The New York Times

The Case for 'Teaching Ignorance' Pioneered by UA Surgery Professor

In the mid-1980s, University of Arizona surgery Professor Marlys H. Witte, MD, proposed teaching a class titled, “Introduction to Medical and Other Ignorance.” Her idea was not well received: at one foundation, an official told her he would rather resign than support a class on ignorance. Dr. Witte was urged to alter the name of the course, but she wouldn’t budge. Far too often, she believed, teachers fail to emphasize how much about a given topic is unknown.

“Textbooks spend eight to 10 pages on pancreatic cancer,” she said some years later, “without ever telling the student that we just don’t know very much about it.” She wanted her students to recognize the limits of knowledge and to appreciate that questions often deserve as much attention as answers. Eventually, the American Medical Association funded the class, which students would fondly remember as “Ignorance 101.”

Classes like hers remain rare, but in recent years scholars have made a convincing case that focusing on uncertainty can foster latent curiosity, while emphasizing clarity can convey a warped understanding of knowledge. Read more
Grant Will Be Used to Improve Oral Hygiene in 5 Sunnyside Schools

Some students in the Sunnyside Unified School District will be able to learn more about keeping their teeth clean. A University of Arizona pediatric resident, Sarah Williamson, MD, received a grant from the American Academy of Pediatrics to start a year-long dental hygiene program across all kindergartens in five elementary schools and in first grades at two of them.

“Sunnyside is excited about the awarding of this grant and looking forward to the research opportunity and the focus it will provide on oral health at our elementary schools,” said Mary Veres, a Sunnyside spokeswoman.

Most of the grant will be used to buy supplies, including tooth brushes and toothpastes, Williamson said. Students will be instructed to brush their teeth together after breakfast. “If they do that on an ongoing basis, hopefully that will help promote oral health hygiene at home also,” she said. Read more

U.S. News: Banner – UMC Tucson Among Nation’s Best Hospitals

Banner – University Medical Center Tucson has been ranked among the best hospitals in the nation in geriatrics, nephrology and pulmonology in U.S. News & World Report’s 2015-16 Best Hospitals ratings and as “high ranking” in seven other medical specialties: cancer; diabetes and endocrinology; gastroenterology and GI surgery; gynecology; neurology and neurosurgery; orthopaedics; and urology. The publication also rated Banner – University Medical Center as the best hospital in the Tucson metro area, and the No. 3 hospital in Arizona, after the Mayo Clinic and Banner – University Medical Center Phoenix, its sister hospital. Read more
The Hill (blog)

Life and Death – and Medicare

The recent decision by Medicare to reimburse doctors for the time spent in conversations with patients about end-of-life planning is a major step in the right direction. Lack of living wills and power of attorney creates a legally and morally murky situation in determining what a person may want in the last months, weeks or days of their life.

It is an issue many families wrestle with every day in our hospitals. Without these simple, but powerful legal documents, the decision on what a loved one might have wanted can tear families apart, even when the chances for survival are dismal. While there is no firm number, various studies indicate the percentage of adults with some form of advance directives is between 30 and 40 percent.

Many health systems and hospitals strongly encourage patients to have these discussions and to complete the necessary paperwork early. Banner – University Medical Center Tucson is piloting a program with first-year students at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson to have them create their own living wills. The objective is to see how this additional education and first-hand experience will influence young doctors to be able to better deal with their patients and their families on end-of-life decisions.

By Peter Fine, president and CEO, Banner Health

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Elle

The Most Searched Beauty Questions

The top beauty question asked around the globe is "When does makeup expire?" European cosmetic guidelines make it easy: Products sold there (and many Euro-made concoctions that are distributed in the United States) are required to list on the label how long the formula will stay fresh after opening. For products that lack that handy guideline, Kelly Reynolds, PhD, a microbiologist at the University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, recommends playing it extra safe with
anything that goes on or around the eye: Toss mascara, liquid eyeliners and concealers after three months. "The eye has very few defenses against bacteria," Dr. Reynolds says. "It has open tear ducts and very little physical protection, so very low doses can cause infection." Anything liquid, from skin creams to makeup, should be trashed after a year, while powder and shadow can stay fresh for up to two years. To get the most shelf life out of any makeup, exile it from balmy bathrooms (as heat and humidity can speed up bacterial growth), avoid applying with fingers and sanitize brushes and tools weekly. Read more