Dear Stephanie

"Leadership is the ability to bring out the best in others." I am returning from my first Leadership America session. One of my colleagues shared this statement which made me immediately think about our team and work at THI.

Texas Health Institute has teams of people who are good at bringing the best out of others. Since our last newsletter, we have conducted the Texas Health Home Summit with 270 participants; 8th National Conference on Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations with 650 participants; and the Mountain States Genetics Regional Collaborative Annual Meeting with 85 participants. Our staff, along with wonderful partners have made a difference by doing together what none of us could do alone.

This May, we will be announcing the opportunity for registration for our 7th Annual 16-state Southern Obesity Summit. Meanwhile, The Benefit Bank of Texas just accomplished having brought $5 million in benefits to Texans.

We have new staff we want you to read about in this issue while next month, we will feature our new board members.

As Margaret Mead says, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful and committed people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

Camille D. Miller
President/CEO
Texas Health Institute

Eighth National Conference on Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations

The Eighth National Conference on Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations was held March 11-14, 2013 at
THI’s work in improving the health of Texans!

Email Stephanie Ondrias to plan your next conference or event by THI’s accredited Event team.

Proud Partners:

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the Oakland Marriott City Center in Oakland, CA. The conference was a great success with attendance exceeding 650 participants, maintaining the conference series’ status as the largest conference on cultural competence in health care.

The theme for the 8th National Conference was: Achieving Equity in an Era of Innovation and Health System Transformation. New partnerships between health care organizations and communities, research into improved ways to deliver care, and changes in health care policy are opening up opportunities to achieve equity and the highest quality health care for culturally diverse populations. In this time of transition, practitioners, policy makers, researchers, and advocates for health equity can focus attention on implementation, participation and improving health outcomes for individuals and communities. The 2013 conference offered participants the opportunity to hear from experts and front-line leaders about how diverse populations are affected by:

- state and national reform efforts
- changes to the Medicaid program
- innovative technology for information management and outreach
- social determinants of health
- other practice and financing developments.

This year’s conference theme brought into focus how the forces and areas of opportunity driving health care may be directed to improve the lives and health of diverse patients and communities. Through plenary presentations from knowledgeable experts, small group sessions and structured discussions, participants considered the implications of new state and federal health care policies, private and government-initiated programs to address health care access and quality-including measurement and standards, and new program incentives such as accountable care organizations and patient centered medical homes for diverse populations. As such, the conference provided the opportunity for attendees to learn how to harness potential new resources and develop organizational strategies and partnerships especially in the context of limited resources and uncertain national reforms.

The conference agenda included more than 70 sessions featuring more than 200 presentations from across the country as well as several international presentations. The full agenda, including presentation abstracts, presenter bios, links to presentations, and resource materials, is available online.

The Ninth National Conference on Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations will be held Fall 2014 or Spring 2015, location to be determined. For additional information, or to join the mailing list, please email conference@diversityrx.org.

Mountain States Genetics Regional Collaborative 2012-2013 Annual Meeting

The Mountain States Genetics Regional Collaborative (MSGRC) hosted its 2012-2013 Annual Meeting in Phoenix, AZ on March 17-19, 2013. The agenda included an update on the State of the Region from Dr. Celia Kaye, MSGRC Project Director, and Dr. Kathryn Hassell, MSGRC Associate Project Director. Many of MSGRC’s national partners also presented on their work:

- Secretary’s Advisory Committee on Heritable Disorders in Newborns and Children (SACHDNC), presented by Joseph A. Bocchini, Jr. MD, SACHDNC Chair & Professor and Chairman, Department of Pediatrics, Louisiana State University Health - Shreveport
- National Coordinating Center for the Regional Genetic and Newborn Screening Collaboratives (NCC), presented by Alisha Keehn, MPA, Project Manager, NCC and Debbie Maiese, MPA, Evaluator, NCC
- National Genetics Education and Consumer Network (NGECN) and Genetic Alliance, presented by Sharon Romelczyk, MPA, Project Manager, NGECN
- Newborn Screening Technical Assistance and Evaluation Program (NewSTEPs), presented by Marci Sontag, PhD, Director of Epidemiology, NewSTEPs
- Newborn Screening Translational Research Network (NBSTRN), presented by Amy J. Hoffman, MPH, Project Manager, NBSTRN

Participants also learned about regional activities addressing newborn screening for Critical Congenital Heart Disease during a panel of presentations, including:

- Colorado CCHD Screening Pilot Study, presented by Jason Wright, MD, Neonatology Fellow, University of Colorado School of Medicine
- Utah CCHD Demonstration Grant, presented by Harper Randall, MD, FAAP, Medical Director, Division of Family Health and Preparedness, Utah Department of Health
- Texas Pulse Oximetry Project (TxPOP), presented by Alice Gong, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and Charlieta Guillory, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Neonatology Section, Baylor College of Medicine
Use of Telehealth in CCHD Screening, presented by Robert Puntel, MD, FAAP, FACC, Staff Cardiologist, Phoenix Children’s Hospital

The Annual Meeting also included a number of workgroup and project team meetings, including the following:

- MSGRC Advisory Council
- Consumer Advocacy Workgroup
- Newborn Screening Workgroup with three breakouts (Laboratory, Follow-up, and Point-of-Care Screening)
- Medical Home Workgroup
- Emergency Preparedness Workgroup
- Telegenetics Workgroup
- MSGRC Metabolic Consortium
- MSGRC Hemoglobinopathies Advisory Group

The meeting marked the launch of the MSGRC Facebook page - be sure to "Like" MSGRC here!

MSGRC was honored to co-sponsor the Community Conversation at the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG) Annual Clinical Genetics Meeting, which immediately followed the MSGRC Meeting. The Community Conversation, titled Emerging from Darkness to Shed Light on Genetics and Cultural Taboos in Native American Populations: A Community Conversation was held on the evening of March 19th and was open to public attendees as well as ACMG meeting participants. The tension between the potential knowledge that can be gained through genetics research and medicine, and cultural beliefs within the Native American Populations of the United States, was explored at the inaugural Community Conversation held at the 2009 ACMG Annual Meeting ("Genetics and Genetic Research: Native American Perspectives"). With the release of the documentary, "Sun Kissed," these tensions are further highlighted as one family, the Nez's, works to understand why their children were born with Xeroderma Pigmentosum (XP) and why the prevalence within the Navajo community is 1 in 30,000 versus 1 in one million in the general population. "Sun Kissed" follows the Nez's as they negotiate between the cross-cultural norms of their community and their information and support needs as parents of children with an incurable genetic condition.

The Community Conversation gave attendees an opportunity to view the documentary "Sun Kissed" and participate in a panel discussion with the Nez's and Maya Stark, one of the filmmakers. Dorey and Yolanda Nez are close friends and partners of MSGRC - be sure to check out the trailer for Sun Kissed!

For more information about MSGRC, please visit
Updated Public Health Primer and Obesity Brochure Now Available on THI Website

In 2012, THI completed updates of both the Public Health Primer and an obesity brochure titled "Obesity in Texas: Reaching Epidemic Proportions." Hard copies are available for distribution but the electronic versions are now available on the THI website! You can find the documents at the following links:

Obesity in Texas: Reaching Epidemic Proportions brochure  
Public Health Primer brochure

If you are interested in obtaining hard copies of either report, please contact Liza Creel at lcreel@texashealthinstitute.org.

2013 County Health Rankings Released

The 2013 County Health Rankings were released on March 20, 2013.

"Now in our fourth year, the Rankings show that how long and how well people live depends on multiple factors including rates of smoking, education, and access to healthy food. They also help to lay the groundwork for governors, mayors, business leaders, and citizens across the country to take action to improve health." - County Health Rankings and Roadmaps website

Check out how your county ranks here.

7th Annual Southern Obesity Summit- Save the Date!

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendars for the largest regional obesity prevention event in the nation! Join leaders from across the South. Together, we will focus energy and talent on fighting the obesity epidemic!

7th Annual Southern Obesity Summit  
November 17-19, 2013  
Omni Nashville Downtown  
Nashville, Tennessee

Presented by Texas Health Institute and Nashville’s Mayor Karl Dean’s office
Who will be there? Youth, university researchers, policymakers, leaders from community-based organizations, federal and state government officials, health care providers, nonprofit organizations and members from national and state associations. Workgroups are developing plans around strategies identified during the 2012 SOS in Charlotte, NC. Learn how you can be part of this unprecedented movement and truly make a difference in your state, your community or your school:

- Fast Paced Breakout sessions
- Workgroup meetings
- Cross-state collaboration
- Networking Opportunities
- Best practice model programs

Registration will open in early May! Visit www.southernobesitysummit.org for updates! Questions? Contact Stephanie Ondrias at sondrias@texashealthinstitute.org.

Texas Health Institute (THI) has a new face!

The new website for THI has officially been launched: www.texashealthinstitute.org! For years now, we have been looking to revamp our website to incorporate a more modern look that is user friendly and best reflects all of our hard work. Thank you to Cecilia Lage for all of her time and energy in making our vision a reality! If you have any comments, questions or updates regarding our website, please email Stephanie Ondrias at sondrias@texashealthinstitute.org.

THE TIME IS HERE

FILE YOUR TAXES

RIGHT NOW... FOR FREE

If your household income is $60,000 or less, you can file your taxes through The Benefit Bank of Texas (TBB-TX). There are no fees or charges and electronic filing is available. You can claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit, and
others. If someone is eligible for EITC and hasn't previously filed, they can still receive that money for up to three prior years.

What You Need to File:

- Government issued ID
- Social Security Number(s)
- W2, 1099, 1098
- Last year’s tax return (if available)
- Information about other income
- Deduction and credit information

2 Ways to File:

- Counselor assisted at convenient locations (click here for TBB-TX Locator)
- Self-serve, ready when and where you are (www.TexasFilesFree.org)

The Benefit Bank of Texas Mission is to be a network of caring individuals reaching out to their neighbors where they live, work, play and pray; helping them to find food for their families, health care, prescription assistance, tax credits, financial aid for school, and other student and worker supports. If you would like to be a part of this worthwhile endeavor, please contact us at Ricardo Hernandez, TBB-TX State Director 512.279.3905.

Please join us in welcoming our new THI Staff!

**RICARDO (Rick) HERNANDEZ**  
*Statewide Director*  
**The Benefit Bank of Texas (TBB-TX)**  
Rick retired as the Executive Director of the Texas Commission on the Arts in 2007, after a 27 year tenure. Throughout his career Mr. Hernandez dedicated himself to the provision of high-quality services and the development of the arts and cultural industry in Texas. He brings to the TBB-TX broad knowledge of the state, extensive experience in the provision of services via the internet and a history of raising funds from public and private sources. An artist by training, Rick attributes much of his past success to the observational and analytical problem solving skills inherent in the creative process. Among his major achievements was the development and implementation of the Texas Arts and Cultural Network (TCAnet), the first full service network for the arts on the Internet. Rick’s goal for THI is the full implementation of the TBB-TX from Dalhart to Brownsville, Texarkana to El Paso!

**ANA MARTINEZ**  
*Chief Financial Officer*  
Ana has more than 26 years of professional experience in various
aspects of accounting functions, strategic planning and executive level management, with more than 24 years experience in non-profit organizations. Her experience includes fiscal management of federal, state and local funding; creation of operating reserve funds; establishing accounting systems and software conversion; and extensive audit experience. Ana served as the CFO for the following non profit organizations: Any Baby Can - Austin, Caritas of Austin, Easter Seals-Central Texas, Skillpoint Alliance, Texans War on Drugs and Youth Advocacy.

**MICHELLE ARAIZA**
**Marketing & Events Coordinator**
Michelle currently holds the role of Marketing & Events Coordinator at Texas Health Institute. Michelle has an extensive background of Marketing Healthcare events with e-MDs (EHR software); nonprofit work includes working with Blood and Tissue Center of Central Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Hispanic Women’s Network of Texas Austin Chapter (HWNT) and Women’s Scholarship Organization in Round Rock. Michelle earned a Bachelor’s degree-Marketing concentration at Texas State University and will be continuing her education in Public Health to better serve the community. Michelle is also a proud member of the American Marketing Association- Austin Chapter and enjoys volunteering with local nonprofit organizations regarding Cancer awareness/patient education.

Our mission is to provide leadership to improve the health of Texans and their communities through education, research, and health policy development.

Editorial Board:
**Camille D. Miller, Sherry Wilkie-Conway, Liza Creel, Stephanie Ondrias, Sue Long**

Editors:
**Sherry Wilkie-Conway, Michelle Araiza**

Texas Health Institute (THI) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization focused on the development of health policy solutions to improve the lives of Texans and their communities. From acting as an honest broker and hosting unbiased health policy forums that facilitate dialogue among policymakers and other healthcare stakeholders, to creating a vision of an improved future healthcare system.

The THI newsletter is a monthly publication of Texas Health Institute written to update THI Board of Trustees and Friends of Texas Health Institute.

For e-mail address changes, add or delete requests, or to submit an article for publishing, please e-mail