



News release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UTMB's Callender addresses BAHEP membership

BAY AREA HOUSTON, TEXAS – “We’re well on our way to getting back to the level of function we had before the storm,” Dr. David L. Callender told a room full of members of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership during a General Membership Meeting held March 25 at Lakewood Yacht Club in Seabrook, Texas. Callender has been president of the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston since September 2007. Of course, everyone in attendance knew that the storm to which he referred was Hurricane Ike that flooded more than one million square feet of UTMB’s facilities and much of the island and surrounding counties just one year and 13 days after Callender arrived.

Campus recovery is 95% complete, Callender reported. Students returned within two to five weeks following the storm; residents were placed within two weeks; and commencements are on schedule. The Galveston National Laboratory was dedicated on Nov. 11 and boasts \$40 million in new research funding. John Sealy Hospital reopened on Jan. 5, and UTMB’s approximately 80 clinics have had 250,000 patient visits, 6,000 admissions and 2,000 babies delivered post Ike.

A clearer path ahead

On March 10, 2009, the University of Texas System’s Board of Regents voted to rebuild UTMB on the island. Callender outlined a working scenario that will include: modernizing John Sealy Hospital, increasing the number of beds, restoring the trauma center, and adding a new surgical tower. Primary clinics will remain on the island with specialty clinics to be expanded on the mainland.

Moving forward, however, will require approximately \$900 million in state and federal funding as well as philanthropic support. The Sealy & Smith Foundation has already committed \$200 million, and \$500 million in capital costs are expected to be repaid with FEMA reimbursements. Callender stated, “Everything that we do today helps to meet the needs of the future.” According to the UTMB president, future planning includes improving patient access and service quality, strengthening collaborations with colleagues on the mainland, and focusing on student recruitment and retention and on academic innovation. Securing funding for a new education building and a new research building is an important part of the planning process as well.

Callender also told the BAHEP membership that UTMB will focus on recruitment for available positions, rehiring as clinical programs develop. First priority will be given to former employees who

were affected by the reduction in force following the hurricane. He noted that providing competitive salaries will continue to be an important part of the recruiting process.

Closing comments

Following his presentation, Callender opened the floor for questions and comments. City of Houston Council Member Mike Sullivan said, “I want to compliment you, your team, and your leadership on everything you’ve done to recover from the storm. We appreciate what you do, and we’re all pulling for you.”

Bob Mitchell, president of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, added, “True leaders surface following events like Hurricane Ike. Dr. Callender has been such a leader. Thank you, Dr. Callender.” Mitchell also commended Galveston County Judge Jim Yarbrough and Galveston County Commissioner Ken Clark, who were in attendance, for “the great job” they have done in that county on behalf of recovery efforts.

In closing, Callender affirmed, “There are going to be some very interesting opportunities that will come out of this that in the end will make us stronger.” The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston was established in 1891. UTMB’s roots grow deep on Galveston Island, and its work affects Texas, the nation and the world – a world which will no doubt benefit richly from UTMB’s second century of service.



A large gathering of Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership members turned out on March 25 at Lakewood Yacht Club in Seabrook, Texas, to hear a presentation by Dr. David. L. Callender, president of the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.



UTMB President David L. Callender, M.D., was the keynote speaker at the March 25, 2009, General Membership Meeting of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership. He spoke on the state of UTMB's institutions, challenges and opportunities for UTMB locally, regionally and nationally, and exciting programs in which UTMB researchers/educators are involved.

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Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership is a member-driven organization that provides the leadership to stimulate regional economic development and employment in southeast Texas. Its members include more than 260 investor companies, business professionals, local governments, and educational institutions encompassing 13 cities, Galveston and Harris counties, and the Port of Houston Authority. Visit www.bayareahouston.com.

Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program is administered by the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership. It is a State of Texas funded initiative designed to transfer the knowledge and technology of the U.S. Space Program to small businesses to solve technical challenges they are unable to solve themselves. Visit www.spacetechnologies.com/bahep.