

UCSFcatalyst

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Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation Gives \$10 Million for Cardiovascular Disease

Many victims of heart and vascular diseases end up in the emergency room – or worse. Now UCSF aims to alter the course of cardiovascular disease, which affects 80 million Americans and claims 870,000 lives per year in the U.S. With a \$10 million gift from the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation, UCSF will establish a new Center for Prevention of Heart and Vascular Disease. The center will be directed by the longtime head of the UCSF Division of Cardiology, William Grossman, MD.

Prevention strategies such as managing cholesterol and high blood pressure have proven highly effective in helping people avoid heart and vascular diseases. Yet most patients only seek care for acute problems, says Grossman. “We are always putting out fires instead of preventing them.”

Ever since his father died of a heart attack in 1969, Grossman has been interested in prevention. At the new center, he and his team will use state-of-the-art technology to screen patients for coronary disease and thoroughly assess risk factors such as hypertension, stress, obesity and family history of heart attack or stroke. Patients will also meet with a dietary specialist and exercise counselor. “We’re going to create a plan that includes lifestyle changes as well as medication,” says Grossman.

Personalized clinical care will serve as a hallmark of the center. “The field is still very complex,” he explains. “There are 20 different identified risk factors that all interact. Finding the right prevention strategy is not something you can turn over to a computer.”

The center will be dedicated to treating all patients regardless of economic status and will serve as an education hub about prevention for the medical community and general public. Initially it will be located on the Parnassus campus, but will move in a few years to the UCSF Cardiovascular Research Building under construction at Mission Bay. “The Schwabs’ gift is a fabulous start for us,” Grossman says. “It will allow us to put all the components of the clinic into place.”

“We are confident that Dr. Grossman’s leadership and passion for saving lives through prevention will make this a world-class center,” say Charles and Helen Schwab.

Grossman’s long-range vision includes adding a research component so that knowledge emerging from the center can be translated into new preventive measures – tools he wishes were available to his father long ago.

For more information on the Center for Heart and Vascular Disease, contact Kevin McAteer at 415/476-3627 or KMcateer@support.ucsf.edu.