Valley High School Students Explore Biomedical Research at UCSF Fresno

FRESNO – Fourteen students will spend the coming weeks in hospitals, clinics and labs although they aren’t sick. For the 25th year, UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program is offering Central San Joaquin Valley high school students the chance to experience hands-on biomedical research through its Summer Biomedical Research Internship Program (SBI).

Now through Aug. 7, the students, who are entering their senior year in high school, will work in local hospitals and clinics on research projects alongside UCSF faculty members at UCSF Fresno and other sites. The research projects will involve health issues such as asthma, pancreatic cancer and renal cell carcinoma. The effectiveness of certain procedures and clinical skills training also will be studied.

Selected students and their respective faculty members are as follows:

- Rahul Nunna, University High School, Tim Brox, MD, Eric Lindvall, DO
- Michelle Benavidez, Central High School – West Campus, Amanda Mortimer, PhD
- Jessica Bonnar, Golden West High School, Dominic Dizon, MD
- Tara Conboy, Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART), Jennifer Hubbard, MD
- Sydney Crews, CART, Rais Vohra, MD
- Yasmeen Dhindsa, Clovis North High School, Christopher Kinter, MD
- Ambar Espinosa, Farmersville High School, Christina Maser, MD
- Kenneth Jeffris, Yosemite High School, Jason Bush, PhD
- Ashten Johnson, Bullard High School, Lori Weichenthal, MD
- Michael Neff, Yosemite High School, Michael Peterson, MD, Paul Mills, PhD
- John Perry, Kingsburg High School, Michael Peterson, MD, Paul Mills, PhD
- Melanie Soch, University High School, Jay Patel, MD, Andrew Yue, MD
- SherMing Tan, Clovis North High School, Stacy Sawtelle, MD
- Rohith Voora, Clovis North High School, Vijay Balasubramanian, MD

“UCSF Fresno faculty members are conducting research important to the health of San Joaquin Valley residents,” said Joan Voris, MD, associate dean at UCSF Fresno. “Our summer internship
program allows students to gain valuable research experience and make contributions to public health.”

As part of the program, students will research health conditions pertinent to the San Joaquin Valley, observe a surgery at Community Regional Medical Center and visit the UC San Francisco campus. They also hear from medical students and residents about career choices, medical schools and medical specialties.

The high school students were selected on the basis of academic merit, questionnaire responses, letters of recommendation and personal interviews. Students from Fresno, Madera, Merced, Kings, Tulare and Mariposa counties are eligible for the program. Since its inception in 1988, more than 200 students have participated in the internship program. This year’s class is the largest to date. Funding for this year’s program is provided by Cal Viva Health, Cook Land Company and the Fresno Regional Foundation.

For more information about the SBI, please visit: http://www.fresno.ucsf.edu/sbi/ or call 559-499-6423.

BACKGROUND:

UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program, established in 1975, plays a substantial role in providing healthcare services to residents of California’s San Joaquin Valley and training medical professionals in the region. A clinical branch of UC San Francisco, the medical education program has trained approximately one-third of Central San Joaquin Valley physicians. Annually, UCSF Fresno currently trains approximately 245 medical residents in eight specialties, 45 fellows in 12 subspecialties and about 250 medical students on a rotating basis.

UCSF Fresno faculty and medical residents engage in a broad spectrum of research addressing health issues pertinent to the Valley. UCSF Fresno faculty and residents also care for the overwhelming majority of the region’s underserved populations.

In addition, UCSF Fresno provides academic preparation programs for middle- and high school students interested in the health professions through the Doctors Academy and Junior Doctors Academy. UCSF Fresno is a key partner in the UC Merced San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education.

UC San Francisco is the leading university exclusively focused on health. UCSF is dedicated to promoting health worldwide through advanced biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care.

For further information, please visit www.fresno.ucsf.edu and http://www.ucsf.edu

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