



**DHR Health**  
Institute for Research  
and Development

To Discover | To Innovate | To Excel

May 2022

# THE RESEARCH SPECTATOR

## A MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR THE INNOCENT VICTIMS OF UVALDE...WE STAND WITH YOU!



DHR Health physicians, team members, and community partners gathered today to pray and show our support for the victims, their families, educators, healthcare workers, first responders, and students affected by the tragedy that occurred at Robb Elementary in Uvalde, Texas.



# DHR HEALTH BREAST CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IS SELECTED TO LEAD A STATE-WIDE EFFORT IN AGROUNDBREAKING BREAST CANCER

The Breast Center of Excellence at DHR Health and the Cancer Research Center at DHR Health Institute for Research and Development have been selected to lead an innovative breast cancer study – WISDOM (**W**omen **I**nformed to **S**creen **D**epending on **M**easure of risk). The overall study is funded by the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute and the National Cancer Institute and local funding will support the DHR launch under the direction of Dr. Lisa Chapa, a board-certified surgeon and breast cancer oncologist at DHR Health, this study aims to recruit women of diverse backgrounds across the entire State of Texas.

“Despite advances in the past three decades, breast cancer remains the second leading cause of cancer deaths for women in the United States,” said Lisa Chapa, MD, director, DHR Health Breast Center of Excellence. “The incidence of breast cancer in women of Hispanic ethnicity is higher than in general population and it is vital to involve minorities in this trailblazing longitudinal study. We are pleased that we will be working with the WISDOM team of investigators and community groups to offer this opportunity that we are the sole site and will be offering this opportunity to all women in the State of Texas.”

“Having a standard for risk assessment with tailored screening recommendations for all women will be an important step forward in reducing these cancer disparities,” said Sohail Rao, MD, MA, DPhil, president and chief executive office, DHR Health Institute for Research & Development. “To maximize the impact of this clinical study and to benefit all women in the State of Texas, we will be seeking funding from the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) in the Prevention and Early Detection program.”

## —THE WISDOM MOVEMENT—

The WISDOM Study wants to try something different. What if instead of screening every woman the same, we assess each woman’s risk and create a personalized screening plan just for her based on personal risk and lifestyle factors?

### How it Works

-  **1 PERSONALIZED RISK ASSESSMENT**  
Fill out a personalized risk assessment, with questions on family history and other demographics.
-  **2 GENETIC TESTING**  
Participants have the option of joining the Annual Study Group, or the Personalized Study Group.  
  
Those who join the Personalized Group will complete a saliva based genetic test and learn their genetic risk for breast cancer.
-  **3 RECOMMENDATION**  
Receive your WISDOM Study recommendation about your breast cancer risk, and when and how often to have your mammogram.

Cont. on pg. 3

“Most women spend 30 to 35 years getting breast screenings,” said Laura Esserman, MD, a University of California San Francisco professor of surgery and radiology and the national principal investigator of this study. “So, we recommend that women in Texas join the WISDOM study and spend the next 5 years helping us create a better future where we can learn how best to target both screening and prevention. Now, more than ever it’s important for women to understand their personal risk and to know how often they should screen.”

To join this landmark study, please visit: [JOIN WISDOM STUDY](#) or call (956)362-2367 or email [wisdom@dhr-rgv.com](mailto:wisdom@dhr-rgv.com).

Be one of the 100,000 women helping transform breast cancer detection.  
Join the **WISDOM Study**

Founded by internationally recognized doctors and researchers at the University of California, and in partnership with DHR Health Institute for Research & Development and the Breast Center for Excellence, DHR Health, the WISDOM Study is on a mission to find the best way to detect breast cancer, so all women can live healthier lives — free of breast cancer.

**Who Can Join**

- Identify as female
- Are between the ages of 40 - 74
- Live in Texas
- Have not had breast cancer or ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS)

For questions call (956) 362-2367 or scan QR code.



**DHR Health**  
Institute for Research and Development



## Visit by LLS South Central Texas Region



Regional representatives from the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) visited DHR Health Institute for Research & Development and the Renaissance Cancer Foundation to discuss areas of mutual interest and collaboration. With the mission to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. LLS funds lifesaving blood cancer research around the world, provides free information and support services, and is the voice for all blood cancer patients seeking access to quality, affordable, coordinated care. LLS will be working collaboratively with the Cancer Research Center, DHR Health Institute for Research & Development, the Renaissance Cancer Foundation, and the Advanced Care Center at DHR Health to assist blood cancer patients their families and caregivers in providing financial, peer-to-peer and other support. To learn more about the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society: <https://www.lls.org/>

Unique to most healthcare foundations in South Texas, the Renaissance Cancer Foundation helps patients by empowering them to use the financial assistance provided to meet their most pressing, immediate needs. From medical and home utility bills, to lodging and transportation costs, the Renaissance Cancer Foundation helps cover the burdening everyday expenses that come with a life-changing disease like cancer. Also, the Patient Navigation team plays a vital role in guiding patients to all resources available through an array of local, state, and federal assistance programs. To learn more about the Renaissance Cancer Foundation: <https://renaissancecancerfoundation.org/>



(Pictured L-R): [Evelyn Saenz](#), Director of Operations at the Renaissance Cancer Foundation; [Kersten Haile](#), Campaign Development Director at The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society; [Jessica Villarreal](#), Campaign Manager at Leukemia & Lymphoma Society; [Sohail Rao, M.D., M.A.](#), President & CEO at the DHR Health Institute for Research & Development; [Clarissa Flores](#), Regional Executive Director at The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society; and [Elizabet Ramirez](#), BSN, RN, Director at the DHR Health Advanced Care Center

# DHR Health Institute for Research and Development is Now Offering Bebtelovimab Monoclonal Antibody for Outpatient Treatment of Patients Infected with SARS-CoV-2

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to permit the emergency use of the unapproved product Bebtelivomab for the treatment of mild to moderate coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID19) in adults and pediatric patients with positive results of direct SARS CoV-2 viral testing who are 12 years of age and older weighing at least 40 kg, and who are at high risk for progressing to severe COVID-19 and/or hospitalization. This study has now been approved by the DHR Health Institute for Research and Development IRB.

SARS-CoV-2 can cause a serious or life-threatening disease or condition, including severe respiratory illness, to humans infected by this virus. Based on the totality of scientific evidence available to FDA, it is reasonable to believe that Bebtelivomab may be effective in treating mild to moderate COVID-19 in adults and pediatric patients with positive results of direct SARS-CoV-2 viral testing who are 12 years of age and older.

In clinical trials, a lower proportion of subjects treated with Bebtelivomab progressed to COVID-19-related hospitalization or emergency room visits within 28 days after treatment compared to placebo-treated subjects. The risk reduction was greater in participants at higher risk of hospitalization according to the high-risk criteria.

High risk in adults is defined as patients who meet at least one of the following criteria: a body mass index (BMI)  $\geq$  35, pregnancy, chronic kidney disease, diabetes, immunosuppressive disease, currently receiving immunosuppressive treatment, >65 years of age, or >55 years of age WITH cardiovascular disease, OR hypertension, OR chronic obstructive pulmonary disease/other chronic respiratory disease.

Pediatric patients are defined as 12-17 years of age. High risk in pediatric patients is defined as patients who meet at least one of the following criteria: BMI >85th percentile for their age and gender based on CDC growth charts, [https://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/clinical\\_charts.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/clinical_charts.htm), sickle cell disease, congenital or acquired heart disease, neurodevelopmental disorders, for example, cerebral palsy, a medical-related technological dependence, for example, tracheostomy, gastrostomy, or positive pressure ventilation (not related to COVID-19), asthma, or reactive airway or other chronic respiratory disease that requires daily medication for control.

If you are interested in this study, please contact DHR Health Urgent Care at (956) 362-5030 or call the DHR Health Institute for Research and Development at 956-362-2390.



**ATTENTION**

**USE OF BEBTELOVIMAB MONOCLONAL ANTIBODY IN PATIENTS WHO ARE AT HIGH RISK FOR PROGRESSING TO SEVERE COVID-19 AND/OR HOSPITALIZATION**

**SCREENING CRITERIA**

**Inclusion Criteria:**

- COVID-19 Positive (PCR or Rapid Antigen Test)
- Mild-Moderate COVID-19 with High Risk for Progression to Severe COVID-19 (including hospitalization or death)
- Adults
- Pediatric: >12 years of age (weighing at least 40 kg)
- < 5 days from the start of the symptoms and/or positive diagnosis

**Exclusion Criteria:**

- Hospitalized due to COVID-19
- Require oxygen therapy and/or respiratory support due to COVID-19, OR
- Increase in baseline oxygen flow rate and/or respiratory support due to COVID-19 and are on
- chronic oxygen and/or respiratory support due to underlying non-COVID-19 related comorbidity

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, CALL URGENT CARE AT: (956) 362-5030 or (956) 362-2390**



# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Engaging in community service provides the Research Institute with the opportunity to become active members of our community and has a lasting, positive impact on society at large. Community service or volunteerism enables us to provide a service to those who need it most.

The following are events from May.

## Walk a Mile In Her Shoes 5k



## Adopt a Park



## DHR Health Blood Drive



## Region One Family Engagement Regional Conference



# TRAUMA AWARENESS MONTH

During the Trauma Awareness Month, Dr. Monica Betancourt-Garcia, MD, Scientific Director, Center of Excellence for Trauma Research in the Border Region was recognized as a "Trauma Superstar" for her continued efforts in working collaboratively with the physicians, surgeons, residents and staff in our Level 1 Trauma Center.

Monica plays a vital role in enhancing our ongoing efforts in generation of new knowledge that informs the practice of evidence-based medicine in our Level 1 Trauma Program.

To learn about the Trauma Level 1 program at DHR Health: <https://trauma.dhrhealth.com/>



To learn more about DHR Health Institute for Research & Development: [www.dhrresearch.org](http://www.dhrresearch.org)

# Expert Panel Event

## COVID-19 – Past, Present, and Future: Strategies to Mitigate Its Impact on Education & Psychosocial Development of Students

DHR Health Institute for Research and Development and DHR Health, in partnership with Region One Education Service Center, hosted a free virtual community event for educators and community members across the state of Texas entitled, “COVID-19 – Past, Present, and Future: Strategies to Mitigate Its Impact on Education and Psychosocial Development of Students” on May 25, 2022. Over 100 people attended the two hour meeting, including representatives from 23 school districts, IDEA Public Schools, St. James School of Medicine, UT-Health, DHR, and the Department of Health and Human Services. The event was moderated by Dr. Sohail Rao, MD, MA, DPhil, who directed community-generated questions to a panel of medical experts that included Dr. James Castillo, Cameron County Health Authority; Ricardo Garcia, infectious disease specialist; Dr. Marissa Gomez-Martinez, Physician Advisor, DHR Health, Edinburg CISD School-Based Health Center; Dr. Ivan Melendez, Hidalgo County Health Authority; and Vanessa Vale-Saenz, MA, LPC-S, Vice President, Behavioral Health Services, DHR Health. Participants in the conference stated that they were “grateful for the very important information and insight shared by the experts.”

To view this event, please visit this website: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Piuw7FadM\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Piuw7FadM_0)




**COVID-19 - PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE:**  
STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE ITS IMPACT ON EDUCATION & PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS

Join us for this free community event hosted by Region One in conjunction with DHR Health Institute for Research and Development as our panel of experts answer your questions regarding COVID-19.

**DATE** MAY 25, 2022  
**TIME** 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM  
**LOCATION** REGION ONE ESC OR VIRTUALLY  
1900 W. SCHUNIOR  
EDINBURG, TX 78541  
**DISTRICT PERSONNEL** REGISTER FOR WORKSHOP # 231472

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS SCAN TO REGISTER**



### EXPERT PANEL




**MODERATOR: DR. SOHAIL RAO**  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF DHR HEALTH INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

 <b>DR. IVAN MELENDEZ</b> HIDALGO COUNTY HEALTH AUTHORITY	 <b>DR. MARISSA GOMEZ-MARTINEZ</b> PHYSICIAN ADVISOR, DHR HEALTH, EDINBURG CISD SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTER	 <b>DR. JAMES CASTILLO</b> CAMERON COUNTY HEALTH AUTHORITY	 <b>VANESSA VALE SAENZ, MA, LPC-S</b> VICE PRESIDENT, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES, DHR HEALTH	 <b>DR. RICARDO GARCIA</b> INFECTIOUS DISEASE SPECIALIST
---	---	---	---	---

FOR QUESTIONS OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT: JACQUELINE HANDEK, BSN, RN | (505) 894-4210 | JHANDEK@DHRH.NET



## Research Team Spotlight:

### Greg Pequeño, MS



Greg Pequeño serves as a Trauma Data Analyst at the DHR Health Institute for Research and Development. He holds a Master of Science degree in Business Analytics from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Greg has experience as an Intelligence Analyst for the United States Army and has completed the Data Science Immersive program at the Divergence Academy in Dallas, TX. His hobbies include playing guitar, woodworking, and reading books.

You can reach Greg at [g.pequeno@dhr-rgv.com](mailto:g.pequeno@dhr-rgv.com)

## Investigator Spotlight:

### Lisa Chapa, MD



Dr. Lisa Chapa, a McAllen native, is a Board-Certified General Surgeon at DHR Health General Surgery Institute and serves as the Director of the Breast Center of Excellence at DHR Health. With experience in providing patients with compassionate care, her specialty is caring for patients with breast cancer as well as those with benign conditions of the breast that warrant surgery.

She also evaluates and cares for patients who are at increased risk of developing breast cancer due to genetic mutations or a history of high risk lesions discovered through biopsy.

Dr. Chapa graduated from medical school at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas and completed her General Surgery Residency at Baylor Scott & White hospital in Temple, Texas. She returned to the Rio Grande Valley to care for her own family and friends after completing her surgical fellowship in Breast Surgical Oncology.

## New Additions to the Team



Xochitl Lopez  
*Program Coordinator*  
South Texas Academy for Education and Training in Research



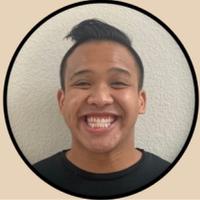
Erica Ortiz  
*Advanced Nurse Practitioner*



Janel Placencia  
*Registrar*



Bill Pope  
*Healthcare Intern*



Thao A Khuc  
*Healthcare Intern*



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.**



**DHRHealth**  
Institute for Research  
and Development

To Discover | To Innovate | To Excel

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)



| @DHRResearch

DHR Health Institute for Research and Development is a non-profit organized under the Federal IRS Tax Code 501(c)(3)