



Media Release

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Prescriptions for the Soul

HCHD enlists community support to treat patients

The Harris County Hospital District (HCHD) is extending beyond medicine to treat patients through "Prescriptions for Fun," a new community-based initiative. The program provides patients and their families passes to local attractions to help them cope with the anxiety, pain and depression associated with illness, medical treatment, hospitalization and death.

"When a loved one is ill or in the hospital, the family becomes so involved in the problem at hand that they forget about releasing tension and stress. The last thought on their mind is having fun," says Lynn Friedman, director of Public Partnerships and Tangible Gifting for HCHD. "By enabling patients and their families to focus on fun events, we help distract them from their difficult situations—even if momentarily."

Local businesses donate the passes, which allow HCHD patients to enjoy recreational activities with their families, while providing an incentive to keep appointments and comply with treatment requirements.

The Houston Zoo is one of the program's largest supporters.

"One of our guiding principles is to be a zoo for all," said Deborah Cannon, president of the Houston Zoo. "To that end, we have developed a number of programs to insure that everyone can visit the zoo. The Prescriptions for Fun program fits perfectly and is one we are very pleased to support."

Other "Prescriptions for Fun" participants include the Houston Fire Museum, The Children's Museum, Celebration Station and the John P. McGovern Museum of Health and Medical Science. More than 200,000 coupons have been donated to the program since its start in January 2005.

"The hospital district could not have this program without the support of these organizations," Friedman says. "Their generosity allows patients to disconnect from their troubles. Their care for our community provides families an opportunity to visit places they may not otherwise be able to because of hardship."

Prescriptions are distributed by caregivers at HCHD hospitals, community health centers, school-based clinics and mobile health units. The bilingual passes feature the logos of the contributing organization and the Harris County Hospital District.

For information on supporting this program, contact Lynn Friedman at lynn_friedman@hchd.tmc.edu or 713-873-5182.

The Harris County Hospital District is the fifth largest public metropolitan healthcare system in the nation. It includes three hospitals—Ben Taub General Hospital, Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital and Quentin Mease Community Hospital; a network of 12 community health centers; a dental center; 13 satellite homeless shelter clinics; seven school-based clinics; and four mobile health units.

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