



• Dr. José Tellez-Zenteno keeps a map on his office wall indicating the prevalence of epilepsy in Saskatchewan.

# LEGACY OF ROYAL CARE

## New Hope in the Treatment of Epilepsy

Dr. José Tellez-Zenteno has patients from all over Saskatchewan, but his research into epilepsy is reaching around the world. Thanks to the successful \$15 million Royal Care Campaign and its focus on education, patient care and medical research, Tellez-Zenteno is able to dedicate more time to researching the treatment of epilepsy, publishing in medical journals and presenting at international conferences for the benefit of other medical practitioners.

In 2009, Tellez-Zenteno was awarded the Mudjatik Thyssen Mining Professorship in Neurosciences, a five-year appointment funded by a \$250,000 donation to RUH Foundation's Royal Care Campaign from Mudjatik Thyssen Mining, a leading mine contractor in northern Saskatchewan and across North America.

One percent of the population - about 10,000 people in Saskatchewan - suffer from epileptic seizures. Tellez-Zenteno sees the most serious, hard-to-treat cases in his clinic at Royal University Hospital. Most of his patients also participate in his research studies, some of which are:

- Fitting adult patients with a portable electroencephalogram so they can

be assessed from home, rather than at the hospital, to determine if they are candidates for brain surgery to control their seizures. "This approach was used in the past for kids, but we are the only program in the country to do so many investigations in adults," says Tellez-Zenteno.

---

*"We are operating on 20 to 25 patients per year, but we could do 100 per year."*

---

- Studying the effectiveness of stopping anti-seizure medication "cold turkey" for one week, triggering the seizures so he can pinpoint the area of the brain responsible for causing them. He says this "cold turkey" method is unique in Canada: "We are showing that one week is enough time to get an answer, and it's safe because we have had very few complications."

- Helping to create a tool to assist family doctors and neurologists in assessing whether their epileptic patients are candidates for brain surgery. Tellez-Zenteno says many potential candidates are never referred to him at RUH. "We are operating on 20 to 25 patients per year, but we could do 100 per year," he says. In order to treat more patients, he is assisting in the recruitment of another neurologist specializing in epilepsy at RUH.

He is also working with the World Health Organization and the International League Against Epilepsy to establish a medical program for epileptics in Tajikistan. "They don't have anything in place so they need our help," says Tellez-Zenteno, who is assisted in his work by his wife, Dr. Lizbeth Hernandez.

"Thanks to the funding from Royal Care, Dr. Tellez-Zenteno is giving hope to everyone in Saskatchewan who suffers from epilepsy, but his research is also helping to establish RUH as a respected partner in worldwide efforts in this field," says Arla Gustafson, CEO of RUH Foundation.