

\$72
MILLION

...AND
COUNTING

Page 12

New **hospital** opens ⁴

PHHP names ⁷
new **dean**

Healthy **churches,** ²³
healthy **families**

On the Cover

The HSC has received 75 grants totaling \$72 million from the National Institutes of Health as part of the federal stimulus package. This month, *The POST* takes a closer look at how some scientists are using the one-time-only opportunity to grow their research and what the funding means for science and for the community.

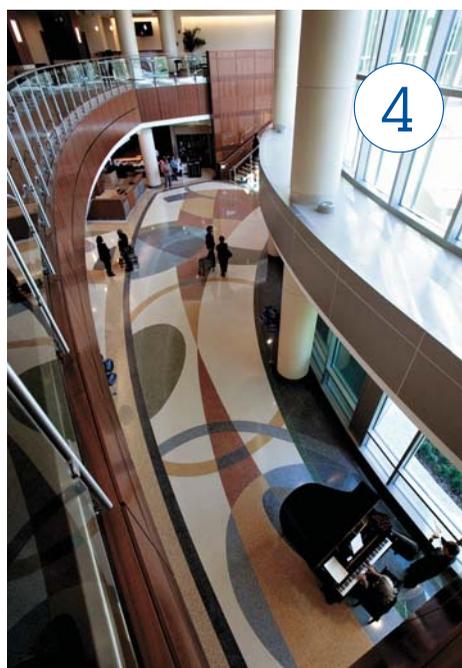


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DISCOVERY BY **MRI**

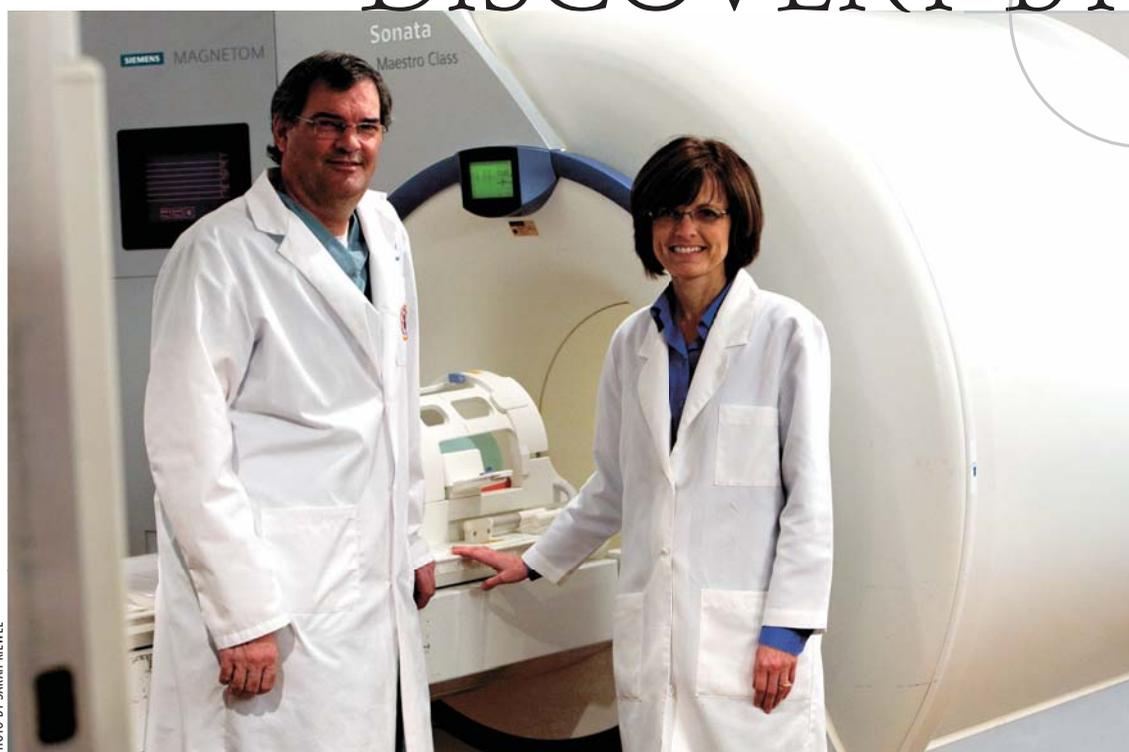


PHOTO BY SARAH MEIVEL

UF anesthesiologist Mark J. Rice, M.D., and radiologist Lori Deitte, M.D., were among a team of researchers who confirmed the effectiveness of a longstanding medical procedure used when anesthesia is administered to patients. The procedure, known as Sellick's maneuver, has come under fire by critics in recent years, but UF scientists have used magnetic resonance imaging to show that it works and that doubts about its effectiveness are based on a misunderstanding of what physical changes happen in the neck during the procedure. **P**



CLEAN OUT YOUR CLOSETS

The PHHP Health Science Student Organization and Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions are sponsoring a used clothing and backpack drive until Nov. 18. Items will be donated to children served by the Micanopy Collaborators for Educational Excellence, a program that provides free one-on-one tutoring for school children from families with low incomes. Please drop off used clothing for boys or girls, ages first through 10th grade, backpacks, school supplies, winter coats and unopened toys at one of the following locations: the advising office on the ground floor of the HPNP Complex, Kaplan at the Reitz Union or Kaplan's downtown location, 409 S.W. 2nd Ave. For more information, please e-mail Gaura Mehta at gaura55@ufl.edu.

WE JUST LIKED THIS PICTURE

A gold-covered Dental Heisman winner holding a toothbrush instead of a football. The Mighty Molar at the reins. A Gator with braces. Ahh, what's not to like about this well-designed float the College of Dentistry's Dental College Council built to grace UF's Homecoming Parade Oct. 16? Dental student Josh Perry is the smiling guy in gold.



WHAT STUDYING DID TO THEIR BRAINS ...

Professor Orit Shechtman, Ph.D., (center) poses with Bachelor of Health Science program seniors Sammi Willis, Melissa Milroy, Bethany Rivera, Brooke Richardson, Alyssa Triacca and Michelle Dubreuil. The students donned their new 'dos for their brain lab on the day after the first exam in Shechtman's class, Nervous Systems and Disorders. Rivera said the idea came to the group while celebrating after the test. One of the girls flipped her head over and put the base of a water bottle on top of her head and tied her hair around the neck of the bottle with a ribbon. Depending on the length of hair, she said, different heights of bottles can be used to achieve the style — no hairspray necessary!

GET FIT

Starting in January, employees of the Health Science Center and Shands HealthCare will have another way to stay fit. The Shands Fitness and Wellness Center will open in the South Campus parking garage, located on Southwest 13th Street. The center will feature cardio and strength training equipment and will offer personal training and medical fitness programs. Memberships are available for one-, three- and six-month periods. Employees' spouses and domestic partners also may purchase memberships. For more information, visit <http://shands.org/find/outpatient/rehab/wellnesscenter/default.asp> or call 352-273-7117.



Shands, the *next* generation

By Elizabeth Connor

If the new Shands Cancer Hospital at UF were a person, it would be a woman. From the undulating lines of the foyer — marketed as “The Sail” by the building’s architects — to the soft, secondary colors used throughout, this building wants to comfort and nurture.

What you’ve read about the new Shands Cancer Hospital undoubtedly focuses on what the facility has — the 192 private beds, the snazzy glassed-in exterior stairwell, the Aquilion One 320-detector row CT scanner. But as the hospital propels itself into the 21st century, it is also defined by what it left behind:

Operating amphitheater. Forget those television vignettes with concerned physicians looking over a surgery from on high. The 12 operating rooms at the Shands Cancer Hospital provide unprecedented ability for the clinicians to share and save almost any clinical event of a typical surgery.

Flat-screen monitors and at least two mobile computer workstations can capture a real-time overview of the operating room and the surgical field, endoscopic and similar images, patient vital signs and other clinical data. Up to four images can be captured and displayed on a single screen simultaneously, allowing physicians to process disparate information quickly and eliminating the need for separate computers.

A conventional hospital kitchen. For the first several months of operation, the Shands Food and Nutrition Services team at Shands Cancer Hospital will plate patient meals with food prepared at the main kitchen on the Shands at UF North Campus. Starting July 1, patients in the new building will be able to order meals from the Shands Cancer Hospital’s own kitchen as they would from room service at a hotel — from a broad menu during kitchen hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The kitchen staff will have real-time electronic access to information showing each patient’s dietary needs; they will even be alerted when a patient fails to order a meal as expected.

The Shands at UF kitchen was designed to enable staff to prepare 1,200 patient meals per day for 400 patients, allowing them to expand with the growth of the Shands at UF South Campus. Eventually, Shands plans to build additional towers on the new campus to serve a total of 1,200 patients.

Franchised restaurants for staff and visitors. The 122-seat Terrace Market Cafe on the third floor of the Shands Cancer Hospital is run by the same vendor company that operates the Shands at UF food court. This will offer the food service teams the flexibility to switch out menu items to reflect the season or customer preferences, Shands Food Service Director Bill Notte said.

Overhead fluorescent lights. In corridors where patients will be transported across the hospital, architects have banished glaring overhead lights whenever possible in favor of softer, indirect lighting. Instead, patients will see art on the ceiling, at least in the elevators.

Tiny windows. Current technology makes possible the oversized energy-efficient windows and shades at the Shands Cancer Hospital, but the decision to install them is driven by a desire to bring as much light into a patient’s room as possible, said Brad Pollitt, Shands HealthCare’s vice president for facilities. The shank of the building sits close to Archer Road, but the windows’ coating will reflect heat and light without blinding nearby drivers and pedestrians.

To ensure that nurses have visual access to each patient, a glassed-in charting area off the corridor straddles every two rooms.

All of the features of the hospital were designed for the eventual transition of all patient care in Shands at UF to the South Campus. The North Campus would focus on teaching and academic activities, Pollitt said. **P**



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

On Nov. 1, Shands HealthCare opened the new 500,000-square-foot, \$388-million Shands Cancer Hospital at UF. An extension of the Shands at UF academic medical center, the new tower features 192 private beds and also houses the Shands Critical Care Center for emergency and trauma services. This month, *The POST* brings you some tidbits about the new addition.

The evolution of EMERGENCY MEDICINE



Dr. Joseph Adrian Tyndall stands in the new emergency department at the Shands Critical Care Center.

By April Frawley Birdwell

The emergency department at Shands at UF was built to handle about 25,000 patients a year. The problem was about 55,000 people were coming. “We have a huge catchment, 13 counties. We provide care for a lot of people,” said Joseph Adrian Tyndall, M.D., chair of the College of Medicine department of emergency medicine. “We were at 55,000 patient visits a year in essentially the same square footage. That led to problems of crowding and throughput. We were doing this while trying to advance teaching and academics in that clinical space.”

Before 1984, the hospital’s emergency department had been tucked in an even smaller space near what are now the hospital’s loading docks. So, the idea of moving to a center three times the size with double the number of patient spaces — quadruple if needed — wasn’t just an ordinary, let’s-pack-the-stethoscopes-and-go kind of moment for the department. Its Nov. 1 move to the Shands Critical Care Center, which houses emergency and trauma services, was a colossal shift and huge step forward in the advancement of emergency medicine at UF.

During the past two decades, emergency medicine at UF has evolved from a division within the department of surgery to a full-fledged department with a residency program, a Level 1 trauma center and a staff of physicians board-certified in providing emergency care.

Now, the department has a space where doctors can see 100,000 patients a year. Also, it’s probably the only emergency department in the country with a 320-detector row CT scanner — a powerful imaging device that can help doctors diagnose conditions in minutes instead of hours or even days — just down the hall.

“A lot of communities don’t have this kind of advanced care,” Tyndall said. “I am proud of it.”

The department began working with management engineers a year and a half ago to walk them through how patients are seen, information that was used to help design the space and plan staffing.

Because the new emergency department is bigger than the old Shands at UF and the Shands AGH emergency areas combined — and because Shands AGH closed — the nursing and ancillary staff was almost doubled to meet the needs of patients. Several new faculty members have joined the department as well, and more could be recruited next year, Tyndall says.

“I look at this as the beginning step of being able to take even better care of patients,” Tyndall said. “It’s not just the physical space or the equipment. It is the people involved. It is the process of making sure the entire institution focuses on throughput so patients can be quickly seen and moved to where they need to be. It is the recognition of all of that. This move is just the beginning.” P



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

The Sanctuary of Peace in the new hospital incorporates novel design concepts and overlooks the Garden of Hope.

Going green

By Kimberly Rose

So, you’ve read about the 192 beds, the fancy 320-slice scanner and the other advances of the new hospital. Did we mention it’s pretty green, too?

The commitment to use environmentally sustainable construction methods to build the hospital earned Shands HealthCare the silver Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design designation per the U.S. Green Building Council rating system.

“We used insulated windows that are treated to reduce solar glare and white rooftops designed to reflect heat,” said Brad Pollitt, Shands HealthCare vice president for facilities. “The facility’s air-conditioning heat wheels help to recover lost energy, and irrigation and drainage systems use reclaimed water. We provide showers for employees who bike to work and special parking for hybrid cars.”

Pollitt says Shands is now being considered for gold-level LEED certification and could be one of a few academic medical centers nationwide to achieve this rating.

Shands also partnered with Gainesville Regional Utilities to establish the GRU South Energy Center to provide 100 percent of the hospital’s energy needs. The on-site power plant will ensure uninterrupted power, independent of the city’s energy grid, regardless of a prolonged outage elsewhere in the community. It will efficiently convert fuel into electricity and provide 46 percent savings compared with traditional fossil fuel-burning generations. Officials estimate this will save 27 million kilowatts per year, enough to power about 3,000 homes. P

Shands Critical Care Center facts:

- Breakaway doors in treatment rooms for fast access
- A 9-second elevator ride from the helicopter pad
- Radiology on site for quicker access to scans
- Special rooms and waiting area for children

Thanks for the Memories

Community, employees say goodbye to Shands AGH



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

Gainesville Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan recalls her birth and her daughter's birth at Shands AGH during a tribute to the hospital in October. Shands AGH, Alachua County's oldest hospital, closed Nov. 1. (Below) The AGH Auxiliary had been a lasting tradition at AGH since 1953. Members of the Auxiliary opened the hospital's coffee and gift shops, established its volunteer program and helped furnish units during the hospital's growth.

By April Frawley Birdwell

The contractions started in the middle of the movie. Surprised her baby might actually arrive on its due date, the mother quickly gathered her two daughters to leave, abandoning the film. Ironically, it was titled "Born Free."

They rushed to Alachua General Hospital. Thirteen minutes later, Pegeen Hanrahan was born. Thirty-nine years later, Hanrahan, now Gainesville's mayor, would have her own daughter at the hospital.

But on a steamy October day, Hanrahan said goodbye to the place where she and her daughter entered the world during a tribute to honor the hospital, which closed its doors after 81 years Nov. 1.

"It is like anything in life, you have to work past the grief for a rebirth," said Hanrahan, her voice cracking with emotion as she addressed the 300 people who gathered at the hospital for the tribute. "God bless you, all of you, who have helped everyone get through the moments of their lives here at AGH."

On March 15, 1928, Alachua County's first hospital opened with 25 nurses, 12 doctors, 58 beds and two operating rooms. The cost of a hospital stay was \$2.50



a day and a major surgical procedure cost about \$15, said Jodi Mansfield, chief operating officer for Shands HealthCare, whose children also were born at AGH.

"They had a gala party that the entire community came to," said Timothy Goldfarb, CEO of Shands HealthCare. "Interesting enough, exactly nine months later the first baby was born at AGH."

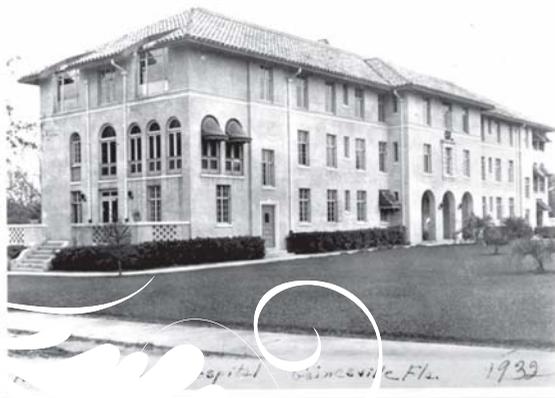
The hospital grew, admitting as many as 3,600 patients a year during the 1930s and 1940s, and its name was changed from Alachua County Hospital to Alachua General Hospital in 1949. By the 1950s, the hospital had 176 beds and its own nursing school, Mansfield said. The nursing school, in operation from 1945 to 1957, disbanded when the UF College of Nursing opened.

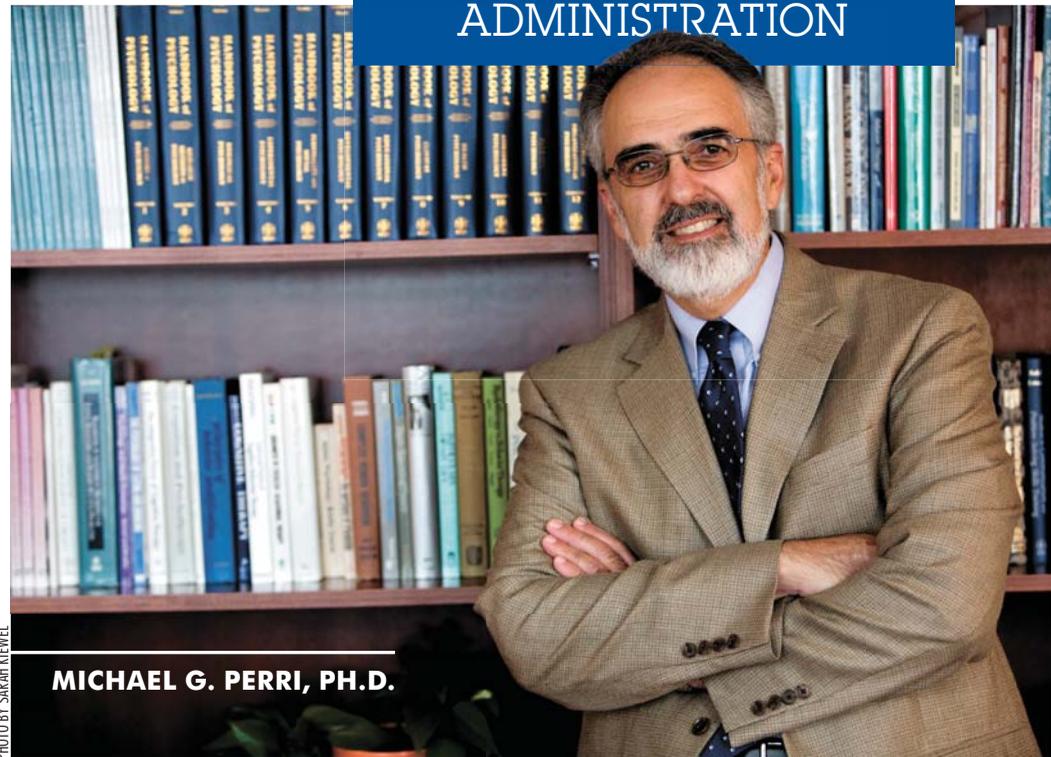
In 1996, Shands bought the hospital, which by the time of its closing had grown to be a 377-bed facility with 1,150 employees. But because of declining revenues and budget shortfalls, the decision was made last year to close the hospital, relocating its services to Shands at UF as well as the new Shands Cancer Hospital and Shands Critical Care Center.

All but a few of the hospital's employees have transferred to positions within Shands HealthCare.

"A community is stitched with 1,000 threads," said UF President Bernie Machen. "Alachua General Hospital was a place where those threads came together in a safe, seamless and sturdy line."

"We owe much to this hospital for (Gainesville's) development as a great place to live and work." 





MICHAEL G. PERRI, PH.D.

PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

It's official

Interim dean earns top job in PHHP

By Jill Pease

Michael G. Perri, Ph.D., has been named dean of the UF College of Public Health and Health Professions.

Perri joined the college's faculty in 1990 and has served as the interim dean since June 2007. A professor in the department of clinical and health psychology, Perri has held several administrative positions in the college including associate dean for research and head of the health psychology division.

"Under the leadership of (nursing dean and associate provost) Kathleen Long, Ph.D., R.N., as chair of the search committee, we conducted a vigorous national search for this critical position at the Health Science Center and University of Florida," said Joseph Glover, Ph.D., provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. "After reviewing an extremely strong field of finalists, the search committee was uniformly supportive of Dr. Perri as the best fit for the next dean of the College of Public Health and Health Professions. I enthusiastically concur."

Perri's research findings have had a significant impact on theory, research and clinical care related to behavioral treatment of obesity. He has contributed to more than 120 scientific publications and has served as principal investigator or co-investigator for more than \$30 million in research grants and contracts from the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Veterans Affairs and private industry. His current studies involve the development of effective programs for the management of obesity in underserved rural communities. In 2008, Perri received the American Psychological Association's Samuel M. Turner Award for Distinguished Contributions to Applied Research in Clinical Psychology.

"UF and its Health Science Center will benefit greatly from Dr. Perri as the dean of the College of Public Health and Health Professions," said David S. Guzick, M.D., Ph.D., senior vice president for health affairs and president of the UF&Shands Health System. "During his tenure as interim dean, Dr. Perri successfully spearheaded the college's public health accreditation. He also stabilized a shaky financial foundation and launched several initiatives to foster collaboration across public health and the health professions disciplines, including the establishment of a funding program for interdisciplinary pilot studies and the founding of the Florida Trauma Rehabilitation Center for Returning Military Personnel."

Perri is a diplomate of the American Board of Professional Psychology and a fellow of the American Psychological Association, the Society of Behavioral Medicine and the Obesity Society. He was recently appointed associate editor of the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, the leading peer-reviewed journal in the field of clinical psychology.

Perri earned his doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Missouri - Columbia. Before arriving at UF he served on the faculty at the University of Rochester, Indiana University and Fairleigh Dickinson University.

"I am honored and excited about the opportunity this appointment presents," Perri said. "The college has accomplished a tremendous amount over the past five years. We are now at the starting point to go on to more significant achievements through our collaborative efforts in education, research and service." 

College of Medicine dean candidates

UF has selected nine candidates to interview to become the next College of Medicine dean. The interviews will take place in mid-November. The candidates are: Valerie P. Castle, M.D., chair of the department of pediatrics and communicable diseases at the University of Michigan; David L. Epstein, M.D., M.M.M., chair of the department of ophthalmology at Duke University; Arthur M. Feldman, M.D., Ph.D., the Magee professor and chair of the department of medicine at Jefferson Medical College; Francisco A. Gonzalez-Scarano, M.D., chair of the department of neurology at the University of Pennsylvania; Michael L. Good, M.D., interim dean at the University of Florida; Gabriel G. Haddad, M.D., chair of the department of pediatrics at the University of California, San Diego; Thomas A. Pearson, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., senior associate dean for clinical research and director of the Rochester Clinical and Translational Science Institute at the University of Rochester; Robert C. Robbins, M.D., a professor and chair of cardiothoracic surgery at Stanford University; and David S. Stephens, M.D., vice president for research at Emory University.



Room with a view

UF vets first to use new MRI unit to get **better look** inside animals

By Sarah Carey

A new clinical imaging system now in place at the UF Veterinary Medical Center will enable veterinarians to obtain diagnostic images of previously inaccessible and larger parts of the body, such as the upper legs of horses, veterinarians say.

The new 1.5 Tesla Titan MR, made by Toshiba, has never previously been used by any academic veterinary medical center in the United States and will provide private practitioners and pet owners with a highly sophisticated tool for pinpointing and treating disease in their animals.

“There are many advantages to the Titan, notably its 71-centimeter patient aperture — known as the open bore — which will be a benefit in examining large animals,” said Clifford “Kip” Berry, D.V.M., a professor of radiology at UF and chief of the VMC’s radiology service.

Magnetic resonance imaging, or MRI, is used in veterinary medicine to look inside an animal’s body to evaluate diseases and other problems. The new MR will provide veterinarians with a more detailed anatomic picture through high-resolution imaging and will enable them to image arterial and venous blood flow with the injection of an intravenous contrast medium, UF veterinarians said.

Berry said the new equipment is “faster, bigger and better” than what has previously been available

and provides UF with one more powerful tool to give veterinarians and their clients the most advanced imaging services.

“There is more space available inside the machine to accommodate patients, which should allow for better imaging of the mid to upper extremity of horses,” Berry said. “The Titan also is quieter than existing MR equipment, making it less likely that acoustic noise will awaken patients during diagnostic examinations.”

The equipment is designed so animals should not have to be repositioned during an MR study. Veterinary technologists also have the flexibility to load large animal patients into the equipment from the back end.

The VMC’s new MR unit and the 8-slice multidetector row Toshiba Aquilion CT unit now available at UF are among the most powerful imaging tools currently available for veterinary diagnostics in the Southeast.

The MR unit allows highly detailed images to be obtained in multiple planes of bone and soft tissue

in all species. Foot, fetlock, suspensory ligaments, carpus, hock and heads can be examined through MRI in the horse, while spiral CT may be used for 3-dimensional reconstruction in complex fracture repair planning of the extremity or stifle in large animals. In small animals, both modalities are routinely applied to neurologic and orthopedic cases at the VMC, with additional studies performed for radiation planning and metastasis evaluations.

“MR allows for exquisite distinction between normal and abnormal tissues,” Berry said. “The use of specialized sequences further increases the ability to distinguish between different types of pathology ranging from hemorrhagic infarctions to primary brain tumors and inflammatory disorders.”

Matthew Winter, D.V.M., an assistant professor of diagnostic imaging at UF’s VMC, added that MR also reveals bone, tendon and ligament pathology and can show bone bruising, meniscal damage and ligament tears that go undetected when using traditional radiography.

“All of our radiologists have strong interests in cross-sectional imaging, which gives UF a unique ability to serve the advanced imaging needs of Florida veterinarians,” Winter said. 

Honoring artists

History wall dedicated to Shands Arts in Medicine artists

By Kim Libby

Nineteen years ago, the Shands Arts in Medicine program began with just two artists and one bone marrow transplant unit. Today, it has grown to include visual, literary and performing artists and designers serving the entire Shands HealthCare community.

The program has helped hundreds of people feel better, which made Allison Wickham and other volunteers decide to say thank you to those who make it happen.

Wickham, a former intern and current employee of the program, coordinated the first Artists Appreciation Day in 2008 as a way to celebrate and honor the artists and administrators. It included a half-hour long show and small trophies along with baskets of gifts. But as the program grew another year stronger, she knew the festivities had to grow with it.

The second annual event was held Sept. 24 as a luncheon for 12 artists, program administrators and influential volunteers. At the event, an oral history wall was unveiled and dedicated to the artists. It includes biographies of everyone from the program's founders to current staff, with quotes and messages from volunteers and administrators about their work.

The wall, currently on display outside the AIM office, will be preserved on a 30-by-60-inch piece of Plexiglas and moved to a new location at Shands.

For artist Paula Patterson, a dramatist in residence, the wall was a chance for her work to be immortalized.

"Someday when I'm gone, my grandchildren can bring their kids to Shands hospital and see what a great program their grandmother was a part of," she said.

Wickham hopes the event will grow each year with increasing support and is already brainstorming ideas with fellow volunteers for 2010.

"This year, the wall was a great chance for everyone to walk down memory lane," she said. **P**



PHOTO BY APRIL FRAWLEY BIRDWELL

Shands Arts in Medicine volunteers Kelly Cuddihy and Jessica McElroy paused to check out the oral history wall on display outside the AIM office near the Shands at UF cafeteria.

A new *leash* on life Good Samaritan helps golden retriever get heart treatment



College of Veterinary Medicine cardiology resident Dr. Mandi Schmidt, left, and student Heather Rogers, right, pose with Anne Liebermann and Tucker in September.

By Sarah Carey

Thanks to a grant from a Good Samaritan and UF Veterinary Medical Center cardiologists, Tucker, a 2-year-old golden retriever with severe heart disease and no other chance for help, is back home in Fort Myers, Fla., with a new leash, er, lease, on life.

"Today I walked him and he walked me 70 percent of the time," said Anne Liebermann, Tucker's owner. "He was really raring to go. When we first got him at the age of 4 months, he could do about a block and that was it."

His condition worsened to the point that he showed increasing signs of stress, including fainting, with minimal exercise and exertion.

"We knew when we got him that he was sick," Liebermann said. "We didn't have the cash or the funds to do anything other than normal maintenance but just decided we would give him as good a life as we could while he was with us."

Liebermann brought Tucker to Gainesville in mid-September on the advice of her veterinarian, who had learned about a congenital heart disease study underway at the VMC. The veterinarian believed Tucker might be a candidate.

After examining the dog, however, Amara Estrada, D.V.M., an assistant professor of cardiol-

gy, and her team determined Tucker did not qualify because his particular heart disease did not meet the study's criteria.

"He not only had really bad heart disease, his owner also was unable to afford an interventional procedure to treat him," Estrada said.

About two years ago, however, an anonymous client generously donated \$4,000 to the cardiology service to help the owners of cats that suffered from heart disease but who could not afford care.

Although Tucker was a dog, the funds had not been spent because there have not been any viable feline candidates, Estrada said. Cardiology resident Mandi Schmidt, D.V.M., contacted the donors to ask if they would allow Tucker's medical expenses to be covered. The owners agreed. Soon thereafter, cardiologists performed a cardiac catheterization and effectively ballooned his pulmonary valve.

A week after the procedure, Tucker was no longer fainting and his owner described him as "like a new dog," Schmidt said.

Liebermann added she had not realized how much Tucker's illness had taken out of him.

"If we hadn't heard about the study at UF we never would have taken him up, so everything really fell into place," she said. **P**



Helping hoooves

HSC students, faculty involved in program that uses horses for occupational therapy

By Jessica Metzger and Laura Mize

Christopher Williams, 7, loves trotting along on P.J., short for Princess Jasmine. He squeals in excitement when the volunteers and occupational therapist Cathi Brown, M.Sc., O.T.R./L coax the horse to trot faster. Once P.J. slows down again, Brown has Christopher place his hands on his helmet to work on his balance.

Christopher hardly realizes he is doing therapy. He just thinks it's fun.

Christopher has autism. Bryan Williams, the boy's father, said they have been coming to Horses Helping People, or HOPE, an organization that specializes in serving people with disabilities through equine-assisted therapy, since April.

Sessions at HOPE have replaced the at-home therapy Christopher used to receive. Bryan Williams says his son is more alert and responsive than before he started going to HOPE.

Started in 2000, HOPE relies solely on donations and help from volunteers,

including many from UF's Health Science Center.

Amy Anderson, a riding instructor at HOPE, is a student in the College of Public Health and Health Professions' Master's in Occupational Therapy program. Brown is a graduate of the program.

Numerous members of the organization's board of directors and advisory committee also work at the Health Science Center.

Kristen Shimeall, HOPE's executive director, says these people make a big difference for the people receiving therapy at HOPE.

"Our riders get attached to our volunteers and look forward to seeing them every week," Shimeall said. "For our riders, it's not just coming out and riding a horse, they are developing bonds with both the volunteers and the horses."

HOPE operates at a 40-acre farm in Archer, Fla.

Patients like Christopher benefit from equine therapy because it focuses on improving their balance, coordination and flexibility. Brown and volunteers play games with the patients and have them perform certain exercises while they ride the horses. Throwing a ball back and forth while atop the horse, for example, works on balance.

Patients begin their therapy sessions by brushing and dressing the horse for 30 minutes, with help from an occupational therapist. Shimeall said the repetitive actions involved help improve sensory perception and memory.

Stephanie Helinger, 21, an animal science major in UF's College of Agriculture, began volunteering at HOPE in May. She prepares the horses and leads them during therapy sessions.

"I know how much horses have really helped me in my life, and I can really imagine how much help they are to those with disabilities," said Helinger, who began riding lessons when she was 10. "At first the kids are quiet, but they really get into it. They make me more thankful for my life."

Dale Ginder, 7, comes to HOPE because he has Duchenne muscular dystrophy, the most common and fatal form of the disease. Dale's muscles don't produce dystrophin, which is what the muscles need to fix themselves after even daily use. As he damages his muscles, they are being replaced with fat.

"Ultimately, these boys die from heart and or lung failure since these are also muscles," explained Rick Ginder, Dale's father. "(For children with Duchenne), the progression is typically in a wheelchair by 10 or 12 and death in their early 20s, sometimes younger and in some cases older. Later in life he will lose the use of most muscles and will need assistance with almost everything."

Riding horses at HOPE is one way Dale is making the most of his youth.

"It is supposed to be one of the fun ways to maintain their core strength," said Rick Ginder. "He sees it as learning to ride a horse rather than therapy. While his older brother does basketball and football, Dale gets to ride.

"As parents we are trying to make his life as much like his friends so that he has memories to look back on when he won't be able to do even these things." P



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

Horses Helping People helps people with disabilities using equine therapy.

Saving lives in



minutes or less ...

UF CPR & Safety Training Center expands to reach community

By Kim Libby

Training to save a life can now be accomplished in record time – just 22 minutes – thanks to a new course offered by the UF CPR & Safety Training Center.

A part of the College of Medicine since July 1, the center is now offering “CPR Anytime” to anyone in the Gainesville community.

Participants attend a live class for 20 minutes to learn the correct way to perform breaths, compressions and cycles, and leave with a kit to practice at home. The package includes an instructional video, a booklet from the American Heart Association and a personal CPR Mini Anne Manikin. The manikin features a tab for an adult or child and audible clicking during compressions to ensure the student is pressing hard enough into the sternum. The cost for the adult CPR course and kit is \$30, while the cost for infant CPR is \$35.

“The goal with this program is for people to feel comfortable about giving bystander CPR,” said Victor Martinez, the program’s community outreach coordinator. “That way, if you ever feel unsure, you can just pop in the DVD and refresh your skills.”

Even though the program does not certify a student in CPR, the training will ensure you are equally prepared, said Wes Henderson, program development coordinator. After a person becomes unresponsive for four to six minutes, brain damage is possible. The response time for emergency services can be seven minutes or longer, so taking action could save someone’s life, he said.

The center plans to use the 20-minute program as part of their Gator Saver Initiative, which includes six events in the upcoming year throughout the community. The largest program is “CPR in the Schools.” The center plans to provide adult/child CPR Anytime kits to 2,000 graduating seniors of the Alachua County Public School System and offer them extra credit if they train five family members, bringing the total to 10,000 people trained.

The next main Gator Saver Initiative event is the Gator Saver Day, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 24. During this event, organizers will bring the 20-minute CPR Anytime kits to participants throughout the Gainesville community in a mass training session. The center is hoping to raise \$128,000 to cover the cost of all of the events it has planned for the year.

“Right now, the national survival rate from sudden cardiac arrest outside of a hospital is 6 percent,” Henderson said. “Our goal is to increase that percentage so that individuals can be responsible and Gainesville can become a heart-safe community.” 

The UF CPR Safety & Training Center is now part of the College of Medicine and is offering courses geared toward the community.

PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL



Interested in classes?

The CPR & Safety Training Center offers courses in a wide variety of areas, including:

Adult, Child and Infant CPR, Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Healthcare Provider (BLS), Airway Management, Bloodborne Pathogens, AED and First Aid Training, Disaster Preparedness, First Responder, Wilderness First Responder, Advanced Wilderness First Responder, Wilderness First Aid, Lifeguarding, Low-tech Navigation and Pet First Aid. The center is in the process of adding classes in Maritime First Aid, Maritime First Responder and Coast Guard Certification for Medical Person on Duty.

For any of the training courses offered, the staff is able to hold classes in doctors’ offices and large groups as well as at the center. For more information, visit the Web site at <http://cpr.med.ufl.edu> or call Wes Henderson at 352-682-5259.

Growing discovery

By April Frawley Birdwell

The HSC has received **75 grants** totaling **\$72 million** from the **National Institutes of Health** as part of the federal stimulus package. First, yay! But exactly how will this infusion of money help UF scientists in the long term and what does it mean for the community? This month, *The POST* explores these issues and shows how some scientists are using the one-time-only opportunity to grow their research.

Money doesn't grow in Petri dishes. If it did, scientists would all drive fire-engine red convertibles and the stagnating National Institutes of Health budget for research funding wouldn't have hit science as hard as it did during the past few years.

But after several years of heightened competition for dwindling health research dollars — a cut-throat environment that has made it particularly difficult for fledgling scientists to get established — science got a bit of a welcome change this year. In February, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), part of which promised several billion to the NIH and other agencies to dole out to scientists.

“It was like opening the spigot of a fire hydrant,” says David Guzick, M.D., Ph.D., UF’s senior vice president for health affairs and president of the UF&Shands Health System. “We went from a very dry situation to one where all of a sudden we had to drink from the fire hose of ARRA without leaving valuable opportunities scattered around us.”

So far, about \$5 billion in these one-time-only funds have been allotted to scientists across the country for research. Of that, UF Health Science Center researchers have received about \$72 million from the NIH. The window of opportunity was small, too. After the NIH announced the availability of these funds, researchers had about 10 weeks to submit proposals. HSC faculty quickly submitted about 400 grant applications.

“Our faculty were extraordinarily active in their grant submissions,” Guzick says. “And judging from the \$72 million of results so far, they were extraordinarily meritorious in the quality of their science. And there are some grants that are still in the review process, so the final figures could be a lot higher.”

Aside from keeping scientists on the path toward discovery, this infusion of dollars to labs across campus could generate as many as 1,100 new jobs in the community, Guzick says. An investment in science here can have a multiplier effect down the road as innovation travels from the lab to companies that turn discoveries into commercial products and eventually to society, which benefits from better medicine and technology, he added.

Seventy-five NIH grants have been funded in the HSC alone, more than anywhere else in Florida. The money will help UF researchers study everything from diabetes and HIV to ethnic differences in pain and biomarkers for various diseases. The largest of these grants was awarded to investigator Marco Pahor, M.D., the director of UF’s Institute on Aging. Pahor’s grant is the largest federal award ever given to study the prevention of movement disability in older adults.

In Pahor’s case, funding for his study will continue from other federal sources after the stimulus funds expire in two years. But for many researchers, the biggest question is what happens next? The stimulus funds were a one-time shot in the arm. Unless more federal dollars are pumped into funding science, many research projects started now might not continue.

“In 2011, we might be in jeopardy,” says Stephen Sugrue, Ph.D., senior associate dean for research affairs in the College of Medicine. “Once you fire up the engines to higher rpm’s it’s very difficult to downshift. When you downshift, you are laying people off, which causes many problems, and science suffers.”

In an average year, for example, about one quarter of College of Medicine grants expire and only about 20 percent of those are renewed without interruption to funding, Sugrue says. With the extra competition sparked by the ARRA grants, renewals could become even tougher to get, too.

Apart from what the future funding outlook holds, two other more immediate grant concerns could affect researchers’ chances of getting their grants funded in the upcoming year, Sugrue says. First, the NIH has changed how it scores popular R01 proposals. Instead of scoring the overall grant, review panels are now specifically scoring on five individual categories: significance, approach, innovation, investigator and environment. The NIH has also scaled down how long it wants grant proposals to be. Instead of 25 pages, proposals are required to be 12 pages starting in January.

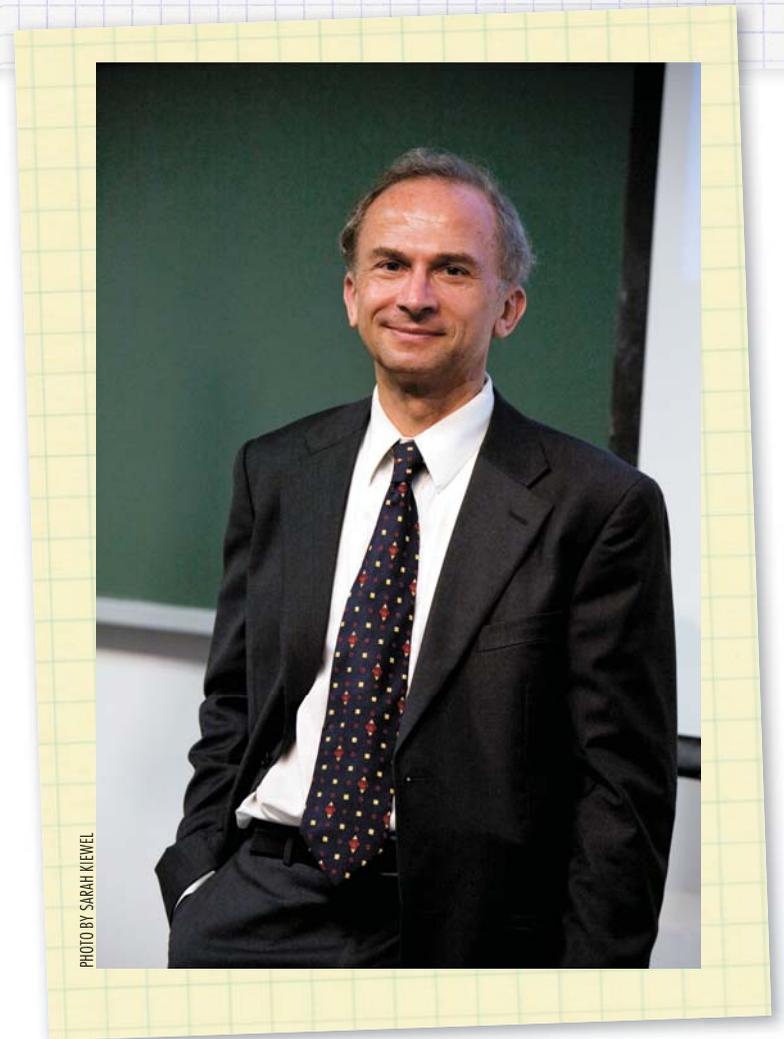
“Their goal is to really get away from the minutia of methodology and highlight the impact of the science and the training background of the researcher,” Sugrue says. “This is one of the big problems in science, we want to communicate in detail, but in doing so we may lose the big picture.”

And getting all people to understand the big picture and what makes a scientific proposal significant also could help government leaders appreciate why such projects should be funded, too.

“The goal is anybody should be able to read the first few pages of your proposal and get it,” Sugrue says. **P**

The LIFE study

Many studies have shown that regular physical activity improves physical performance. And the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that adults engage in least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity each week, as well as muscle-strengthening activities. Still, little is known about whether exercise can actually help prevent major mobility disability, defined as the inability to walk a quarter of a mile or four blocks. To fill this gap in scientific knowledge, UF researcher Marco Pahor, M.D., and colleagues received a six-year, \$64.4 million grant from the National Institute on Aging. The grant is the largest federal award UF has ever received and the largest given to any institution for a study of this kind. About half the grant is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. For older adults, staving off disability could help them maintain their physical independence and enhance the quality of their later years. “We all know that physical activity is good for our health, but the definitive evidence whether it can prevent disability in older people — whether you can prevent them from being unable to walk — is lacking,” said Pahor, director of the UF Institute on Aging and principal investigator of the study. The new study, called the Lifestyle Interventions and Independence for Elders, or LIFE study, is a phase 3 randomized controlled trial of 1,600 sedentary adults age 70 to 89 who are at risk of disability and will be conducted at eight institutions around the country. — *Czerne M. Reid*



Marco Pahor, M.D.

Facebook for scientists

Imagine a Web site like Facebook, but instead of using it to share videos or post quizzes like “What ‘80s song are you?” scientists could scour a national network of researchers, only a few mouse clicks separating them from information needed for a scientific breakthrough. That’s the goal of a \$12.2 million National Center for Research Resources grant awarded to UF and six collaborating institutions across the country. During the next two years, researchers will implement a new type of networking system at the seven schools that eventually will link researchers across the country and world to like-minded peers and potential collaborators. By making it easier for scientists to find each other, researchers will be able to improve their ongoing studies and forge collaborations that could lead to new discoveries, said Michael Conlon, Ph.D., interim director of biomedical informatics for UF and the principal investigator on the grant. “Scientists have problems finding each other,” Conlon said. “We often find that researchers have pretty good networks with students or with scientists at institutions where they received their degree or worked before. But they don’t always know people even at their own institutions.” The new program will draw information about scientists from official, verifiable sources and make it available using a type of technology called the Semantic Web. Although users will still view the information on what looks like regular Web pages, the software developed by Cornell University researchers — called VIVO — actually collects the facts a person wants and assembles its own page. — April Frawley Birdwell



PHOTO BY PRISCILLA SANTOS

(From left) Chris Barnes, Valrie Davis, M.L.S.; Wallace McLendon, M.S.L.S., Judith Russell, M.L.S.; Michael Conlon, Ph.D.; Sara Russell Gonzalez, Ph.D.; and Narayan Raum were among several UF researchers who collaborated on the grant.

Muscle degeneration

Research teams led by Krista Vandendorne, Ph.D., chair of the College of Public Health and Health Professions’ department of physical therapy, have received \$3.3 million to support three studies on the prevention or treatment of muscle degeneration. In the largest study, UF and University of Pennsylvania scientists will investigate drug therapies that can inhibit or reverse muscle atrophy caused by disuse. Researchers expect to identify at least one, and as many as three, new drug interventions that show promise for improving muscle regeneration. “The drugs used in the study are either approved for human use or they are in clinical development, so they can be translated quickly from the animal model to human clinical trials,” Vandendorne said. The research team will also develop a new animal model for spinal cord injury studies that more closely resembles spinal cord injury in humans. The new study is expected to create or retain at least 19 faculty and staff jobs in Florida and Pennsylvania. — Jill Pease

Krista Vandendorne, Ph.D., works in her lab with fellow researcher (and husband) Glenn Walter, Ph.D.



PHOTO BY SARAH MEVIEL

The fall guy

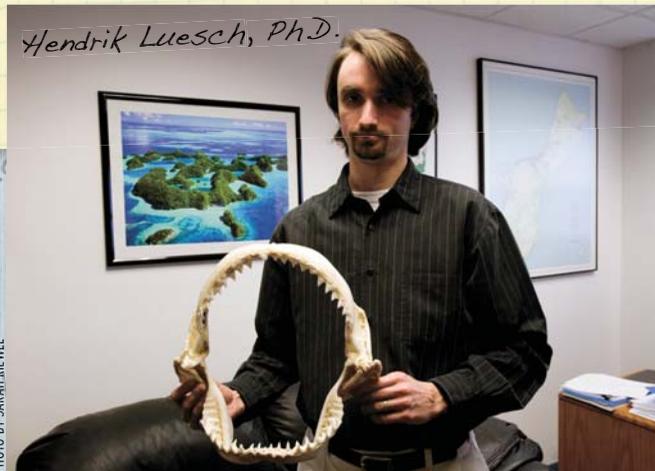
Ron Shorr, M.D., M.S., a professor of aging and geriatric research at UF and director of the Veterans Affairs Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center, received \$1.6 million from the NIH to study whether a new Medicare rule eliminating payment for treatment of injuries associated with in-hospital falls will lower the rate of falls among people who are hospitalized. Using data from 3,000 nursing units at 1,000 hospitals, the researchers will look at whether the rule has the intended effect of reducing falls and the unintended negative effect of increased use of physical restraints to keep people anchored to beds or chairs. The rate of falls and restraint use in the 27 months before the rule came into effect and the 27 months after will be analyzed. There are no measures that have proven effective at reducing the rate of patient falls. Study field sites are UF, Methodist Health Care in Tennessee, Vanderbilt University, Louisiana State University, University of Tennessee and University of Kansas. — Czerne M. Reid

Understanding ‘Ouch!’

Pain affects people differently. For example, studies have shown that African-American and Hispanic people tend to have stronger responses to pain than white people. The question is why? College of Dentistry research Roger Fillingim, Ph.D., a professor of community dentistry and behavioral science, has been studying ethnic differences in pain perception for years and received a \$3.6 million grant from the NIH earlier this year to study whether whites and African-Americans differ in their response to pain from arthritis. When the stimulus package was announced, he applied for an additional grant and received \$713,000 to also find out how his study participants’ perception of pain differs from healthy individuals, too. “Many people do not know there are these disparities in pain,” Fillingim says. “If we want to correct these disparities, we have to understand where they come from ... It’s very complex, but we are just trying to look at several aspects associated with race that might give us some ideas for how to tailor treatment.” — April Frawley Birdwell

Sea science

Hendrik Luesch, Ph.D., an assistant professor from UF's department of medicinal chemistry, received \$327,441 from the National Cancer Institute to help further his study of the biology and chemistry of largazoles. Certain marine cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, which grow in the Florida Keys near Key Largo, produce an anticancer natural product he calls largazole. As a marine drug researcher, Luesch has found that largazole stop an enzyme known as histone deacetylase, sparking anti-tumor effects in the body. Because Luesch and collaborators have already reproduced the chemical structure of largazole in the lab, he now hopes to use it to help produce a more effective or more specific agent against cancer. — *Kim Libby*



Calling all ataxia experts

Even with devastating brain diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, doctors can reach into their medical bags to help a patient. But nothing can be done for the vast majority of patients with ataxia, a group of disabling disorders that robs people of their balance and coordination. UF neurologists are trying to change that with the help of a \$1 million grant from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke to establish a nationwide network of physician scientists with expertise in clinical ataxia research. "A lot of times I explain to patients the symptoms of ataxia are similar to what happens when someone gets too much alcohol into their system," says S.H. Subramony, M.D., a professor of neurology in the UF College of Medicine. Ataxia can be hereditary or it could be brought on by strokes, tumors or other medical problems. "Our first goal is to find a treatment to make patients' lives easier," says Tetsuo Ashizawa, M.D., chair of neurology in the College of Medicine and principal investigator of the project. "But the common thread of ataxia with diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Huntington's and ALS is that neurons are dying. By studying ataxia, we can create insight into the neurodegenerative process in all of those diseases." — *John Pastor*

Tetsuo Ashizawa, M.D.



Toxic exposure

More than 80,000 man-made compounds exist in the environment, including in rivers, lakes and streams. Although most pose little or no risk to humans, a few are dangerous, even when present in trace amounts. To better understand how exposure to these chemicals could affect people and the environment, researchers from the UF College of Veterinary Medicine are studying liver and reproductive toxicity in fish. Researchers Nancy Denslow, Ph.D., and colleague David Barber, Ph.D., received a \$220,000 grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to study how toxic chemicals commonly found at Superfund toxic waste sites could be affecting liver function and reproduction in largemouth bass. The study seeks to identify mechanisms underlying liver toxicity and determine if there are previously unidentified reproductive effects of chemicals such as trichloroethylene, benzene and cadmium. The biochemical effects of these chemicals will be compared to the effects of pesticides that still linger in the environment, despite being banned for 30 years. "If you're exposed to something and 20 years later you come down with a disease how are you ever going to trace it back to the exposure," said Denslow, a UF professor of physiological sciences in the College of Veterinary Medicine. "If we chart this in fish, that is a good model for how similar exposures could affect human health." — *April Frawley Birdwell*

Exercise science

Judy Delp, Ph.D., an associate professor of physiology and functional genomics, won a \$415,000 grant from the NIH to study how age-related deficits in small blood vessels can limit exercise capability in the elderly. Her team is trying to correct a process that causes reduced blood flow when the body needs it most, such as during physical activity. During exercise, the lining of blood vessels — such as micro-vessels in skeletal muscle — expand because of the production of nitric oxide. The researchers have found that a chemical called BH4 helps stimulate nitric oxide production, but that less of it is available as people age, leading to lower nitric oxide production. Delp will try to solve that problem in rat models using gene therapy to improve the cells ability to make their own BH4, and by exercise-training animals to try to enhance nitric oxide production. — *Czerne M. Reid*

PHOTO BY APRIL FRAWLEY BIRDWELL





A little bit of sunshine

Haitian M.P.H. staff member gives back to homeland, community



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

SLANDE CELESTE

By Alyssa LaRenzie

Slande Celeste is busy being fabulous.

The line borrowed from The Eagles sums up the Haitian-born Master of Public Health internship coordinator to a T. She stays busy with her volunteer and public health education work, but it isn't really work to her. It's just fabulous.

With a big smile and a hearty laugh, Celeste, whose first name means "sunshine" in Creole, describes almost every aspect of her life as "fabulous."

Though she's lived in the United States for most of her life, Celeste has traveled back to Haiti many times, most recently with a group of UF faculty and staff as part of the Sante pou Lavi project. Sante pou Lavi, which means "Health for Life" in Creole, hopes to set up a sustainable base for student learning, community service and research in Haiti. As the internship coordinator, Celeste is thrilled students will have the opportunity for international work in a location where help is needed.

"We don't want to go and do one-week trips because that only benefits the students," Celeste said. "We want to be able to make a difference in the community as well as allow the M.P.H. students to develop practical skills."

As a Haitian-American, Celeste plays an important role in the group. On the last trip, she performed needs assessments for the communities and provided a great deal of translation assistance.

Celeste's knowledge of culture, language and health education makes her an invaluable member of the team, said Gina Murray, a member of Sante pou Lavi and the educational coordinator for the Program for Interdisciplinary Education.

During her time as a UF student, Celeste was chosen for the Coca-Cola World Citizenship Program, working with the humanitarian organization World Vision International. Her knowledge of English, French and Creole allowed her to translate many important documents and conduct numerous assessments as she stayed in Haiti working for an extra year with the group.

Seeking economic opportunities, Celeste's parents moved to the U.S.

when she was a child, leaving her and her sister, Manoucheka, with their grandmother. As a Haitian child during the violent era of Jean-Claude Duvalier, known as Papa Doc's son, Celeste can remember her grandma hiding her and her sister under the bed amid gunshots.

Celeste followed her parents to the United States at 6 years old, flying into the John F. Kennedy Airport and experiencing frightening escalators and parking garages for the first time.

Celeste said she didn't develop such a great appreciation for her culture until she moved away from her family's home in Altamonte Springs, Fla., to Gainesville for school, where she earned her bachelor's degree in health science education and her master's of public health. Seeing so many different cultures opened her up to the importance of celebrating her own background. Eventually, her interests in public health and her heritage would merge and bring her back to her homeland.

"That's a huge part of our identity," Manoucheka Celeste said. "To be able to do something positive rather than just going and vacationing. I think it's a no-brainer for her."

Manoucheka said her sister, the oldest child, was always the leader of the pack when they were growing up. Now, the "worker bee" chooses how to spend her time carefully to spread the sunshine across many causes.

Though many of her public health efforts focus on Haiti, Celeste keeps busy in her own community, too. A self-described "avid wannabe gardener," Celeste volunteers with the Edible Plant Project, a nonprofit nursery and collective. She also started two school gardens and one community garden during her time working as a health educator consultant for the Levy County Health Department.

Celeste continues to work on the Sante pou Lavi project and is looking forward to the next trip later this fall.

"She's very positive. She never has anything negative to say. She's always so gracious and complimentary," Murray said. "She's fabulous, what can I say?" **P**

Eat your **vegetables** (first)

Compounds in **plant-based foods** help fight obesity, disease

By April Frawley Birdwell

The cheeseburger and French fries might look tempting, but eating a serving of broccoli or leafy greens first could help people battle metabolic processes that lead to obesity and heart disease, a new UF study shows.

Eating more plant-based foods, which are rich in substances called phytochemicals, seems to prevent oxidative stress in the body, a process associated with obesity and the onset of disease, according to findings published online in advance of the print edition of the *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics*.

To get enough of these protective phytochemicals, researchers suggest eating plant-based foods such as leafy greens, fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes at the start of a meal. Using what is known as a phytochemical index, which compares the number of calories consumed from plant-based foods with the overall number of daily calories, could also help people make sure they remember to get enough phytochemicals during their regular meals and snacks, said Heather K. Vincent, Ph.D., the lead author of the paper.

“We need to find a way to encourage people to pull back on fat and eat more foods rich in micronutrients and trace minerals from fruits, vegetables, whole grains and soy,” said Vincent, an assistant professor in the UF Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine Institute. “Fill your plate with colorful, low-calorie, varied-texture foods derived from plants first. By slowly eating phytochemical-rich foods such as salads with olive oil or fresh-cut fruits before the actual meal ... you’re ensuring that you get the variety of protective, disease-fighting phytochemicals you need and controlling caloric intake.”

The researchers studied a group of 54 young adults, analyzing their dietary patterns over a three-day period, repeating the same measurement eight weeks later. The participants were broken into two groups: normal weight and overweight-obese.

Although the adults in the two groups

consumed about the same amount of calories, overweight-obese adults consumed fewer plant-based foods and subsequently fewer protective trace minerals and phytochemicals and more saturated fats. They also had higher levels of oxidative stress and inflammation than their normal-weight peers, Vincent said. These processes are related to the onset of obesity, heart disease, diabetes and joint disease, she added.

“Diets low in plant-based foods affect health over the course of a long period of time,” Vincent said. “This is related to annual weight gain, low levels of inflammation and oxidative stress. Those are the onset processes of disease that debilitate people later in life.”

Oxidative stress occurs when the body produces too many damaging free radicals and lacks enough antioxidants or phytochemicals to counteract them. Because of excess fat tissue and certain enzymes that are more active in overweight people, being obese can actually trigger the production of more free radicals, too.

Because many phytochemicals have antioxidant properties, they can help combat free radicals, Vincent said. Phytochemicals include substances such as allin from garlic, lycopene from tomatoes, isoflavones from soy, beta carotene from orange squashes and anthocyanins from red wine, among others.

“People who are obese need more fruits, vegetables, legumes and wholesome unrefined grains,” she said. “In comparison to a normal-weight person, an obese person is always going to be behind the eight ball because there are so many adverse metabolic processes going on.”

Instead of making drastic changes, people could substitute one or two choices a day



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

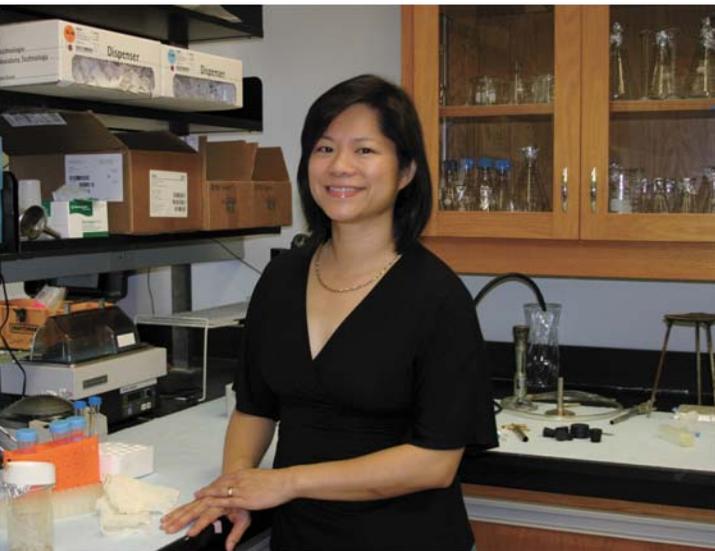
with phytochemical-rich foods to make a difference in their diets, Vincent said. For example, substituting a cup of steeped plain tea instead of coffee or reaching for an orange instead of a granola bar could increase a person’s phytochemical intake for the day without even changing the feeling of fullness. Over time, replacing more pre-packaged snacks with fresh produce or low-sugar grains could become a habit that fights obesity and disease, Vincent said.

“We always want to encourage people to go back to the whole sources of food, the nonprocessed foods if we can help it,” Vincent said. “That would be the bottom line for anyone, regardless of age and body size, keep going back to the purer plant-based foods. Remember to eat the good quality food first.”

A trigger for colon cancer?

UF finding sheds light on cells' transition from colitis to cancer

By Jennifer Brindise



EMINA HUANG, M.D.

UF researchers have grown tumors in mice using cells from inflamed but noncancerous colon tissue taken from human patients, a finding that sheds new light on colon cancer and how it might be prevented.

Scientists observed that cancer stem cells taken from the gastrointestinal system in patients with a chronic digestive disease called ulcerative colitis will transform into cancerous tumors in mice.

The finding, featured on the cover of the Oct. 15 issue of *Cancer Research*, may help explain why patients with colitis have up to a 30-fold risk of developing colon cancer compared with people without the disease.

New understanding of the link between colitis and cancer could lead to diagnostic tests that would evaluate tissue taken from patients with colitis for signs of cancer stem cell development, thereby identifying patients who may be at greater risk for cancer.

“Ultimately it would be great if we could prevent colitis or treat colitis so it never gets to the cancerous stage,” said UF College of Medicine colorectal surgeon Emina Huang, M.D., who is a member of the Program in Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine at UF’s McKnight Brain Institute.

Although colonoscopy is very effective in screening and preventing colon cancer for most people, for patients with colitis no diagnostic tests work well because the inflamed tissue makes identification of precancerous changes difficult.

According to the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of America, approximately 700,000 people have colitis in the United States. The National Cancer Institute estimates that cancer of the colon and rectum will claim the lives of about 50,000 people this year.

UF scientists gathered colitic tissue from humans and chemically screened it for colon cancer stem cells, also called tumor-initiating cells. These cells were then isolated and monitored in mice to see if tumors would grow.

Huang said these findings shed light on that fact that it may not be just the cancer “seed” cell, but the “soil” — in this case inflamed colon tissue — that plays a role in the development of cancer.

“Is it the seed, is it the soil or is it their interaction?” she said. “We think probably both, but now we have a new way to look at it and a new method of attack.” **P**

The need for screening

Grant to help UF doctors deliver cancer care to needy Floridians

By Elizabeth Connor

UF is one of three academic medical centers in Florida that will provide screening and care for colorectal cancer under a new \$850,000 grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Only a minority of Floridians ever receives colon cancer screening,” said Thomas George, M.D., director of UF’s gastrointestinal oncology program and a member of the UF Shands Cancer Center. “We are targeting people with the most to gain. For them, this screening could mean the difference between life and death.”

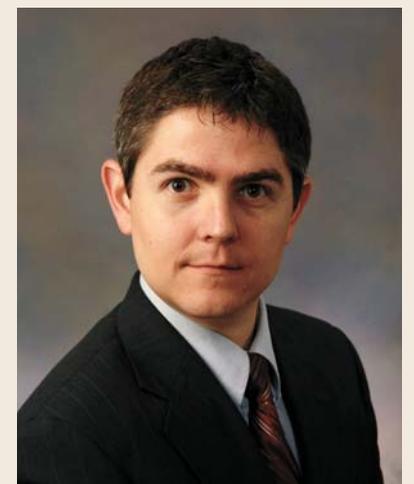
Colon cancer screening under the grant is targeted at those ages 50 to 64 with little or no health insurance coverage, said Susan Fleming, R.N., a cancer program administrator with the Florida Department of Health. Shands at UF, along with grant partners Jackson Memorial Hospital at the University of Miami and Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, will provide follow-up care at no charge for any cancers detected in the screening.

Program organizers are working with local county public health units, the College of Medicine Equal Access Clinic and selected faculty practices to help identify people who may be eligible for the screening at UF.

The five-year program began July 1 and services are slated to begin Jan. 1.

Part of the grant funds will be used for colorectal cancer education and awareness. Other grant efforts will seek to identify the cultural, geographic and other barriers that can deter people from getting screened for colon cancer.

In 2009, colorectal cancer will claim about 50,000 lives in the United States, about evenly divided between men and women, according to the American Cancer Society. Florida colorectal cancer deaths during 2009 are estimated to be about 3,500. **P**



THOMAS GEORGE, M.D.

TESTING H1N1

UF part of trials to test H1N1 vaccine in HIV-infected women, children

MOBEEN RATHORE, M.D.



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

By Czerne M. Reid

The UF Center for HIV/AIDS Research, Education and Safety in Jacksonville is taking part in national clinical trials of the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine among children, youth and pregnant women who are infected with HIV.

The trials' aim is to determine how well higher-than-usual doses of the vaccine trigger a protective immune response in the study populations. The trials will help clarify whether candidates need one or two doses and will allow continued evaluation of the vaccine's safety. The strength of the response — and how long it lasts — also will be evaluated.

Clinical trials have shown that a 15-microgram dose of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine protects healthy adults and older children. But children, youth and pregnant women who have HIV might not be as well-protected by the same doses. Trial participants will receive two 30-microgram doses of vaccine by injection 21 days apart.

"In the immune-suppressed population there is always a concern that they may not be able to respond to the vaccine," said Mobeen Rathore, M.D., director of the UF Center for HIV/AIDS Research, Education and Safety — also known as UF CARES — who is leading the UF trials. "We give the vaccine realizing that it may or may not work — provided it is safe."

The FDA-approved study vaccine contains inactivated 2009 H1N1 influenza virus and cannot cause infection.

HIV compromises the immune system, making people more vulnerable to attack from disease-causing agents. Pregnant women who have HIV are at increased risk because of their pregnancy in addition to a suppressed immune system. The 2009 H1N1 influenza appears to cause a much higher mortality rate among pregnant women than among others. But even with the "regular" seasonal flu, pregnant women are at increased risk of sickness and death, including fetal death.

Children generally are at higher risk from H1N1 influenza because their immune systems are not as well-developed as those of older persons. In addition, adults have some level of protection against the 2009 H1N1 flu virus because of previous exposure to similar flu viruses, something young children generally lack.

One trial will enroll 130 pregnant women age 18 to 39 who are in their second or third trimester. Women will take part in the study until six months after delivering their babies. Their newborns will be studied during the first six months of life.

The other trial will involve 140 children and youth age 4 to 24 who were infected with HIV from birth. They will be followed for seven months from

enrollment.

Blood samples from subjects will be analyzed to determine the level of antibodies produced against the 2009 H1N1 flu virus and how those levels change over time. Newborns will be tested to see how many maternal antibodies were transferred to them from their mothers.

Participants at UF's study site will come from existing patient groups with which UF CARES works. The organization is the largest comprehensive HIV education program in North/Central Florida and performs NIH-funded HIV/AIDS research in infants, children, adolescents and women — including pregnant women. The program is staffed by a multidisciplinary team of researchers, physicians and other health professionals.

The vaccine trials are being conducted at 35 sites and eight sub-sites around the United States and Puerto Rico that are members of the International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials Group. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, both part of the National Institutes of Health, are sponsoring and funding the trials.

But Rathore, who is trained as a vaccinologist, isn't just concerned about people who are in the trial population.

"Whether one is participating in the study or not, I think it's important that everybody get the H1N1 vaccine to protect ourselves," he said. **P**



Jacksonville center focuses on patients **battling breast cancer**

By Kandra Albury

Danielle Horsley noticed the lump in her left breast when she was laying on her back in bed.

Horsley, 37, knew there was a possibility that the lump could be the unthinkable — breast cancer. Just a year earlier, one of her sisters had been diagnosed with the disease at age 29.

The next morning, Horsley contacted her gynecologist, Brent Seibel, M.D., a UF College of Medicine-Jacksonville assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology.

“I found it on a Wednesday night, called Thursday morning, and Dr. Seibel saw me on Friday at 11 a.m.,” Horsley said.

Within 24 hours of her call, a treatment plan was quickly put into action. Seibel, who sees patients at Emerson Medical Plaza, referred Horsley to a multidisciplinary team of physicians at the Breast Health Center, located in the same building.

The Breast Health Center is focused on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancers. The center’s collaborative team of physicians includes specialists in oncology, radiation therapy and breast surgery. The team also includes one of only two fellowship-trained breast surgeons in the Jacksonville area, Laila Samiian, M.D.

After a mammogram and ultrasound confirmed an abnormality was present, Horsley met with Samiian, a UF assistant professor of surgical oncology who specializes in treating breast cancer. Samiian evaluated Horsley and performed a biopsy on the same day to rule out cancer in the lymph nodes. By the time her pathology results were back, Horsley had an appointment scheduled with Samiian as well as a plastic surgeon.

“Her biopsy showed that she had a very aggressive, fast-growing breast cancer,” Samiian said. “We had to move as quickly as possible to improve her outcomes.”

Because her younger sister had been treated for breast cancer and tested positive for BRCA mutation — the gene that increases a woman’s risk of developing breast cancer — Samiian felt that Horsley would be at high risk for developing additional breast cancers in the future. So she recommended a prophylactic bilateral mastectomy, which involves removal of the diseased breast as well as the unaffected breast.

Five weeks after Horsley discovered the lump, surgeons removed both of her breasts at Shands Jacksonville. During the same operation, the breast reconstruction process began. Surgeon Christopher Vashi, M.D., placed expanders in Horsley to prepare for her permanent implants, an operation that would be performed months later.

Samiian said surgical removal of both breasts is more common now than it was several years ago due to advances in technology such as MRI, genetic testing and breast reconstruction options.

“Some women may have had a previous breast cancer treated



by lumpectomy and radiation and end up developing a second breast cancer,” Samiian said.

In some cases, patients cannot have radiation a second time and undergo mastectomy. They may choose to have the unaffected breast removed as a preventive measure to reduce the risk of another breast cancer and to achieve better symmetry during plastic surgery reconstruction.

Horsley underwent eight rounds of chemotherapy during the 16 weeks following her surgery. On Sept. 1, seven months after finding the lump, she returned to Shands Jacksonville to have the expanders removed and the permanent implants put in by Vashi.

“In several months, we will raise a mound of tissue to create a nipple,” Vashi said. “Once that has healed, we will then tattoo the areolas and this will hide the scar from the nipple flap.”

Vashi said the reconstruction process from start to finish takes about a year, giving the patient a break between procedures to heal.

After the areola is tattooed, a final touch-up procedure follows that could include anything from scar revision to aesthetics. These are usually short, small procedures that can be done in the physician’s office.

In the meantime, Horsley is resting and slowly getting back into the swing of things as she waits to schedule her final procedures.

“It was just over two weeks from me finding it to diagnosis, with ultrasound, mammogram and biopsy in between,” said the mother of three. “I’m just truly grateful for all of my physicians at Shands and everyone who helped me through this.” **P**

Danielle Horsley — with husband Todd and children Emily, 15, Shelby, 4 and Parker, 12 — is recovering after doctors with UF’s Breast Health Center in Jacksonville removed both her breasts to treat a fast-moving cancer.

Great nurses



Several College of Nursing faculty members were recently honored by the Florida Nurses Association as a part of their Centennial Great 100 Nurses. The Great 100 Nurses were nominated by their peers and selected as representing excellence in diverse areas of nursing practice. Among the College's faculty honorees were: **Andrea Gregg**, D.S.N., R.N., an associate professor and Jacksonville campus director, for nursing advocacy; **Pamela Pieper**, M.S.N., A.R.N.P., a clinical associate professor and pediatric surgery nurse practitioner/clinical nurse specialist for the department of surgery at Shands Jacksonville, for clinical nursing; **Joan Castleman**, M.S.N., R.N., a clinical associate professor, for community nursing; **Jo Snider**, Ed.D., R.N., an associate professor, for nursing education; **Jennifer Elder**, Ph.D., R.N., a professor and department chair, for research; and **Kathleen Long**, Ph.D., R.N., dean and a professor, for role model in nursing advocacy, research and education. Those selected were honored at the FNA Centennial Celebration banquet held in late September.

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

KENNETH I. BERNS, M.D., Ph.D., the director of the UF Genetics Institute, has been named to the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity, a key federal panel that advises on matters of national security and public health. Berns accepted an invitation to serve on the board for a term ending June 14, 2012, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. As one of a group of advisers to Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and National Institutes of Health Director Francis S. Collins, Berns will provide security oversight of what is termed "dual-use" research — legitimate biological research that could be misused to pose a biologic threat to public health or national security.



Kenneth I. Berns

MILDRED MALDONADO-MOLINA, Ph.D., an assistant professor of epidemiology and health policy research, received the 2009 National Award of Excellence in Research by a New Investigator from the National Hispanic Science Network. The award recognizes Maldonado-Molina's work related to methodology applications to drug and alcohol prevention science. In May, she also received the ECPN Early Career Award from the Society for Prevention Research.



Mildred Maldonado-Molina

GREGORY SCHULTZ, Ph.D., a professor of obstetrics and gynecology and director of the Institute for Wound Research, has been named director of the college's Medical Sciences Research Program. In his new role, Schultz will be in charge of the administration of the college's research track, will control the program's funding and will select students who are eligible for graduation with honors.



Gregory Schultz

COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

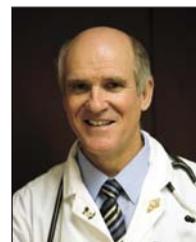
HENRIETTA L. LOGAN, Ph.D., a professor of community dentistry and behavioral science and director of the Southeast Center for Research to Reduce Disparities in Oral Health, was one of 30 UF faculty members who received a UF Research Foundation Professor award. Logan was selected for her notable record of research and strong research agenda likely to lead to further distinction in her field. This three-year award includes a \$5,000 annual salary supplement and a \$3,000 grant.



Henrietta L. Logan

COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

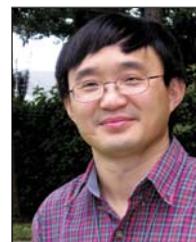
ROWAN J. MILNER, B.V.Sc., an associate professor of oncology, was appointed associate chief of staff of UF's small animal hospital. Milner, who is board certified in both small animal internal medicine and in oncology, will be in charge of the hospital's day-to-day operations. Milner joined UF's veterinary faculty in 2001. He was associate chair of the department of small animal clinical sciences in 2008 and was oncology service chief until assuming his new position in July.



Rowan J. Milner

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

BIN LIU, Ph.D., an assistant professor of pharmacodynamics, was one of 10 UF faculty members to receive the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Distinguished Mentor Award for 2009-2010. The two-year, \$10,000 award recognizes faculty members who are actively engaged with training of undergraduate students in research. Liu has mentored 21 undergraduate students, including 10 at UF.



Bin Liu

L. DOUGLAS RIED, Ph.D., an associate dean for the college, has been named dean of the Southwest Oklahoma State University College of Pharmacy. Ried came to UF in 1990 as an associate professor and served as an assistant dean from 2000-06. Ried also served as a professor in the colleges of Public Health and Health Professions and Medicine. Diane Beck, Pharm.D., a professor in the college, has been appointed as interim associate dean for curriculum and assessment in Ried's absence.



L. Douglas Ried



Karen Whalen

Carol Motycka

William Riffie

College of Pharmacy honors

Three UF College of Pharmacy faculty members were named to leadership positions for the the Florida Pharmacy Association in July during its annual meeting in St. Augustine, Fla. **Karen Whalen**, Pharm.D., a clinical associate professor and assistant director of the UF College of Pharmacy St. Petersburg campus, was installed as the 2009-2010 president of the FPA; **William Riffie**, Ph.D., a professor and dean of the College of Pharmacy, was named speaker-elect of the FPA; **Carol Motycka**, Ph.D., a clinical assistant professor and assistant dean and director of the UF College of Pharmacy Jacksonville campus, was elected chair of the education council of the FPA.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, HEALTH AFFAIRS

MELANIE FRIDL ROSS,

M.S.J., E.L.S., has been named director of the Health Science Center Office of News & Communications. After serving as interim director for the past year, Ross will continue to lead the office's communication efforts, working in cooperation with Shands HealthCare and UF University Relations.



Melanie Fridl Ross

JACKSONVILLE

Three College of Medicine-Jacksonville emergency medicine residents won the first annual Emergency Medicine Residents' Association Resident SimWars Competition Oct. 6. Emergency medicine residents Jack Forrest, M.D., Mark Laperouse, M.D., and John Lissoway, M.D., battled five other residency teams from around the country in this interactive simulation competition. The teams challenged each other on simulated patient care, as an expert panel rated their teamwork, communication, leadership, medical care and management of the patient.



Cancer Center names new director

Paul Okunieff, M.D., has been named director of the UF Shands Cancer Center and chair of the College of Medicine department of radiation oncology, effective Dec. 1. A graduate of Harvard Medical School, Okunieff is currently the Philip Rubin professor in radiation oncology and chair of the department of radiation oncology at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, where he leads a successful radiation oncology clinical practice and research program. He also is director of the university's Robert A. Flavin Radiosurgery Center. Prior to his appointment at Rochester in 1998, Okunieff served as branch chief of radiation oncology at the National Cancer Institute, overseeing clinical-translational research for the intramural NCI program. Okunieff succeeds Joseph V. Simone, M.D., an internationally recognized leader in cancer care, research and education who headed the Cancer Center and helped to advance an alliance with UF, Shands HealthCare and the Moffitt Cancer Center that was forged in 2008, and Robert J. Amdur, M.D., a professor and interim chair of the department of radiation oncology since 2006.

"Dr. Okunieff is a perfect match for the University of Florida and Shands HealthCare," said David S. Guzick, M.D., Ph.D., senior vice president for health affairs at UF's Health Science Center and president of the UF&Shands Health System. "At a time when we are opening a new Cancer Hospital, developing our already world-renowned Proton Beam Therapy Institute in Jacksonville with a plan to add a radiosurgery center at that site, enhancing our research program with a focus on translational and clinical research, and establishing a National Cancer Center consortium arrangement with Moffitt Cancer Center, Paul's extensive background in all of these areas and his extraordinary record of achievement are just what we need in Florida."

A gifted surgeon and leader

Dr. James M. Seeger, a professor and chief of vascular surgery and endovascular therapy, died Oct. 21. He was 62.

An internationally recognized leader in the field of vascular surgery, Dr. Seeger devoted his career to advancing patient care, educating future surgeons and conducting research to solve medical and surgical problems. He dedicated all but one year of his medical practice to Shands at UF and the UF Health Science Center.

"The UF College of Medicine has lost a great leader, skilled surgeon, compassionate physician, gifted teacher, inquisitive scientist and good friend," said Michael L. Good, M.D., interim dean of the college. "Jim's dedication and contributions to UF, his patients and students were unparalleled, spanning decades, touching and improving the lives of thousands."

Dr. Seeger joined UF in 1982 as an assistant professor of surgery and rose rapidly through the academic ranks, serving most recently as associate chairman of the department of surgery. In 1989 he established the division of vascular surgery, serving as its first and only chief, leading a dynamic team of surgeons and staff committed to improving patient care and advancing surgical science. He also served as chief of vascular surgery for the Malcom Randall Veterans Affairs Medical Center from 1982 to 1999.

His greatest passion was the vascular surgery fellowship program. Under his tutelage as director, more than 25 physicians went on to become accomplished vascular surgeons, many of whom are current leaders within the field.

Dr. Seeger's research interests included peripheral arterial disease and aortic surgery. He worked for several years on the

postoperative inflammatory response associated with major aortic reconstruction, and the role of this inflammatory response in the development of single and multi-organ failure after aortic repair.

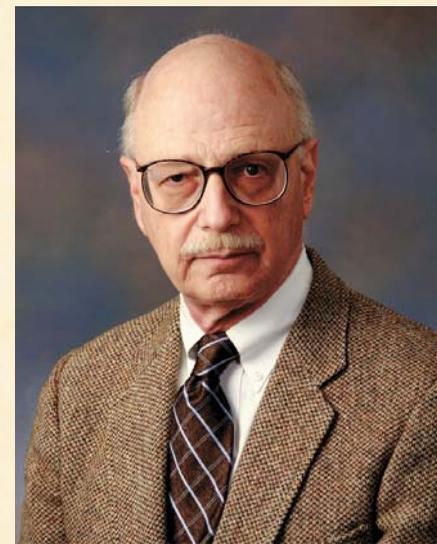
Though he was passionate about all aspects of vascular surgery, his brilliant analytical mind and his obsession for details were gifts that allowed him to be an innovative leader in the business practice of surgery, said Kevin Behrns, M.D., chair of the department of surgery.

"His determined work behind the scenes led to many changes in surgical practice and improvements in the care of patients," Behrns said.

He was a member of more than 20 professional organizations, including the American Surgical Association, Society of Vascular Surgery and the American College of Surgeons. He was serving his second term on the Society for Vascular Surgery's board of directors.

Dr. Seeger is survived by Carolyn, his wife of more than 36 years.

Please join the UF Department of Surgery in honoring the life and achievements of Dr. Serger on Wednesday, Nov. 18. Family and friends will receive guests beginning at 4 p.m., with the service beginning at 4:30 p.m. in the UF Health Professions, Pharmacy and Nursing Auditorium. — *Jennifer Brindise* **P**



JAMES M. SEEGER, M.D.

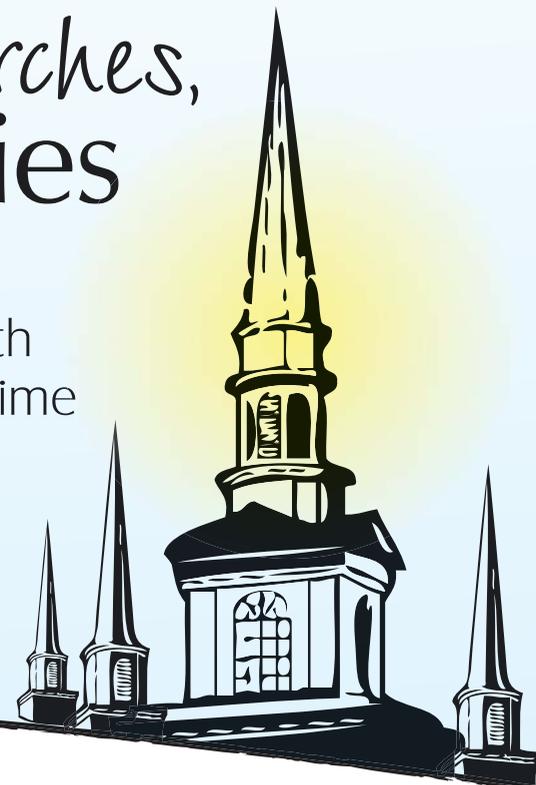


PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

Healthy churches, healthy families

How one UF professor and her team are reducing health disparities one church at a time

CAROLYN TUCKER, PH.D.



By Jessica Metzger

As Carolyn Tucker, Ph.D., takes the stage, she invites everyone to stand and sing with her, “One love, one heart. Let’s get together and feel alright.”

She uses this song as a motivational tool in her new Health-Smart Church Program, which brings church members, pastors, communities and families together to help improve African American health. The pilot program targets African-American women facing issues such as obesity or hypertension to both identify barriers to healthy behaviors and find ways to help them adopt healthier lifestyles. Why target women? In African-American families, the woman is often the center of the household; if she changes her behaviors, the family will follow, Tucker said.

“It is a sad fact that most of chronic diseases that occur in Florida and the U.S. have the highest prevalence among African-Americans, followed by Hispanics/Latinos,” said Tucker, a UF professor of psychology and community health and family medicine, and an endowed term professor of health disparities in the College of Medicine. “We African Americans are over-represented with regard to seemingly every chronic disease, and that has to change.”

The program was recently developed into a DVD that outlines Health-Smart Behaviors and how to overcome barriers like not having a safe place to exercise or time to prepare a healthy breakfast. Aside from directly teaching participants, the program also involves turning churches into health promotion centers, with church leaders and pastors receiving training to be health empowerment coaches.

“Some people believe they can’t exercise because they’re too fat to exercise and they feel embarrassed. This is a barrier,” Tucker said. “That’s one of the reasons we are focusing on having churches become health promotion centers — people often feel more comfortable in their church setting, as opposed to going to a gym or a public place.”

Kendall Campbell, M.D., an assistant dean of minority affairs for the College of Medicine and director of UF’s Eastside Community Practice, is a co-investigator of the Health-Smart Church Program. Participants come by his clinic and he keeps track of their blood pressure, body-mass index,

triglycerides and cholesterol levels.

“It’s a way to infiltrate the community, especially underserved minorities. Churches are the core hub of these communities; it’s the way to get access to the people,” Campbell said. “I’m a physician, I fight health disparities every day. The Health-Smart Church Program and its focus on Health-Smart Behaviors is just one component. It’s a good start and a new approach.”

Each participating church was given a treadmill and a balance beam scale, and with the help of graduate and undergraduate students, each is implementing a walking group, cardio-dance class and other physical exercise classes, Tucker said.

In addition to the health empowerment coaches, each family is assigned one student member from Tucker’s research team. These coach consultants call the family weekly and discuss their progress and any problems they may be facing. Soon, church members will take over these roles and will implement all aspects of the program.

“Being a part of an African-American church, I see the problem firsthand,” said Deloris Rentz, a community research coordinator for the program. “I think getting the churches involved is a good way to research some of the health issues. I think Dr. Tucker has the right idea in that the African-American church has a tremendous impact on the community. It’s one of the best ways historically to get the African-American community involved in promoting their own health.”

Rosa Williams, a community member partner who makes contacts with community groups and recruits participants, said she has known Tucker for a long time and respects her methods, dedication and manner.

“I got involved because I like her and I like what she does. She’s very concerned about people, especially minority health,” Williams said. “She’s a very unique person. She keeps going when most would stop.”

Tucker said her two goals are to train the next generation of researchers interested in community health promotion and to reduce health disparities by empowering communities and families to take charge of their health. To do this, she typically works 14- to 16-hour days, but it’s worth it, she says.

“When people ask what inspires me, I am reminded that a major part of my inspiration comes from the words of my grandfather, who always told me, ‘Anything worth doing ain’t easy, and anything worth having is worth working hard to achieve.’ I think that reducing health disparities and promoting health are both worth doing.” 

SEE YA!



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

Shoulder pads designed by College of Medicine researchers are helping players at the high school, college and professional levels keep their cool during those steamy early season football games. Dr. Nik Gravenstein (far left) and Sem Lampotang, professors in the department of anesthesiology, were part of the team that came up with the idea that led to the Temperature Management System, which blows cool air through football pads. Marybeth Horodyski, director of research at the UF Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine Institute, oversees testing of the equipment.

Dr. Copper Aitken-Palmer, a second-year zoological medicine resident at the UF Veterinary Medical Center, holds an 8-month-old giraffe named Geoffrey on Nov. 5 while veterinary technician Sarah Purcell, right, feeds him a bottle. Geoffrey is recuperating from arthroscopic surgery performed on his right front hock.



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

The helicopter pad atop the new Shands Cancer Hospital at UF is a mere 9-second elevator ride to the Shands Critical Care Center on the first floor.

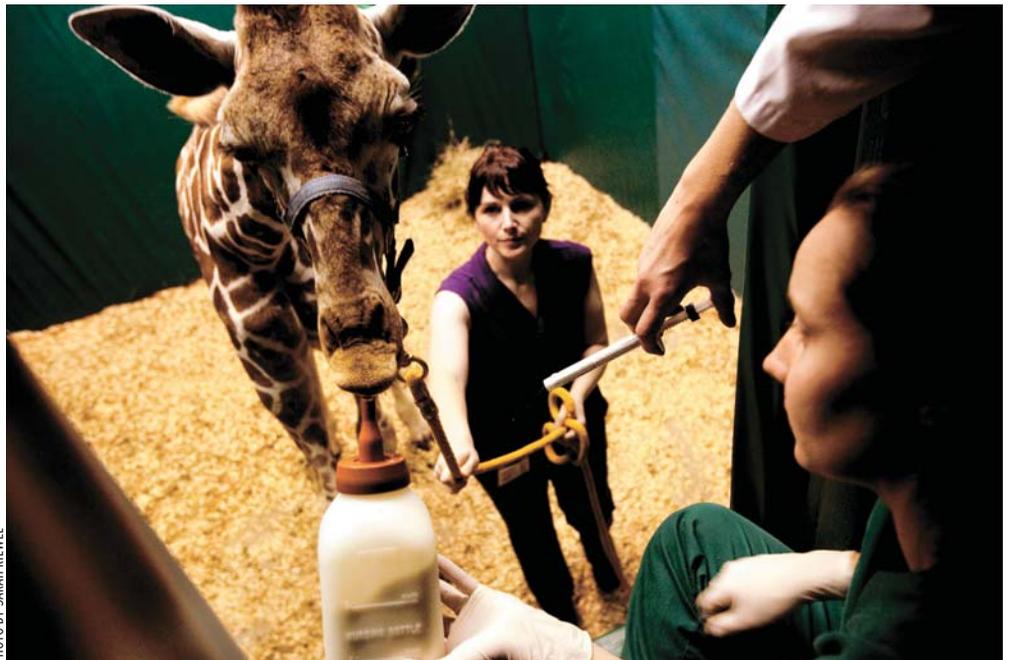


PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

THE POST 11.09

Published by
UF Health Science Center
Office of News & Communications

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UF&Shands Health System**
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The POST is the monthly internal newsletter for the University of Florida Health Science Center, the most comprehensive academic health center in the Southeast, with campuses in Gainesville

and Jacksonville and affiliations throughout Florida. Articles feature news of interest for and about HSC faculty, staff and students and Shands HealthCare employees. Content may be reprinted with appropriate credit. Ideas for stories are welcome. The deadline for submitting items to be considered for each month's issue is the 15th of the previous month. Submit to the editor at afrawley@ufl.edu or deliver to the Office of News & Communications in the Communicore Building, Room C3-025.

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