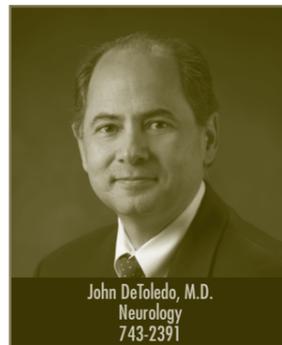
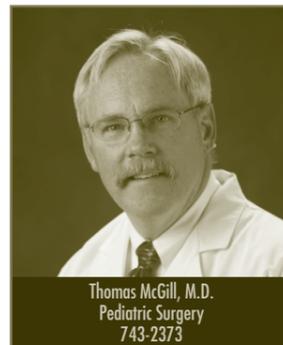
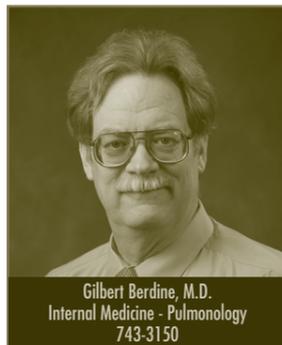
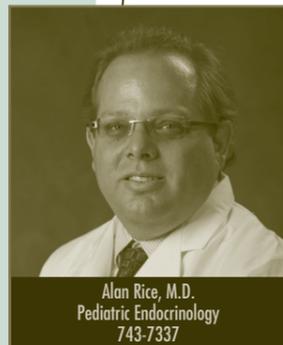
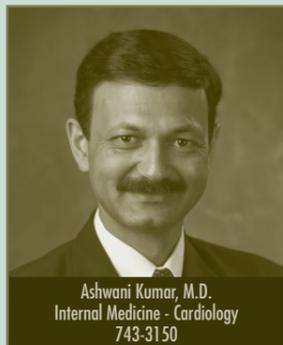


## Welcome to New Texas Tech Physicians



## Is Technology to Thank or to Blame?

By Bill Brooks, District Sales Manager-Assurant Health

Advances in medical technology have changed the way we view heart disease, cancer, broken bones and a host of other medical conditions. New medicines are developed every day that control cholesterol, blood pressure, depression or sexual dysfunction. We are living longer and more productive lives because of these advances. The United States has developed most of the great new medicines and machines like the MRI and CAT scans, chemotherapy, because of the great profit motive. These developments are wonderful for mankind; however, all come with a price tag.

If you were diagnosed with leukemia in 1980 like my father was; you had very limited treatment options. He was given the best chemotherapy of the day, and he lived for almost three more years at a cost of about \$100,000. The good news was health insurance only cost about \$80 a month at that time. Three weeks ago my coworker, who wrote the article for this newsletter last quarter, was diagnosed with the same type of leukemia as my father. He is scheduled for a high tech bone marrow transplant in a couple of weeks. This treatment could actually cure him; however, it will be at a cost of at least \$850,000. The bad news is that health insurance premiums are now around \$450 a month.

If we still had the medical technology of 1980 we would still pay \$100 per month for insurance. However;

we would die or suffer from hundreds of health conditions that are easily treated today. If we were offered a plan that would treat you with 1980 technology at a cost of \$100 a month or a plan that treats you with 2009 technology at \$500 a month, I know I would pay the \$500. If you picked the 1980 plan you realize that you don't have access to a MRI, heart stints, angioplasty, arthroscopic surgeries, most chemotherapy drug, anti-rejection drugs for transplants, cholesterol medication, insulin pumps, and thousands of medications that treat chronic illnesses.

Improvements in medical technology have made our lives better; however, it has also made it much more expensive. There are all kinds of side effects to new drugs and medicines. We take cholesterol and blood pressure medicines instead of exercising and losing weight. We take anti-depressants because we are overweight and feel bad about ourselves. If we go to the emergency room for a stomach ache, it is very likely we will receive a \$2,000 MRI or a CT scan because doctors are afraid of being sued for not doing it.

Medical technology has made many advances in the last two decades. Let us all be thankful for medical opportunities that were once only a vision for the future.

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## UMC unveils DuckTheFlu.com

Each year in the United States, one in five people may get the seasonal flu. More than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications and about 36,000 people die from flu-related causes every year.

"Taking proper precautions, many people can avoid catching the flu or spreading it," said Greg Bruce, vice president of corporate services for UMC Health System. "We want to help our community be informed this flu season, and help keep people safe and healthy. That's why we've unveiled **DuckTheFlu.com** to provide local information on vaccines and a central place for prevention tips."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends yearly seasonal flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against seasonal influenza. The seasonal flu vaccine protects against the three seasonal viruses that research suggests will be most common.

"Vaccination is especially important for people at high risk of serious flu complications, including young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older," said Dr. Joe Sasin, medical director of UMC's Emergency Center.

"The CDC recommends people get the flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available in their community," Bruce said. "Through the **DuckTheFlu.com**, UMC will provide real time updates on the availability of vaccines at PNS clinics."

Prevention of exposure to the flu virus is key to avoiding developing the flu. Sasin offers these tips:

- **Cover nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough. Throw away the tissue after you use it.
- **Wash hands often with soap and water**, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.

Welcome To Family Medical Care

# Brian J. Leffler, M.D.,

## Family Practice Physician

- Sports Medicine Fellow, Baton Rouge (La.) General Medical Center
- Family Medicine Residency, St. Vincent Indianapolis (Ind.) Hospital
- Indiana University School of Medicine

*Joining Dr. Mario H. Guel at Plainview's Family Medical Care, Dr. Leffler is your newest hometown physician.*



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