access to hundreds of evidence-based order sets through the touch of a button to deliver care proven to produce the best possible outcomes. This vision is fast becoming a reality at TIRR Memorial Hermann.

Our electronic medical record (EMR) and computerized physician order entry (CPOE) went live in January of this year, dramatically changing the nature of how we work in a positive way. The transition to a paperless environment, which will allow clinicians to automate care by documenting medical records electronically, is a milestone for TIRR Memorial Hermann and a giant leap forward in ensuring efficiency, accuracy and patient safety.

One of our strengths at TIRR Memorial Hermann is our integration with the entire system of care provided by Memorial Hermann. EMR means that we can access patient history from transport by Memorial Hermann Life Flight® to Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center’s Level I Trauma Center through inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation care. Access to imaging results through the Picture Archiving Communication System (PACS) eliminates repetition of studies. An entire patient history is now available in one medical record.

The implementation of EMR and CPOE was a true partnership between clinicians, physicians and Memorial Hermann’s Information Technology team. We’re proud of the accomplishment, which brings us one step closer to being a higher reliability organization.

Carl E. Josehart, CEO
Chief Executive Officer
TIRR Memorial Hermann

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Carl E. Josehart, CEO
Gerard Francisco, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer
Mary Ann Euliarte, R.N., C.R.N.N.
Chief Nursing Officer/Chief Operations Officer
Mark Sherer, Ph.D.
Director of Research

Karen Kephart, Writer
Steve Stanley, Designer
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Spring 2011

We have opportunities for outstanding rehabilitation professionals. If you are interested in joining our team at U.S. News & World Report’s No. 5 rehabilitation hospital, contact Jude Lemaire, recruitment consultant, at 713.797.7281 or Jude.Lemaire@memorialhermann.org. All available opportunities can be viewed at memorialhermann.org. www.tirrmemorialhermann.org, www.ilru.org
Rep. Giffords’ Arrival Puts TIRR Memorial Hermann in the International Spotlight

In January, Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords arrived at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center and soon after was transferred to TIRR Memorial Hermann, raising public awareness of the process of recovery for individuals with a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Local and national news reports took an international audience inside the facility, giving them a personal look at the experts who work there and the experience of patients.

“We’re optimistic that greater awareness and understanding of the science and practice of rehabilitation, and brain injury recovery in particular, will lead to increased community acceptance of individuals with a range of abilities,” says Carl Josehart, CEO of TIRR Memorial Hermann. “We also hope it will lead to more willingness to provide reasonable accommodations that allow all individuals to remain independent and productive members of society. We’re grateful for the opportunity to showcase the members of our multi-disciplinary team of rehabilitation professionals who work together to advance the care of our patients.”

Stories about the facility and the team caring for Giffords appeared on national networks, including NBC, CNN, ABC, CBS, PBS and CSPAN, in addition to coverage by local network affiliates. CNN anchor Sanjay Gupta, M.D., and NBC Nightly News anchor Brian Williams took their viewers on tours of TIRR Memorial Hermann and watched its staff at work.

“Giffords’ admission brought attention to the little-known specialty of physical medicine and rehabilitation, in general, and the field of brain injury rehabilitation, in particular,” says Gerard Francisco, M.D., chief medical officer at TIRR Memorial Hermann and chair of the department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHHealth) Medical School.


Computerized Physician Order Entry Brings Evidence-Based Medicine to the Point of Care

Most physical medicine and rehabilitation specialists were trained in a paper-based world. The big news in healthcare today is the transition to a paperless environment through the implementation of electronic medical records (EMR) and computerized physician order entry (CPOE). TIRR Memorial Hermann went live with both on Jan. 16, 2011.

“We’re not 100 percent there yet but utilization of order entry for TIRR Memorial Hermann is relatively high – about 85 percent,” says Gerard Francisco, M.D., chief medical officer. “When CPOE is fully implemented, our medical staff will be able to access hundreds of plans for delivering care and transmit them electronically to the appropriate department or individual to be carried out. The entire care team will be on the same page, with no time lag in the sharing of information.”

CPOE incorporates evidence-based medicine at the point of care by activating rules and alerts related to specific patient medical records. “The program helps physicians avoid deviations from standard practice,” Dr. Francisco says. “If a physician is using the software to write orders for a patient, the program will bring up clinical guidance data and a set of rules on the screen, so that all the information is available to the physician when writing specific orders. For instance, if I order a larger-than-normal dose of a particular medication, an alert will come up. We can override the alert when we need to order unusual doses of a medication, but by

Computerized continues on page 4
Researchers at TIRR Memorial Hermann have published one of the first studies to explore directly the relationship between social communication skills and broader social integration outcomes in a culturally and socioeconomically diverse traumatic brain injury population. The article appeared in the January/February 2011 issue of the Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation.1

“There are no gold-standard measures and few clinical tools to evaluate communication skills following traumatic brain injury,” says lead author Margaret Struchen, Ph.D. “The measures we used to evaluate the extent to which social communication abilities and behavioral functioning contribute to overall social integration outcomes were evaluation of self-perception of communicative skill, as well as behavioral measures that assess receptive, processing and sending communication abilities.”

Participants in the prospective cohort study included 184 English-speaking adults (72.8 percent men) evaluated at least six months post discharge from acute care or inpatient rehabilitation hospitals between May 2004 and June 2008. Assessment measures included the La Trobe Communication Questionnaire, Assessment of Interpersonal Problem-Solving Skills, Affective Behavioral subscale from the Problem Checklist of the Head Injury Family Interview, the Craig Handicap Assessment and Reporting Technique–Short Form Social Integration subscale and the Community Integration Questionnaire Social Integration subscale.

“Based on the results of the measures, we concluded that social communication measures and self-reported behavioral functioning contributed significantly to concurrently measured social integration outcomes,” Dr. Struchen says. “It’s evident that social communication abilities and affective/behavioral functioning make a substantial contribution to social integration outcomes.”

The work was supported by grants from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Community Integration of Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Developing Strategies to Foster Community Integration and Participation for Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury, and the Texas Traumatic Brain Injury Model System of TIRR Memorial Hermann.

For more information about the article, contact Dr. Struchen at struchen@bcm.edu.

with scholarship offers from 14 colleges. “At that time, Tarleton State University was the only school in Texas with an exercise program for students with disabilities,” Eddie says. “Chris tried to go to college but it was a tough experience, and he had to withdraw on a medical leave.”

When he returned home, his friends had left for college, leaving him isolated. “I could see the isolation starting to wear and tear on him,” his father says. “He was reaching the one-year anniversary of his injury – and that first year is the toughest. Right after a spinal cord injury, people are still thinking, ‘I’m going to do whatever it takes to get out of this chair.’ Athletics was an important part of Chris’ life, and at the one-year mark, it was starting to sink in that he would never play football again.”

To get his son out of the house and take his mind off the injury, Eddie took Chris to a state championship football game. From the stands, they witnessed a high school player suffer a spinal cord injury.

“That was the inspiration behind the Gridiron Heroes Spinal Cord Injury Foundation,” he says. “Chris said, ‘Dad we have to go and help him. I know what he will go through, and you know what the family will go through.’”

Today, Gridiron Heroes, which is funded solely through private contributions, provides immediate and long-term resources and support to individuals who sustain a catastrophic spinal cord injury through activities associated with high school football.

and energy to raising awareness of SCI in the community.

Their work through the foundation has gained national attention, including a cover story in *Time* magazine, several Associated Press articles and most recently, recognition from CNN. Last fall, both men were nominated as CNN Heroes.

“It’s quite an honor,” says Eddie, who was named CNN Hero for January 2011. “Chris and I were both nominated for the award, and they had to choose one of us. I think they chose me because Chris has been recognized for his work in the past.” In 2006, Chris was named the American Red Cross of Central Texas Hero. That same year, he was a finalist for the Houston Texans’ Community Quarterback Award. He was inducted into the National Spinal Cord Injury Hall of Fame in 2007.

“Chris has been the inspiration and faith behind the Gridiron Heroes,” Eddie says. “Thanks to the motivation he provided, we’ve established our niche. As big as football is in Texas and across the nation, there’s never been an organization quite like ours. We’re grateful for the opportunity to help and for the attention we’re getting. Now that our names are out there, we’ve started to receive calls for help from people in other states, including folks who aren’t athletes but need guidance and help.

“Chris is still very involved with the Gridiron Heroes, but he’s also moved on with his life,” Eddie says. “Going beyond the injury to reintegrate into the community is a major part of what TIRR Memorial Hermann teaches. I’m proud of Chris’ accomplishments.”

Chris developed an interest in film editing after he and his dad were invited to work on the pilot for the television show *Friday Night Lights*, based on the film of the same name. He went on to complete an internship in film editing at Universal Studios in Hollywood and is now working on the feature film *Battleship*, to be released in 2012.

“TIRR Memorial Hermann helped me get back what I have now, and I’m grateful for the therapy they provided me,” Chris says. “It was a tough time, but it was a good experience and it’s part of what inspired me to want to help. I’ve always been kind of a shy guy but when I saw that player injured at the state championship game, I knew how hard it would be for him and I knew we had to help.”

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**Extra Yard continued from page 1**

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**GRIDIRON HEROES, WHICH IS FUNDED SOLELY THROUGH PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS, PROVIDES IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM RESOURCES AND SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUALS WHO SUSTAIN A CATASTROPHIC SPINAL CORD INJURY THROUGH ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL.**
functional ability, and return to active lives in their communities. A founder and first president of The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research, now TIRR Memorial Hermann, Dr. Spencer died on Feb. 18, 2009.

Dr. Spencer’s words are inscribed at the base of the statue of Prometheus Unbound that stands at TIRR Memorial Hermann’s entrance: “Man uses the tiniest of strengths for the greatest purposes.” In 1951, as a young pediatrician just out of the United States Army, Dr. Spencer was recruited by Baylor College of Medicine and the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis to lead a staff of clinicians at the Southwestern Poliomyelitis Respiratory Center in Houston. As the polio epidemic swept the nation, patients from across the United States were sent to the center. At one time, the center managed more than 10 percent of the 38,000 new cases of polio occurring annually.

“When the polio epidemic hit, my father became frantic,” says Susan Spencer-Tully of Potomac Falls, VA, who worked closely with TIRR Memorial Hermann leadership to establish the William A. Spencer Fund for pediatric outpatients. “As a pediatrician, he was committed to curing kids. But he couldn’t cure this disease, and when he saw the crippling, the kids confined to iron lungs and...
We expect the fund to grow quickly with support from employees and community members who want to help.”

**One Step Closer Foundation Hosts Third Annual Celebrity Poker Tournament Benefiting TIRR Memorial Hermann**

Celebrities and professional poker players came together last December to help find a cure for cerebral palsy at the third annual “All in for CP Celebrity Charity Poker Tournament,” held in The Venetian Poker Room in Las Vegas. The tournament supports the One Step Closer Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness and funds for research on cerebral palsy. Founded by CEO Jacob Zalewski, a former patient at TIRR Memorial Hermann, the foundation generously donates proceeds from the tournament to the rehabilitation hospital.

One hundred fifty-two players registered for the tournament, including Mekhi Phifer of Fox’s *Lie To Me*; Sean Astin of *Lord of the Rings*; Sam Simon, creator of *The Simpsons*; Jennifer Elise Cox; Jennifer Tilly; Jeremy London; Omar Gooding; Al Santos; Miko Hughes; and boxer Sergio Martinez. Professional poker players included Karina and Chip Jett, Todd and Anjela Brunson, Justin Smith, Christina Lindley, Phil Laak, Lupe Soto, Eric Mizrachi, Marsha Waggoner, Joseph Reitman, Andy Bloch and 2009 World Series of Poker champion Joe Cada, among others. Tournament host Cheryl Hines and Zalewski kicked off the tournament with an enthusiastic “Shuffle up and deal!”

In 2008, the first “All in for CP” tournament drew 44 players who raised $44,000. From this year’s proceeds, Zalewski donated $15,000 to TIRR Memorial Hermann through the Memorial Hermann Foundation, his largest donation to date. “We are grateful to Jacob for his continued interest in and support of TIRR Memorial Hermann and our programs,” says TIRR Memorial Hermann CEO Carl Josehart, who attended this year’s tournament. “TIRR Memorial Hermann was founded on the belief that people with even the most severe disabilities could attain a state of health and functional ability and return to active lives in their communities. Jacob never gave up, and through his efforts he’s helping us help others find the path to more rewarding lives.”

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Giving Back continued from page 7

Born three months premature, Jacob Zalewski suffered complications during birth, including broken ribs, a brain infection and air supply loss when his umbilical cord wrapped around his neck. He weighed less than 1.5 pounds, and his doctors gave him a 3 percent chance of survival.

When he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at the age of 3, his adoptive family sought treatment around the world. By the time he was 18, he had been to numerous hospitals, specialists and physical therapists but had failed to gain his independence. After years of being told that nothing more could be done, he began to believe that his disability was permanent.

In 2003, his parents took him for an evaluation at TIRR Memorial Hermann. “After consulting with my doctor, Gerard Francisco, and my physical therapist, Heather Heyl, I knew there was something special about them,” Zalewski says. “The fire in me that had almost died began to spark again. I couldn’t wait to start.”

In two weeks at TIRR Memorial Hermann, he improved an astonishing 20 percent. “I had not improved that much in 10 years at other hospitals,” he says. “My parents and I were thrilled. I felt that I was a part of something important instead of watching my therapy from the sidelines as I had done at other hospitals. It was about what we could accomplish together.

“TIRR Memorial Hermann has helped me get where I am,” he says. “They were the first people to believe in me as a patient and to believe in us as a foundation. My goal is to continue to work with TIRR Memorial Hermann and the Memorial Hermann Foundation on bigger and better fundraising projects.”

Project U.N.I.O.N. Extends TIRR Memorial Hermann’s Reach into the Community

Begun in 2009 as the idea of Pari Azari, M.D., Project U.N.I.O.N. was founded as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization to help individuals with disabilities become more functional, safe and active in their communities by providing durable medical equipment. At the time, Dr. Azari was a resident at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) Medical School/Baylor College of Medicine Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Alliance, rotating at TIRR Memorial Hermann for much of her training.

“Dr. Azari saw the progress patients had made at TIRR Memorial Hermann and understood that it doesn’t end with inpatient and outpatient treatment,” says Patricia Tully, O.T.R., A.T.P., a seating and mobility specialist who serves on the board of directors of Project U.N.I.O.N., an acronym for Understanding Needs In Our Neighborhood. “Rehabilitation is a lifelong process, and often when former patients have finished their program of therapy, they find themselves without the equipment they need to continue living active lives. Our goal is to help them meet those needs by providing wheelchairs, walkers and even hospital beds by refurbishing and recycling donations from the community.”

Project U.N.I.O.N. depends on the support of volunteers, many of whom work at TIRR Memorial Hermann. “Therapists, rehab equipment dealers and manufacturing company representatives have donated their time, skills and products to help refurbish the equipment and make it ready for use by others,” Tully says. “We are only as strong as our volunteers.”

“We hope to expand in the future to offer other services such as orthotics, education about pain management, free or discounted transportation funds and help with medication and treatment fees, as well as physical, occupational and speech therapy,” says Craig DiTommaso, M.D., a UTHealth/BCM Alliance resident who assumed the role of president of Project U.N.I.O.N. following Dr. Azari’s departure from Houston. “TIRR Memorial Hermann is a driving force and inspiration to us. They’ve been very involved with us on several levels. Patients leave TIRR Memorial Hermann with great potential to move forward with their lives. We’re here to provide them with support over the long haul.”
patients with catastrophic needs in the changing healthcare environment and related topics.

Both forums seek to enhance TBI and SCI rehabilitation services on a national level through participation of leadership representatives from member centers serving in program development or administrative roles.

For more information about the TBI Model Systems forum, contact Diane Wege, P.T., N.C.S., at diane.wege@memorialhermann.org.

For information about the SCI Model Systems forum, contact Julie Jennings, P.T., N.C.S., at julie.jennings@memorialhermann.org.

TIRR Memorial Hermann Hosts Brain Injury and Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems Meetings

TIRR Memorial Hermann, one of only six rehabilitation hospitals in the nation designated as model systems by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) for both its spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury programs, will host the annual leadership forums for both model systems this spring and fall.

The 5th Annual TBI Model Systems Leadership Forum, which was held at TIRR Memorial Hermann April 13 to 16, 2011, provided an opportunity for invited TBI Model Systems representatives from occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology and nursing to exchange administrative, clinical and educational ideas and information related to brain injury and rehabilitation. Participants, who came from current and former TBI Model Systems around the country, discussed the challenges of conversion to an electronic medical record, fall prevention, restraint use, behavior management, staffing models, team conferences, incorporating research into the clinical setting, updates on research studies and patient and family education, along with other discipline-specific clinical topics.

The 33rd Annual Model SCI Systems Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy Leadership Forum will be held Oct. 19 to 22, 2011. A collaborative meeting of current and former SCI Model Systems centers designated by the NIDRR, the gathering will include presentations to invited participants on patient safety, clinical issues, staffing needs, how to implement culture change, how to manage

ON THE MOVE

Steady growth in the pediatric program at TIRR Memorial Hermann Outpatient Rehabilitation has led to an expansion of services in a newly constructed space adjacent to the facility. The expansion adds 2,900 square feet designed solely for the use of pediatric patients.

TIRR Memorial Hermann Pediatric Outpatient Rehabilitation features a dedicated child-friendly space for pediatric services, a new entrance and space to further grow the pediatric program. New additions include pediatric neuropsychological testing, and last June, the program purchased pediatric legs for TIRR Memorial Hermann’s Lokomat®, which benefits patients with neurological movement disorders. The addition of the pediatric legs was made possible by the generosity of 105 donors who contributed $88,000 to the Memorial Hermann Foundation for their purchase.

The pediatric outpatient program is designed to meet the needs of children whose condition calls for the intensity of conventional inpatient rehabilitation but does not require overnight nursing care. Patients benefit from an intensive, integrated rehabilitation program in a clinical setting during the day, combined with the family’s emotional support at home.

Physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, social workers and neuropsychologists at the pediatric outpatient center provide a full range of rehabilitation services for patients with brain injury, spinal cord injury, amputations, developmental delay, torticollis, multiple trauma, genetic disorders, cancer, neurological insult, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis, as well as for post-transplant and post-orthopedic injury patients.

For more information or to refer a patient, call 713.524.9702.

On the Move continues on page 10
extension of the grants, allowing groups in Texas and other states to continue to spend allocated grant funds into 2011.

To date, ILRU has interviewed 346 clients with disabilities in the nine counties that comprise the Greater Houston area. One hundred thirty-three clients were referred to appropriate organizations for assistance with food, utilities, housing, transportation, rent, prescription medications, medical, vision and dental services and many other miscellaneous needs. Attorneys at the Southwest ADA Center, a program of ILRU, have helped numerous clients with fair housing and other disability-related legal issues.

“Since beginning the project, ILRU has worked closely with volunteer groups from the area who provide labor for construction projects. Together, we’ve completed 37 ramps and three wheelchair-accessible showers, and widened doors for wheelchair accessibility for three clients,” says Vicki Clayton, recovery assistance project manager at ILRU. “Our clients have all been grateful for the help.”

Rehabilitation Solutions Expands to 200-Plus Participants

More than 200 people attended Rehabilitation Solutions 2011, TIRR Memorial Hermann’s annual advanced case management conference featuring nationally and internationally recognized experts in the field of rehabilitation. This year’s conference was held February 17.

Topics and speakers included “Current Concepts in Sports Medicine” by William Mosi Jones, M.D., assistant professor in the departments of Orthopaedic Surgery and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) Medical School, and attending physician at Memorial Hermann Sports Medicine Institute; “An Overview of Vocational Rehabilitation” by Shaun A. Smith, M.S., C.R.C.; “Implications of Aging in Persons with Disabilities” by Kathleen Murphy, Ph.D., M.S., G.N.P., C.N.S., Suzie Conway Endowed Professor in Nursing at UTHealth; “Pain Management in the Rehabilitation Setting” by Eric Kerstman, M.D., M.P.H.; “Sexual Function and Sexual Health in the Neurogenic Patient” by Sophie Fletcher, M.D., assistant professor, department of Urology, and director of research, Center for...
Dr. Jayne focuses on the diagnosis and treatment of voiding dysfunction, urinary incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse and chronic pelvic pain. His research interests focus on urinary incontinence and novel methods of treating these disorders as well as female sexual dysfunction.

The New Community Opportunities Training and Technical Assistance Center operated by Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), a program of TIRR Memorial Hermann, will promote community-based alternatives to institutionalization and the successful transition of youth with disabilities from school to postsecondary education, employment and independent living. Funded by a...
Lex Frieden Appointed Chancellor’s Health Fellow on Disability

Kenneth I. Shine, M.D., executive vice chancellor for health affairs for The University of Texas System, has appointed disability rights champion Lex Frieden to take on the challenge of enhancing the lives of the 2.8 million Texans with disabilities. Frieden’s appointment as the Chancellor’s Health Fellow on Disability was effective Dec. 1, 2010.

“Only a quarter of Texans with disabilities are working, compared with two-thirds of people without disabilities – and a significant percentage live below poverty,” says Frieden, who was an architect of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and is currently a professor of biomedical informatics and rehabilitation at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth). Frieden uses a wheelchair following a 1967 traffic accident in which his spinal cord was severed.

“Lex Frieden’s vast knowledge in the areas of biomedical informatics, physical medicine and rehabilitation – not to mention his extraordinary leadership in guiding national and international organizations that support people with disabilities – make him an outstanding choice as a Chancellor’s Health Fellow,” Shine said in announcing the appointment. “Frieden’s impressive résumé of activities in this field will be most helpful in maximizing improvements in education, research and patient care among our campuses.”

As the new Chancellor’s Health Fellow on Disability, Frieden’s goals include exploring the use of technology to facilitate independent living among people with disabilities and expanding employment opportunities. To accomplish this, he is working to identify, organize and coordinate disability research resources within the UT System and seek partnerships with other organizations.

Frieden believes university researchers can do a better job of harnessing advanced technology for the benefit of people with disabilities. “Golfers are choosing clubs based on GPS coordinates and measurements of wind velocity. Hobbyists are guiding model airplanes with head movements. Automobile manufacturers are developing sophisticated accident avoidance systems. Smart-phone users are driving virtual race cars by tilting their devices from side to side. At the same time, power wheelchair users are controlling their devices with essentially the same technology that was used to control the devices three decades ago,” he says.

Frieden says research into human-assist robotics is particularly promising and could help people with disabilities and seniors to live more independently in their homes and be more productive in the workplace. “Robotics applications are already being used in rehabilitation centers, and in some countries, robotic exoskeletons are being used in farming and in industry,” he says.

In addition to his duties at UTHealth, Frieden directs the Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) program at TIRR Memorial Hermann, which has served since 1977 as a national center for information, training, research and technical assistance in the area of independent living.

From 1984 through 1988, Frieden served as executive director of the National Council on the Handicapped, now called the National Council on Disability, where he was instrumental in conceiving the ADA. In 2002, he was appointed by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the United States Senate as chairperson of the National Council on Disability, the independent federal agency he directed in the 1980s. He is the author or co-author of more than 60 articles on independent living, disability rights and rehabilitation.

Elementary School Students Design Award-Winning Project to Help Former TIRR Memorial Hermann Patient

A group of 10 fourth and fifth graders from the Lego League Robotics Team at Clear Lake City Elementary School won second place in the annual regional Lone Star Competition by creating an assistive device for former TIRR Memorial Hermann patient Mark Blanchard.
In recognizing the award winners, CourseAvenue noted, “These industry leaders have demonstrated how the use of instructional design and technology can produce eLearning titles in the true spirit of complying with both the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974. These award winners clearly show that the days of creating separate or limited eLearning courses to achieve ADA and Section 508 compliance are over.”

Gerard Francisco, M.D., has been named to the editorial board of the Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine, Foundation for Rehabilitation Information. He served on the editorial board of the second edition of the Textbook of Traumatic Brain Injury, edited by J.M. Silver, T.W. McAllister and S.C. Yudofsky and published by American Psychiatric Publishing Inc. Association in Arlington, VA. In February, Dr. Francisco and two collaborators – Raymond Grill, Ph.D., of UTHealth, and Olivera Nesic, Ph.D., of The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston – received a Mission Connect Research Award from TIRR Foundation for their proposal “Preclinical and Clinical Testing of FDA-approved Compounds for the Treatment of Neuropathic Pain Following Spinal Cord Injury.”

Martin Grabois, M.D., was elected president of the American Academy of Pain Medicine for 2011-2012.

Accolades continues on page 14
On the Move continued from page 11

five-year grant of more than $1.3 million from the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Center will train and equip Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to start and grow community-based services programs. “We’re pleased to bring a new and much-needed initiative to the independent living field,” says Lex Frieden, ILRU director. “When we began developing the Center, our overarching objective was to create a program of training and technical assistance to help CILs advance community services and strengthen their own organizations. We saw the availability of funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as a unique opportunity to create true capacity building.”

“Community alternatives to institutionalization and youth transition programs are vitally important, not only for the disability community but also for the CILs themselves,” says ILRU’s Richard Petty, who is director of the new Center. “They offer CILs some of their best opportunities for expansion and for generation of third-party payments that will move them to self-sustaining operations.” Other organizations targeted by the new Center are agencies eligible to become CILs and Statewide Independent Living Councils.

Accolades continued from page 13

He was also recently elected vice-chair of membership development for the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R), and to the 2010-2011 AAPM&R Pain Council Executive Committee. In addition, he serves as senior editor of the new journal Pain Management. Dr. Grabois attended the AAPM&R annual session in Seattle, where he organized and spoke at two scientific sessions: Lower Back Pain: Evidence-Based Practice Guidelines and Practice Management of Pain Practice. He also co-hosted the UTHealth/Baylor College of Medicine PM&R Alliance alumni party in conjunction with the session. In addition, he attended the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine annual meeting in Montreal, Quebec, in October 2010.

IN THE NEWS


About TIRR Memorial Hermann

TIRR Memorial Hermann is a 119-bed nonprofit rehabilitation hospital located in the Texas Medical Center in Houston. Founded in 1959, TIRR Memorial Hermann has been named one of “America's Best Hospitals” by *U.S. News & World Report* for 21 consecutive years. TIRR Memorial Hermann provides rehabilitation services for individuals with spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, strokes, amputations and neuromuscular disorders.

TIRR Memorial Hermann is one of 11 hospitals in the not-for-profit Memorial Hermann system. An integrated healthcare system, Memorial Hermann is known for world-class clinical expertise, patient-centered care, leading-edge technology and innovation. The system, with its exceptional medical staff and 20,000 employees, serves Southeast Texas and the Greater Houston community.
Philanthropic support helps ensure TIRR Memorial Hermann’s ongoing ability to meet the needs of individuals whose lives have been interrupted by disability. We’re grateful for the generosity of the many organizations and individuals who have supported us in the past and continue to support us through their donations of time, money and effort.

Several are mentioned in this issue. Susan Spencer-Tully, the daughter of TIRR Memorial Hermann founder William A. Spencer, M.D., worked closely with us to establish the William A. Spencer Fund for pediatric outpatients as a bequest in Dr. Spencer’s will. Former patient Jacob Zalewski has made gifts to the Memorial Hermann Foundation through his One Step Closer Foundation for the last three years.

In addition to providing direct support for patient care, philanthropy can expedite the acquisition of equipment to help patients improve coordination, regain mobility and return to active lives. We’re grateful for the generosity of Suzann and Robert Jones, whose donation made possible the purchase of 40 e-readers for the use of our inpatients and outpatients.

We’re particularly proud of Project U.N.I.O.N., which was founded in 2009 by former UTHealth/Baylor College of Medicine Alliance residents who recognized a need in the community for access to durable medical equipment. Today, the program is run by resident Craig DiTommaso, M.D., and supported by former patients, physicians and staff members who share their experience and expertise as volunteers.

Every gift of time or money counts. If you would like to learn more about ways to support our care, research and outreach programs, contact Thom Sloan, senior director of development at the Memorial Hermann Foundation, at 713.242.4400 or by e-mail at thomas.sloan@memorialhermann.org.

Gerard E. Francisco, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer
TIRR Memorial Hermann
Chair, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston