News Release: Harris County Medical Society Doctors Give Youth Fresh Start

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Houston, TX (Nov. 14, 2012)… For the past 15 years, the Harris County Medical Society (HCMS) and the City of Houston’s Parks and Recreation Department have teamed up to help former gang members re-enter mainstream society through the D-Tag Tattoo Removal Program.

The D-Tag Tattoo Removal Program, also referred to as D-Tag, removes the tattoos of young men and women, age 24 and younger, who are participating in the City of Houston’s Operation Gang Together program. In exchange for six community service hours, the youth earn one laser removal session. HCMS physicians who are trained to remove tattoos volunteer one Saturday each month to the D-Tag to provide their services.

“These young men and women are making changes to do something more with their lives,” says Michael V. Kelly II, MD, chair of the D-Tag Program efforts at HCMS. “Removing the reminders of their past lives, gives these youth a fresh start. It’s an honor to be part of the process.”

Thousands of youth have been helped by D-Tag since its inception in 1997. This year, more than 350 young men and women have benefited from the physicians’ efforts.

“Depending on the size and color of the tattoo, it can take six to eight sessions to complete the removal from the skin,” says Dr. Kelly. “D-Tag requires a lot of work from the young men and women participants, the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department, and HCMS. Without the continued commitment and dedication of everyone involved, the program would not be a success.”

In 2012, the following HCMS member physicians dedicated their time and expertise to the D-Tag Tattoo Removal Program: HCMS D-Tag Chair and Founder Michael V. Kelly II, MD; Melissa A. Bogle, MD; James F. Boynton, MD; Paul Friedman, MD; Christopher Livingston, MD; Roberto Montoya, MD; Ronald Rapini, MD; Ryan Rogers, MD; Steven J. Smith, MD; and Charlotte Stelly-Seitz, MD.

For more information on D-Tag Tattoo Removal Program, contact Kay Joshua, Division Manager, at 832-395-7270 or Emily Broussard with the City of Houston at 832-395-7297 for application procedures.