

...from the Director

What is **The University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center**?

The mandate of all state land-grant universities is to improve the quality of life of the citizens of that state with discoveries that can be exported to the state, the United States, and ultimately the rest of the world. Since cardiovascular diseases are the leading causes of death and disability in Arizona, the United States, and most industrialized nations of the world, our mission is critical to that of the University of Arizona. It is a tall order!

Our vision is “**a future free of heart disease, stroke and other vascular diseases**,” a vision that can be accomplished only through the academic pillars of research (creating knowledge), education (sharing knowledge) and patient care (using knowledge). This vision can best be accomplished by bringing together physician scientists from multiple academic departments, including medicine, surgery, emergency medicine, anesthesiology, physiology, basic science research and statistics, who partner with the community.

In research, the Sarver Heart Center has been a major contributor in the field of cardiac transplantation, artificial heart technologies, treatment of arrhythmias and the prevention and treatment of sudden cardiac arrest (see “Heart News for You” in this issue). Our advances in resuscitation science for both bystanders (chest compression only CPR) and advanced resuscitation techniques for paramedics and physicians already have saved innumerable lives. But significant scientific advances are not made overnight—most often it takes long hours in a basic research laboratory with many blind alleys before a significant advance is made. And even when made, it often takes years to change an entrenched paradigm.

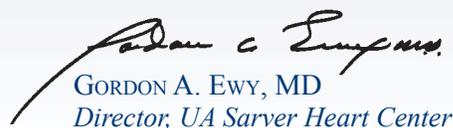
In education, the Sarver Heart Center is engaged in medical education at many levels, including that of our future primary care physicians, scientists and nurses, and our specialty training for cardiologists and cardiothoracic and vascular surgeons. We provide post-graduate education as physicians who graduated years ago must stay abreast of scientific advances, predominantly those made in academic medicine. We also are convinced that public education is as important as student and physician education. To decrease the mortality of patients with cardiovascular disease, we also must inform the public; thus, our

Sarver Heart Center Newsletter with “Heart News for You,” our heart-disease-in-women programs, Green Valley lecture series (now in its 25th year), “Healthy Heart” program (coming up February 4) and “mini-medical school” programs in cardiology in Yuma, Prescott and the Phoenix area.

In patient care, which is where physicians’ hearts are or we would not have chosen this vocation, the advances that have resulted in decreasing cardiovascular mortality have been very gratifying. In the 1970s, 40 percent of us in the United States died of cardiovascular disease. This mortality has decreased 2 percent every decade since, and advances in cardiovascular disease are major contributors to the average six years of increased survival that we have enjoyed since. While advances, first in cardiac surgery and then in interventional cardiology, have been critically important to those needing them, I think the greatest advance has been in preventing cardiovascular disease by treating the major risk factors identified decades ago: smoking, high blood pressure and abnormal lipids. We all know that genetics is the major risk, and while enormous efforts have been placed on accurately detecting risk by genetic analysis, to date, these results have been disappointing. We do know that if cardiovascular disease runs in your family—grandparents, parents and siblings—your risk is greater. See *Top 10 Tips to Prevent Heart Disease & Stroke* in issue 60, www.heart.arizona.edu.

The future: We are committed to continuing our traditions of the past while meeting the challenges of the future. While approaches will continue to evolve, the information will be easier to obtain. The good and bad news is that because of enhanced electronic communications, we get correct information as well as misinformation—faster and faster!

One of the educational goals of the Sarver Heart Center is to provide up-to-date, accurate information about the prevention and treatment of heart disease, stroke and vascular diseases to the public. Attend our upcoming “Healthy Heart Conference” and bring your questions—our format will emphasize adequate time for responses to your questions. (See page 12 for more information.)


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