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The University of Arizona  
Health Sciences



Dr. Joe G.N. "Skip"  
Garcia

## UA President Hart and UA Senior VP for Health Sciences Dr. Garcia Share UAHS Progress, Goals at Nov. 19 Regents Meeting

The University of Arizona Health Sciences, through its partnerships with Banner Health and other health-care allies throughout the state, is strategically working to address health-care shortages, health disparities and improving health throughout the state, the border region, nationally and internationally.

The University of Arizona Health Sciences is making major strides in health professions education and improving health throughout the state through innovation and discovery, UA leaders reported to the Arizona Board of Regents Thursday.

UA presenters President Ann Weaver Hart and Senior Vice President for Health Sciences Dr. Joe G.N. "Skip" Garcia discussed the University's groundbreaking partnership with Banner Health and strategic investments in people, programs and infrastructure that are bringing UAHS national recognition as a high-performing academic health center.

Dr. Hart began with an operational and financial review of the UA and outlined accomplishments made under the UA "Never Settle" strategic plan, including successes resulting from the academic affiliation with Banner Health and its subsequent significant capital investments to support UA medical research and education, both in Tucson and Phoenix.

Dr. Garcia provided the Regents with an overview of advances made by UA Health Sciences, highlighting the contributions of the health sciences colleges to educating Arizona's health-care providers and to increasing the diversity of UAHS health professions students and Arizona's health-care workforce.

In order to successfully reduce Arizona's significant health disparities and improve community health throughout the state, the border region, nationally and internationally, Dr. Garcia said, UAHS is working to become a national leader in health sciences training of a diverse faculty, staff, student body and health-care workforce. UAHS is making progress, with above-national percentages of Latino and Native American students entering the UA Health Sciences colleges in 2015. There is substantial literature that underscores the fact that minority health professionals are much more likely to treat minority patients and to serve in rural and underserved areas, he said. The shortage of physicians, nurses and other health-care professionals has been magnified by the Affordable Care Act, he continued, and the movement toward a new model of interprofessional

education is part of UAHS efforts to build the best health-care teams possible to meet the challenges of health-care delivery, research and education.

He also discussed the impact of limited residency and fellowship opportunities for UA medical graduates to train in Arizona. Training physicians and others in Arizona is critical to ensuring that they remain in the state to practice, Dr. Garcia said. When health sciences graduates leave the state for graduate medical education, they are far less likely to return to Arizona.

Dr. Garcia highlighted the strategic recruitment of several nationally and internationally acclaimed scientists and also cited UAHS innovations to improve health, including clinical trials to optimize therapies for a wide variety of complex disorders, ranging from respiratory disease, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's; cell-based therapies to address neurodegenerative and cardiovascular diseases; medical devices for early detection of disease and monitoring health from a distance; and precision therapies that are unique to the individual.

Critical to growing the research, education and clinical missions of UAHS is the UA's partnership with Banner Health that Dr. Garcia described as "essential" for UAHS sustainability. The interdependent affiliation benefits both UAHS and Banner: the flow of funds from the health-care delivery system supports the academic medical center's research and education, in turn allowing recruitment of both physician-scientists and patients into the health-care delivery organization.

Banner now is the primary clinical partner for the UA Colleges of Medicine in Tucson and Phoenix. The Banner affiliation also benefits the UA College of Medicine – Phoenix, Dr. Garcia said, strongly supporting the college's efforts for LCME accreditation and providing the College with a much-needed primary hospital partner, Banner – University Medical Center Phoenix, as well as a major opportunity for strategically expanding the College's academic and clinical programs. The UA-Banner affiliation also allows expansion of programs offered in Phoenix by the UA Colleges of Nursing and Pharmacy and the UA Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health.

Dr. Garcia also described the partnership with Dignity Health St. Joseph's for oncology services and research as "robust." The newly opened UA Cancer Center at Dignity Health St. Joseph's is a state-of-the-art facility that provides a Phoenix-based home for the expansion of the UA Cancer Center's clinical and translational research programs.

Dr. Garcia announced plans for two new state-of-the-art facilities at the Tucson campus, the first a research facility that will focus on biomedical imaging, genetics, informatics and neuroscience; and the second, an 11-story building that will house learning facilities, a simulation center and several newly launched UAHS research centers focused on health disparities, precision health, population health and neuroscience.

The presentation is archived by Arizona Public Media at <http://livestream.com/azpm/events/4516862>



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