



## Career Pathways in Healthcare Edinburg, Texas

February 23, 2022



**DHRHealth**  
Institute for Research  
and Development

REGION ONE ESC  
GEAR UP  
COLLEGE READY CHARTER

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Presents a Research Conference:

### Career Pathways in Healthcare

Region One Education Service Center  
February 23, 2022

The South Texas Academy for Education and Training in Research, DHR Health Institute for Research and Development, in partnership with Region One Education Service Center *GEAR UP College Ready—Career Set* and *GEAR UP College Now—Career Connected*, organized a one-day conference to address the evolving workforce challenges in healthcare in the nation and in the Rio Grande Valley. Topics included were careers in medicine, clinical and translational research, nursing, allied health, laboratory sciences, medical informatics, and pharmacy.

Over 120 educators, including classroom teachers, counselors, campus and district administrators, career and technical education directors, and GEAR UP facilitators attended the conference. Attendees listened to informative lectures provided by several members of the DHR team, including Dr. Sohail Rao, Dr. Lisa Trevino, Dr. R. Armour Forse, Dr. Janete Sheiner, Dr. J. Malcolm Barney, Mr. Dennis Davis, and Dr. Manish Singh. In addition, Mr. Frank Ambriz, Director of Physician Assistant Studies at UTRGV and Dr. Ron Ozuna, Assistant Dean, College of Pharmacy, University of Houston, presented to attendees and Dr. Monica Betancourt-Garcia of DHR Health moderated the event. Ms. Melissa Eddy, Program Manager, played a critical role in organizing this event.

Key objectives of the conference included:

1. To foster a better understanding of the public health crisis and need for health care workers;
2. To share information about various career pathways in healthcare;
3. To provide the most updated resources to share with students

Attendee feedback on both the event and the electronic “Career Pathways in Healthcare” handbook that was distributed was extremely positive. Conference attendees commented that “*firsthand information from doctors on careers in high demand in our area*” was especially useful and that they were impressed by “*the professionalism of the event*” and the “*knowledge of the presenters.*” The “Career Pathways in Healthcare” handbook was praised as a “*fantastic tool*” that is “*easy to navigate, understand, and share with students.*” Attendees said the handbook is “*user-friendly, very informative, concise, and detailed.*” Handbook information on “*salaries specific to the careers, the different pathways that students can pursue after high school,*” and “*the number of opportunities that kids have*” were all identified as highly useful information. One hundred percent of survey respondents reported that they were “*very satisfied*” with the event and that they would participate in future events presented by DHR Health Institute for Research and Development.





## Thinking About Abandoning the Mask?

Breaking Down the  
CDC's New Guidelines  
in the Era of COVID-19

SARS-CoV-2 has infected over 434 million and has claimed the lives of over 5.9 million people worldwide (1). In the United States, over 78.9 million have been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and over 948,000 people have died from COVID-19. Since the issuance of the first Emergency Use Authorization by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the use of Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 mRNA vaccine on December 11, 2020, over 215 million people have been fully vaccinated in United States and over 94 million have received a booster dose (2, 3). Despite of these accomplishments, in the last 28 days, in the United States, over 4.6 million people have been infected with this virus with over 61,000 deaths reported (1). COVID-19 is by far the worst pandemic that the world has witnessed and given the recent data, there appears to be no immediate reprieve in sight.

In an attempt to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, CDC has issued several guidelines which included wearing of masks in public gatherings (4, 5). Despite of all the evidence that masks are critical to lessen the spread of respiratory viruses such as SARS-CoV-2, the wearing of face masks has become one of the most contentious issues in the United States (6-8). On May 18, 2021, Texas Governor Greg Abbott issued an executive order prohibiting government entities from mandating masks (9). Since then, with the exception of healthcare facilities, and despite CDC guidelines to the contrary, many organizations have abolished the mandate for indoor masking. Consequently, many states in the United States have or will in the very near future eliminate the mandate for indoor masks as well as in the schools (10).

On Friday, February 25, CDC announced updated guidance on COVID-19 prevention and masking with a new framework for measuring community transmission of the disease. The new guidance means that a substantial portion of the U.S. population will no longer be advised to wear a mask in public and in indoor settings (11). Most of the CDC's changes are based on its community level tool, which measures COVID risks in every US and Puerto Rican counties and helps individuals determine the amount of protection they should use depending on where they live, go to work or school, and travel. ...

It must be recognized that all four counties (Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy, and Starr) in the Rio Grande Valley are considered high risk for COVID-19 transmission. In fact, the four surrounding counties of Kenedy, Brooks, Jim Hogg and Zapata are also considered high risk .....

We strongly endorse CDC's recommendations and request that people in the Valley use their personal discretion in the use of mask in indoor and public settings. This is particularly important for individuals who are unvaccinated and/or immunocompromised and are at high risk for getting infected with SARS-CoV-2.

Read the Full Article at DHR Proceedings: <https://www.dhrproceedings.org/index.php/DHRP/article/view/40/30>

# Upcoming Research: The WISDOM Study

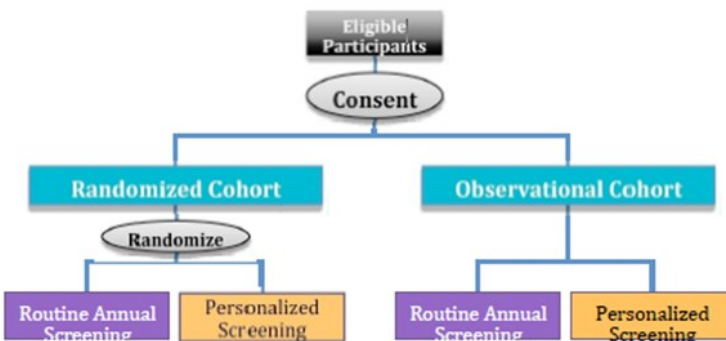
DHR Health Institute for Research and Development in coordination with the University of California San Francisco will soon be enrolling for The Wisdom Study (Women Informed to Screen Depending On Measures of Risk). This study is a pragmatic, preference-tolerant randomized controlled trial (RCT) in which the purpose of this study is to test personalized screening, a new approach for breast cancer screenings, compared to routine annual screenings.

Personalized screening is a new screening schedule based on a woman's individual health circumstances which are assessed at the screening visit, such as personal and family history. It is based on the mammography screening guidelines recommended by the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF).

Routine annual screening beginning at age 40 is the current guideline that most physicians follow and is recommended by various groups of medical professionals such as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Radiology, and the American Medical Association.

After education about the study, participants will be asked to choose between randomization or self-assignment. Women who consent to randomization will be enrolled and randomized equally between the two arms- annual screening and personalized screening. Please see the info graphic below.

For additional information please contact the Primary Contact for this study, Angela Varela-Espinosa at Email: [a.varela@dhr-rgv.com](mailto:a.varela@dhr-rgv.com) or Phone: 956-362-2367.



## DHR Health Receives FDA Approval to Offer Fourth Dose of Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine



Edinburg, TX (February 7, 2022) – DHR Health Institute for Research & Development has been granted Expanded Access by the FDA to offer fourth dose of Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. DHR Health Institute for Research & Development is the first and only entity in the US which has received formal approval from the FDA to administer the fourth dose of this vaccine.

“Recent clinical studies in Israel and other European countries have provided scientific evidence that the fourth dose of Pfizer COVID-19 mRNA vaccine affords enhanced protection against the Omicron variant” said Sohail Rao, MD, MA, DPhil, President and CEO, DHR Health Institute for Research & Development. “Given that Omicron is the dominant variant which is responsible for the current spike in COVID-19 cases in the US, we are pleased to offer this option to continue to keep our community safe”

**To qualify for the fourth dose, you must be a healthcare worker, or above the age of 65 years, or have an immunocompromised status. The fourth dose can be administered 90 days after the third dose of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. If you have been recently diagnosed with COVID-19, you can also receive the fourth dose 21 days after complete resolution of your symptoms.** As part of this protocol, the level of antibodies against the virus that causes COVID-19 will also be measured in the blood before administering the fourth dose and at frequent intervals thereafter and the results of these tests will be provided to the patient in a timely manner.

If you or your patient is interested to receive the fourth dose, please call 956-362-2392 or 956-362-2387; or send an email [dhrresearch@dhr-rgv.com](mailto:dhrresearch@dhr-rgv.com); or fax with relevant patient information to 956-362-2383

Cont. on pg. 4





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## **Q&A:     **FOURTH** DOSE OF PFIZER OR MODERNA COVID-19 mRNA VACCINE**

**Q:     Why get the fourth dose of Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 mRNA vaccine?**

**A:     Recent evidence from clinical studies have shown that the best protection against the current pandemic due to Omicron variant is afforded by getting a fourth dose of Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 mRNA vaccine 90 days after the third dose of the vaccine**

**Q:     Is this treatment approved by the FDA?**

**A:     Yes, FDA has reviewed the protocol and after much deliberations extended an Expanded Access Authorization. DHR Health Institute for Research & Development is the first and only entity in the US which has received formal approval from the FDA to administer the fourth dose.**

**Q:     Which vaccine will be used for this protocol:**

**A:     Pfizer (Comirnaty; Pfizer/BioNTech) or Moderna COVID-19 mRNA vaccine will be used for the fourth dose**

**Q:     Who would qualify for fourth dose of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 mRNA vaccine?**

**A:     The following individuals would qualify for the fourth dose:**

- ≥18 years of age
- Healthcare worker, and/or
- ≥65 years of age, and/or
- Immunocompromised
- ≥90 days after the third dose of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine
- ≥30 days after receiving EVISHELD™

**Q:     Where will the treatment be administered?**

**A:     Under controlled condition, the fourth dose will be administered in a “safe” zone in the DHR Health Institute for Research & Development**

**Q:     Is there any cost to the subjects?**

**A:     COVID-19 vaccine is available free-of-cost. However, there is standard cost for administering the vaccine and post-vaccine monitoring. This is billed to insurance or third party and/or to the patient**

**Treatment Site:**

**DHR HEALTH INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT  
5323 S. MCCOLL ROAD, EDINBURG**

**For more information or to refer your patient please call: 956-362-2392 or 956-362-2387; or send an email to [dhrrresearch@dhr-rgv.com](mailto:dhrrresearch@dhr-rgv.com); or fax relevant patient information to 956-362-2383**



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## **INFORMACIÓN SOBRE LA 4ª DOSIS DE LA VACUNA DE PFIZER O MODERNA PARA COVID-19**

P: ¿Conviene recibir la 4ª dosis?

R: Las pruebas de los estudios clínicos han demostrado que la mejor protección contra la pandemia actual debida a la variante Omicron se consigue recibiendo una cuarta dosis de Pfizer o Moderna COVID-19 mRNA vacuna 90 días después de la tercera dosis de la vacuna.

P: ¿Este tratamiento está aprobado por la FDA?

R: Sí, la FDA ha revisado el protocolo y después de muchas deliberaciones extendió una Autorización de Acceso Expandido. El Instituto de Investigación y Desarrollo de DHR es la primer y única entidad en los EUA que recibió aprobación de la FDA para administrar la cuarta dosis.

P: ¿Qué vacuna se utilizará en este estudio?

R: La vacuna COVID-19 de ARNm de Pfizer (Comirnaty; Pfizer/BioNTech) y Moderna se utilizará para la 4ª dosis

P: ¿Quién puede recibir la cuarta dosis de Pfizer o Moderna?

R: Las siguientes personas podrían recibir la 4ª dosis:

- $\geq 18$  años de edad
- Trabajadores de la salud Y/O
- Inmunocomprometidos Y/O
- $\geq 65$  años de edad
- Deben haber pasado 90 días desde la 3ª dosis de Pfizer o Moderna
- $\geq 30$  días después de recibir EVUSHELD

P: ¿Dónde se administrará la vacuna?

R: La cuarta dosis se administrará en el DHR Health Institute for Research & Development

P: ¿Tiene algún costo para participar?

R: La vacuna COVID-19 es gratuita. Sin embargo, existe un costo estándar para la administración de la vacuna y el monitoreo post-vacunación. Esto se factura al seguro o a una tercera parte y/o al paciente.

### **Sitio de Vacunación:**

**DHR HEALTH INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT**  
**5323 S. MCCOLL ROAD, EDINBURG**

Para más información, llame por teléfono: **956-362-2392** o **956-362-2387**

También puede ponerse en contacto con nosotros por correo electrónico en:

**[dhresearch@dhr-rgv.com](mailto:dhresearch@dhr-rgv.com)**; o envíe por fax la información relevante del paciente a 956-362-2383

# Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Colorectal cancer (CRC) starts in the colon or the rectum where cells grow out of control. Colon is identified as the large intestine and the rectum is the passageway that connects the colon to the anus. Some abnormal growths called polyps may form over time and could turn into cancer. Screening tests are done and can identify the polyps before they turn into cancer for removal. Your risk for colorectal cancer will increase as you get older, but other risk factors include:

- Inflammatory bowel disease (Such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis)
- Personal or family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps.
- Genetic syndrome such as familial adenomatous polyposis or hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer.
- Lack of regular physical activity
- Diet low in fruit and vegetables.
- Overweight and obesity.
- Alcohol consumption and tobacco use.

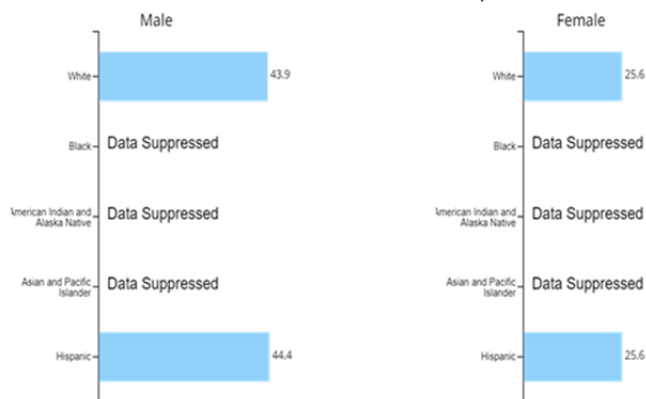
One of the most effective ways to combat and reduce your risk of colorectal cancer is to begin screening routinely at age 45. The two main objectives for Colorectal Cancer screening are for early detection to improve survival, in addition to prevention of CRC through the removal of the polyp. Colonoscopies are going to allow for the gastroenterologist to visually inspect the entire GI tract.

At DHR Health Institute for Research and Development, a current study called Sample Collection Study for the CellMax Life Circulating Tumor Cell and Circulating Tumor DNA Platforms for the Early Detection of Colorectal Cancer and Adenomas, short named CellMax involves recruitment of newly diagnosed patients with the goal to develop a blood test for colon cancer screening and prevention. With the advancement of research, we hope to help efforts in our local community by giving access to new diagnostic tools. For further information, please reach out to: Odalys Salinas, Clinical Research Study Coordinator: at Email: [oda.salinas@dhr-rgv.com](mailto:oda.salinas@dhr-rgv.com), Phone: 956-362-2384.

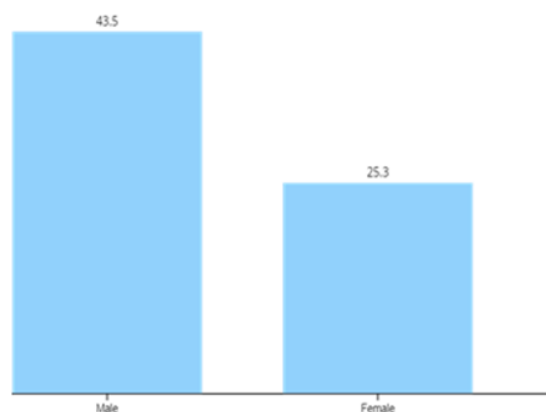
Information was taken from the CDC website and American Society of Clinical Oncology

## Rate of New Cancers, All Races and Ethnicities, Both Sexes: Colon and Rectum

### Rate of New Cancers By Sex and Race and Ethnicity Colon and Rectum,



Source - U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group. U.S. Cancer Statistics Data Visualizations Tool, based on 2020 submission data (1999-2018): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Cancer Institute; <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dataviz>, released in June 2021.



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## Research Team Spotlight: Alejandra Chapa



Meet Alejandra Chapa. She serves as a Clinical Research Coordinator for studies in the Border Biorepository at DHR Health Institute for Research and Development.

Alejandra obtained a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences from The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Additionally, Alejandra is pursuing her double Masters of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. She was also a research student with Partnership for Research and Education in Materials Science (PREM) at UTRGV and a research student with Materials Research Science and Engineering Centers (MRSEC) NSF at The University of Minnesota.

Alejandra is bilingual and enjoys reading, running, and spending time with family and friends. We are so happy to have Alejandra as a part of our research team.

Email: [a.chapa@dhr-rgv.edu](mailto:a.chapa@dhr-rgv.edu)

## Investigator Spotlight: Carlos Garcia-Cantu



Dr. Carlos Garcia-Cantu is board certified in general surgery and surgical critical care, providing surgical care for a broad range of diseases and disorders. With over 31 years of experience, Dr. Garcia specializes in breast, hernia, vascular and trauma surgery.

Dr. Garcia received his medical degree from Universidad de Monterrey. He conducted internal medicine residency training at Mount Vernon Hospital-New York Medical College. He also completed general surgery residency training at New York Medical College Cabrini Medical Center. Dr. Garcia conducted a surgical critical care fellowship at Lincoln Hospital Center-New York Medical College. Dr. Garcia is the principal investigator on several research initiatives at DHR Health Institute for Research and Development.

## New Additions to the DHR Health Institute for Research and Development Team



Edgar Lopez Pacheco  
*Lead Clinical Research Coordinator—  
Oncology*

Email: [ed.lopez@dhr-rgv.com](mailto:ed.lopez@dhr-rgv.com)  
Office Phone: 956-362-2390



Angela Varela-Espinosa  
*Compliance Manager*  
Email: [a.varela@dhr-rgv.com](mailto:a.varela@dhr-rgv.com)  
Office Phone: 956-362-2367



DHR Proceedings is one of the premier peer-reviewed health sciences journals in general and specialty medicine. It is the first such scientific journal to be published in the Rio Grande Valley. DHR Proceedings is sponsored by DHR Health Institute for Research & Development and invites submission from authors in the region and worldwide.

DHR Proceedings can be accessed at: <https://dhrproceedings.org/index.php/DHRP/index>

**DHR Proceedings is currently welcoming submissions for a publication date in the spring of 2022.**



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5323 S. McColl Rd. | Edinburg, TX 78539 | (956)362-2390  
4770 N. Expwy. 77 Ste. 305B | Brownsville, TX 78526 | (956)362-2390  
[dhrresearch@dhr-rgv.com](mailto:dhrresearch@dhr-rgv.com) | [www.dhrresearch.org](http://www.dhrresearch.org)



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