

MCGRATH BEGALA

MEMORIAL HERMANN HEALTHCARE SYSTEM, "REVOLUTIONIZING NEUROSCIENCE" CAMPAIGN
Houston, Texas | March 28, 2012 | Draft of Remarks by Dan Wolterman

Thank you, Dr Colasurdo. Memorial Hermann is blessed to have strong partners like Giuseppe and indeed all at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. Together, we are blazing new and important paths that, I am convinced, will change medicine forever.

I want to join in thanking our dear friends Paige and Tilman Fertitta for hosting us tonight in this beautiful space with this sublime food – accompanied by the Houston Symphony Orchestra Ensemble. Their generosity and friendship know no bounds.

I also want to thank our very special guests Gabby and Mark for making time in their schedules to be with us – and making this important evening in the history of Memorial Hermann all the more special by their presence and support. It's truly remarkable.

But then, as the video you saw earlier helps to underscore, Memorial Hermann is an extraordinary place, with some truly extraordinary people, that today are doing some pretty extraordinary things to help save and improve the lives of so many.

For example, most Houstonians don't know that Memorial Hermann owns and operates Life Flight – the only air ambulance service in Houston and surrounding communities.

They also probably don't know that, for the second straight year, our level one Trauma Center at the Texas Medical Center was ranked as the busiest in the entire nation. Most of the challenging, complex, and headline-making cases you hear about end up under our care there.

Thanks to our 11 hospital facilities around the region – along with our 135 other free-standing advanced diagnostic and clinical service sites – Memorial Hermann is the only healthcare provider that offers the full spectrum of services to our large, diverse community. From the onset of trauma, through any number of treatment protocols, and then comprehensive rehabilitation at the world-renowned TIRR Memorial Hermann, we do it all.

So as I say, we have an extraordinary organization, with extraordinary people, doing extraordinary things.

Tonight, however, we're here to tell you how and why we're going beyond extraordinary – to take what is already a world-class neuroscience department, and elevate it to an unprecedented level of scientific discovery that, in turn, produces transformative treatments for our patients.

That's what Revolutionizing Neuroscience is all about.

Now, the Memorial Herman Mischer Neuroscience Institute is already blessed with superb doctors, top researchers, state-of-the-art equipment, and groundbreaking treatments. If you look at our programs and services, you will find that we already set the highest standards in the field.

As Mark Kelly will tell us later, there's a really good reason why they brought Gabby to Memorial Hermann when they did. {Look at Gabby if present} We have been honored to care for you, Gabby. We marvel at

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your incredible strength and determination. You are indeed an inspiration to us all.

So if we're already this good, you might be wondering: why this push, this campaign? Why do we feel this compulsion to "Revolutionize Neuroscience" now, when our programs and services are already among the very best in the world?

Simply put, we know we can do even better, and touch even more lives. This Revolutionizing Neuroscience campaign is driven by the confidence – the passionate knowledge – that we truly are standing at the threshold of so many breakthrough discoveries that will fundamentally transform how we treat and cure the broadest range of neurological diseases and disorders.

We're close. We're that close.

Back in 1851, when a research chemist named Louis Pasteur sensed he was on the verge of his seminal discovery that germs cause disease, he wrote a friend and described it this way: "I am on the edge of mysteries, and the veil is getting thinner and thinner."

Ladies and gentlemen, that's exactly where Memorial Hermann and UT-Health are when it comes to discovering and solving the mysteries of the brain. The veil is getting thinner every day.

And like the wave of new vaccines and immunizations that were unleashed thanks to Pasteur's breakthrough, I believe we will see another Golden Age of life-saving and life-enhancing discoveries stem from the mind-boggling work our entire team is doing every day.

Let me give you an example.

Right now at TIRR Memorial Hermann, we are treating a young boy who was, and still is, the victim of a drive-by shooting in El Paso. It's almost too tragic for words. He was in the wrong place, at the wrong time – just minding his own business. Then in an instant, he hears a sound, everything goes numb, he falls to the floor – and now, he's paralyzed for life.

At least, under the confines of current medicine, he's paralyzed for life.

Stop and think for a moment how much has been taken from a young boy, with his whole life in front of him. Think, too, about the impossibly heavy burden thrust upon his family – and all who love and care for him.

Through no fault of their own. In the blink of an eye.

But what if our work on stems cells, which will be one of the next big breakthroughs, produces a way to regenerate nerves? And if you can find a way to regenerate nerves, couldn't you then also find a way to stimulate and repair a damaged spinal cord?

What if that young boy was your son, or grandson? When you get right down to it, it is only by the grace of God that it wasn't.

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Still, what if we could give the use of his legs back to that young man?

Wouldn't that be truly Revolutionary?

And here's the kicker: this isn't some pipe dream. We're that close. That day is coming. The only question is how fast it gets here.

That's why we need your generous support. That is why we are here tonight. Every dollar we can raise for this campaign will be used in a way that brings those exciting, vitally important breakthroughs just beyond our grasp that much closer to the present.

Here in Houston, we take understandable pride that, thanks to so many devoted professionals throughout the Texas Medical Center, we've already conquered the heart – and we are turning the tide in the war against cancer as well.

But the brain – the brain is the final frontier, as the experts will tell you. And once again, thanks in this case to Memorial Hermann and UT-Health, Houston is again at the forefront when it comes to pushing back the horizon of discovery and solving the mysteries of the brain.

When you get right down to it, there isn't anyone among us whose family or friends hasn't been impacted in some way by some element of neurological disease or disorder – because it effects people of every age. For children, it ranges from spina bifida in utero to learning disabilities, autism and epilepsy. For adults, our comprehensive services and programs address stroke, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis and so much more.

And as we have seen too often, any of us, at any age, at any time, and in any place, we can be struck with traumatic brain or spinal cord injury.

Put in that light, it's in ALL of our interests to see the kinds of groundbreaking research like Memorial Hermann's work in stem cells or adaptive technologies to continue.

Every day, that same veil that conceals the mysteries of the brain and spinal cord injury is indeed getting thinner. With your help, we're going to crack that code. It's not a question of if ... but when. We're that close.

And to be clear: there is no better place in the United States to get these initial neurological breakthroughs than Memorial Hermann and UT-Health.

For starters, we have one of the largest Children's Hospitals in the country, to go with all our adult healthcare capabilities.

We have our partnership with the UT-Health Medical School – which provides the amazing doctors that offer our clinical care, and conducts our research, and manages our educational pipeline.

We also have many of the programmatic capabilities we need to reach that horizon of medical discovery.

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Finally, and importantly, I want to emphasize that this Revolutionizing Neuroscience campaign is not about bricks and mortars. It's NOT about buildings. We have all the buildings we need ... at least, for the time being.

Rather, this campaign is about people.

It's about getting more leading researchers and physicians – like those in this room tonight – who can create those new programs and centers of excellence that push the envelope and keep Memorial Hermann on the cutting edge.

It's also about another extremely important group of people: our patients, including the inspiring men and women here with us tonight.

Behind each patient is not only a story of challenge and heartache, but also a profile of courage and perseverance. You cannot walk the halls at TIRR Memorial Hermann, to cite one example, and not be moved by the passion and devotion – the determination – with which our patients and their families strive every step, and every day, to rebuild their lives.

Their tears of frustration and sadness, their tears of joy and accomplishment, tell us everything we need to know. For them, for our patients, and for their families, we must keep fighting – and we will.

Finally, if the difference between where we are today and where we know we need to get to is about people – then tonight is, just as importantly, about each of you.

Throughout our history, Houston has benefitted from the vision – and commitment to the common good – from generations of individuals and families whose leadership and generosity has transformed this swampy bayou town into the fourth largest city in America.

It is the people of Houston that have made this city the international success story that it is. We maybe don't have the best weather, or the beautiful mountain vistas – but I'd put the quality of our civic leadership up against any city in America, or for that matter, the world.

And so it is only with your help that we can continue "Revolutionizing Neuroscience." We asked you here tonight specifically because we believe the people assembled in this room will help the Memorial Hermann team write this critical next historic chapter in medical history with us.

As close as we already are, we simply cannot make it there without you.

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