

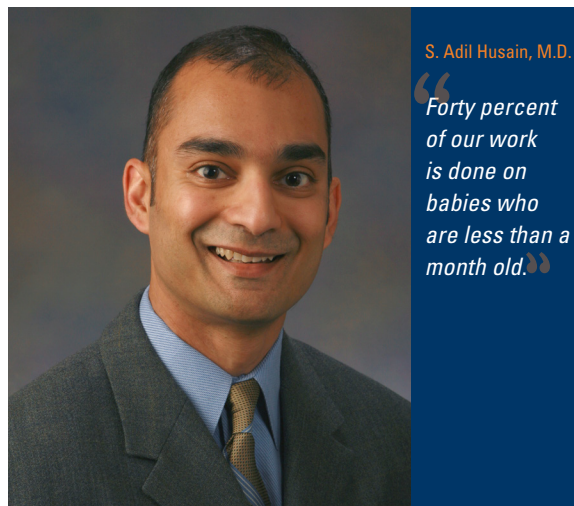
# The University of Texas

## Health Science Center at San Antonio



### Caring for the smallest

*Gifts Help to Sustain Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery Program*



A Hearst Foundations gift, with matching funds from the Greehey Family Foundation, helps families whose infants need lifesaving heart surgery.

An Army family stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, learns that their beautiful, newborn daughter will need open-heart surgery. Within hours, they are flown to San Antonio's University Hospital, where, at just 2 days old, a surgical team repairs the constriction in her heart. In the confusing whirlwind of activity, the family at one point doesn't know what city they are in or where they will stay.

"This confusion is typical for families who have just been told their newborn has a critical heart condition," said S. Adil Husain, M.D., director of pediatric cardiothoracic surgery and professor of cardiothoracic surgery in the School of Medicine at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. He is a physician with UT Medicine San Antonio, the School of Medicine's faculty practice.

"The stresses are unimaginable," said Dr. Husain, who leads the university's Congenital Heart Program, which delivers specialized, coordinated care to babies with congenital heart defects. Around 350 heart surgical and catheter-based interventional procedures are performed each year through the program.

"Forty percent of our work is done on babies who are less than a month old when they need an operation," he said. "In addition, about 40 percent of our patients are from outside of Bexar County, so we have a significant number of families who have to temporarily relocate to San Antonio while their newborn child is undergoing a very complex heart operation."

But relocating, even temporarily, puts a strain on the family. Because of that, "We've done a lot in our program to treat these families in a unique way," Dr. Husain said.

#### Hearst Endowed Chair

Dr. Husain is the inaugural holder of the William Randolph Hearst Endowed Chair in Congenital Heart Disease. The chair was created through a \$350,000 gift from the Hearst Foundations to the Health Science Center to help attract and retain leaders in pediatric cardiothoracic surgery and to ensure excellence of care for South Texas children with congenital heart disease.

The Hearst Foundations' leadership gift was matched through a gift from the Greehey Family Foundation for this lifesaving program and the pediatric surgical team that it supports. The vision is to continue building the Hearst chair until it reaches at least \$1 million.

"When someone has just had a baby, they're excited, but then they find out their baby has complex heart disease and requires a major heart operation. It's a medical challenge, a psychological challenge and a familial challenge on all levels," Dr. Husain said. "Our entire team and program are committed to not just the neonate, but also to the entire family unit."

While there are more than 40 types of congenital heart defects, one of the most complex is single ventricle disorder, in which the heart has only one adequately sized functional pumping chamber instead of the two chambers that are found in a normal heart.

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Typically, this condition requires a series of three invasive surgeries in the first two to three years of life. As recently as two decades ago, this disorder was fatal.

Today, 60 percent to 70 percent of children born with single ventricle heart defects survive all three surgeries due to improvements in surgical techniques and the emergence of multidisciplinary teams to care for these fragile patients.

### Gift expands congenital heart program

With the Hearst Foundations' gift, even more will be possible. Already, it has been the catalyst for expansion of the Health Science Center's congenital heart disease program. The program's priorities include creating bilingual education modules to explain congenital heart disease, the required surgeries, the sequence of care and the expected outcomes.

Other priorities are providing social work evaluation, psychological family support and patient navigation, and helping families identify housing and other services during lengthy inpatient treatment periods. Funds will also go toward telemedicine support for inter-stage follow-up care of patients outside the San Antonio area.

Longer term, Hearst endowment funds will allow Dr. Husain and his team to track programmatic outcomes to help in research. And, with the growth of the program, medical students and residents will have more opportunities to experience the medical and surgical care provided, so a pipeline of future health care providers will be cultivated in this field, Dr. Husain said.

"Our team is exceptionally passionate about this project," Dr. Husain said. "It has been wonderful and gratifying to have the support of the Hearst Foundations. They have become a valuable partner in our mission to ensure excellence of care for South Texas' most vulnerable patients and their families."



Matthew and Amy Santos share a loving moment with their daughter, Lyla Grace. At 2 days old, Lyla underwent open-heart surgery performed by S. Adil Husain, M.D., of UT Medicine San Antonio. UT Medicine is the faculty practice of the School of Medicine at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

### An investment in babies' futures

George Irish, vice president and Eastern director for the Hearst Foundations, said the gift recognizes the groundbreaking work being done.

"What Dr. Husain and his team at the Health Science Center are doing is really impressive," he said. "They cover an extensive service region and care for critically ill babies in the first days of their lives. Not too long ago these infants would have perished, but the doctors here have a very high success rate of saving them so they can go home with their parents. The Hearst Foundations saw this as an investment in the future of health for children and their families."

As it did for the family from Fort Hood, the Hearst Foundations' gift will provide invaluable assistance to other families who may someday travel the same path.