

Harlingen Medical Center Kicks Off Doc Talks 2008 Summer Lecture Series

Harlingen (July 8, 2008) – Congestive Heart Failure is a condition that claims the lives of hundreds of Americans each year without warning. But, Harlingen Medical Center (HMC) is looking to change that by shedding light on the potentially fatal condition when it hosts the first of its Doc Talks 2008 Summer Lecture Series, July 8, 2008 at the MOB Conference Room, located at 5501 N. Expressway 77. The guest speaker who will tackle this topic at the lecture is Dr. Luis E. Zepeda, Family Practice Physician of Harlingen.

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF), also known as heart failure, is a condition in which the heart cannot pump enough blood to the body's other organs. This condition is caused by a number of factors including: heart defects present at birth – congenital heart defects, narrowed arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle – coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, and infection of the heart valves and/or heart muscle itself, among other things.

“The most common signs of congestive heart failure are swollen legs or ankles or difficulty breathing,” said Dr. Zepeda. “Another symptom is weight gain when fluid builds up. But, a patient's doctor is the best person to make a correct diagnosis.”

While someone may suffer from congestive heart failure they are still able to function, but in a limited manner. For example, people with CHF can not exert themselves too much because they quickly become short of breath and tired. Various drugs are used to treat congestive heart failure. They perform different functions. ACE inhibitors and vasodilators expand blood vessels and decrease resistance. This allows blood to flow more easily and makes the heart's work easier or more efficient. Beta blockers can improve how well the heart's left lower chamber (left ventricle) pumps. Digitalis increases the pumping action of the heart, while diuretics help the body eliminate excess salt and water.

“When heart failure is discovered in a patient, it should be treated, or if possible, corrected,” said Zepeda. “In some instances, CHF can be treated by simply controlling the patient's high blood pressure. If there are more issues affecting the patient's health, then surgical measures may be taken.”

This is the first of two lectures that will embody the Doc Talks 2008 Summer Lecture Series. The next lecture is scheduled for August 12, 2008, at the MOB Conference Room. The topic and guest speaker will soon be announced.

For more information on Harlingen Medical Center's Doc Talks, contact Manny Chacon in Community Relations at (956) 365-1888.

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