

Texas U.S. Senator [Kay Bailey Hutchison](#) was briefed on the UT Dallas [Center for BrainHealth's](#) latest advancements during a recent tour of the center.

UT President David Daniel, [School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences](#) Dean Bert Moore and VP of Research Bruce Gnade joined Chief Director Sandra Chapman and the team of BrainHealth researchers to welcome the senator.

During the tour, the center's Head of Special Services Audette Rackley gave Senator Hutchison an overview of the center's brain physical, a baseline test that measures reasoning, strategic learning, filtering and mental flexibility. During the brief demonstration, the senator wowed the researchers with her performance on a practice exercise.

The senator then learned about the center's Middle School Brain Years Initiative. Dr. Jacquelyn Gamino explained how critical the middle school years are in the development of critical thinking and reasoning skills. Gamino's team has created the Strategic Memory and Reasoning Training (SMART) program to intervene and improve education during this developmental period. The team is doing a pilot program at a local middle school and hopes to receive legislative support so they can create a program for all Texas middle schools.

Dr. John Hart, M.D., the center's Medical Science Director, talked about his research with veterans who have traumatic brain injuries. He explained that these injuries can lead to hyper-arousal, overwhelming the victim and making decisions on and off the battlefield difficult.

As Ranking Member of the [Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veteran Affairs](#), and chairman of the [West Point Board of Visitors](#), Senator Hutchison is deeply concerned about issues related to the troops and veterans and was very interested to hear about Hart's promising research.

"I'm very pleased to hear this," she said. "This is one of the entities I support with federal dollars because I think this research is so important. I'm glad that UT Dallas and UT Southwestern are collaborating on research that will help our veterans."

Senator Hutchison has served as a United States Senator for the State of Texas since 1993.