

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS
2005 BIENNIAL REPORT

THE COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS PREPARES
TOMORROW'S LEADING EDUCATORS, RESEARCHERS AND CLINICIANS. THE
COLLEGE IS COMMITTED TO ADVANCING AND INTEGRATING SCIENCE AND
PRACTICE AND DEMONSTRATING EXCELLENCE IN SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY.

DEAN'S MESSAGE

The cover of our last biennial report proudly featured the entrance to our new building, emblazoned with the words "College of Health Professions." The building brought most of our programs under one roof for the first time in the college's history.

Two years later, the same entryway displays a new name, "College of Public Health and Health Professions." The addition of public health to our name, building on our legacy of health professions, says much about the college's last two years and about its future.

The concept of an independent college dedicated to educating a broad array of health professionals was realized at the University of Florida in 1958. Over the ensuing decades, our faculty and graduates have been instrumental in defining the disciplines included in our college. We are proud of our heritage and role in developing a new educational model, started in Gainesville and now adopted across the nation. Without exception, our programs have won national recognition for the quality of the education provided. We have also remained committed to expanding the science supporting our disciplines, placing our college first or second in National Institutes of Health funding for colleges of health professions over the last two years.

During recent strategic planning at the university level, the need for a public health program at the University of Florida became apparent. We immediately recognized such a program would mesh well with the college's existing programs and provide important opportunities for the college.

The work done by our faculty has demonstrated the impact of chronic health conditions upon Americans,

especially as the population ages and the risk of disability and number of chronic health conditions individuals manage increases. These problems must be addressed at the individual level, yet this approach alone is unlikely to succeed. The scope of the problem and the long-term cost implications require a broader population perspective.

The Institute of Medicine, part of the prestigious National Academy of Science, recently called for the development of "transdisciplinary research" to broaden the field of public health. The combination of the population emphasis inherent to public health with our long-term focus on the management of chronic health conditions creates a powerful model.

Our faculty have already demonstrated their ability to work across disciplines. Now this mixing of faculty and students with interest in both areas will create unimagined opportunities, and possibly ignite the same type of innovation witnessed more than 45 years ago when we invented the concept of a unique college to educate health professionals.

Today, the name College of Public Health and Health Professions symbolizes the hope that our faculty and students will become living ambassadors of change. Through this effort, we envision becoming the leader of this new approach, just as we have done among colleges of health professions. I look forward to reporting on our efforts in the next biennial report.

As you examine this report, I think you will be impressed by the college's achievements. Each page of the report shows the remarkable efforts of our faculty and students to create the best educational and scientific programs possible. I welcome your thoughts on our progress.



Dr. Robert G. Frank

"We are proud of our heritage and role in developing a new educational model."



There has never been a better time for a new public health program at a prestigious university such as UF.

New program seeks to improve and protect public health

In an effort to improve the overall health and quality of life for Floridians, University of Florida officials announced the establishment of a new college of public health, integrated into the recently renamed College of Public Health and Health Professions.

“There is some history of a Master of Public Health program here,” said Mary Peoples-Sheps, Dr.P.H., the director of the new program. “But it became clear during the university’s strategic planning process that it would make sense to develop an accredited school of public health here at UF, which is really an essential ingredient for high-quality interdisciplinary research and a full complement of health science schools.

“The decision was made that the College of Health Professions would change its name, the public health programs would be housed here, and the school would embark on a deliberate effort to expand its offerings,”

Above: Dr. Mary Peoples-Sheps with public health students Paula Crawford, Wei Yuan and Annie Morton.

Peoples-Sheps said. “Development of the program is a high priority for Dean Frank, who has provided the leadership necessary to assure a successful launching this year.”

There has never been a better time for a new public health program at a prestigious university such as UF.

“Public Health is everywhere around us,” Peoples-Sheps said. “We are usually not aware of it. But in today’s world, it has taken on greater significance and has become more obvious to people because of concerns about bioterrorism. When the anthrax scare happened, it was the experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one of the major public health agencies in the United States, who were called upon to address the problem.

“Public health is often identified with infectious disease, but things like the recent identification of obesity as a national problem are public health issues, too,” she said. “All of the intervention programs, such as those encouraging children to walk to school and to eat healthier foods,

are created and implemented through the vast public health system in this country.”

UF in particular is a prime spot for a far-reaching public health program.

“Florida is one of the largest states in the country, and before our program, we only had two public health schools in the state, neither of them in the large northern portion,” Peoples-Sheps said. “There is a need in a state of this size for another school of public health. UF is a major research university, and public health is firmly grounded in research. Also, a major focus of our program is on aging. This is a natural for our college since it has a long tradition of research, service and teaching about disabilities.”

Already, Peoples-Sheps and her colleagues have initiated the accreditation process, which will take a few years, and they are building the program from the ground up. They have hired many new faculty members through national searches and are continuing to look for more.

“We’re looking for people who are graduates of major schools of public health who can bring expertise in their concentrations,” Peoples-Sheps said. “We’ve recruited some excellent faculty members, some of whom are at mid-career or higher while others are just starting out.”

Nationally recognized researcher Elena Andresen, Ph.D., who directed the epidemiology program at St. Louis University’s School of Public Health, is among the recruits.

“The newly composed college of Public Health and Health Professions is unique among public health programs nationally,” said Andresen, the head of the division of epidemiology in the department of health services research, management and policy. “My research interests have long included aging, rehabilitation and disability, and the UF program incorporates a broad range of associated disciplines and researchers that I hope to work with in the future.

“Public health training and research are undergoing substantial changes with emphases on transdisciplinary work and attention to training outcomes for the entire profession,” she said. “I am excited to be part of a program that is developing as these new ideas have emerged in public health.”

Students in the Master of Public Health program can focus on one of five concentration areas: biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health, health management and policy, or social and behavioral sciences. The program also offers an accelerated master’s degree for qualified health professionals, a combined bachelor’s to master’s degree, a minor and a certificate in public health.

By fall 2005, Peoples-Sheps expects to have a few course offerings online, and by fall 2006, the college hopes to offer a Master of Public Health degree online.

PUBLIC HEALTH FACULTY

Elena Andresen, Ph.D.
Epidemiology

Babette Brumback, Ph.D.
Biostatistics

George Casella, Ph.D.
Biostatistics

Sherrilene Classen, Ph.D.
Epidemiology

Pamela Duncan, Ph.D.
Epidemiology

Natalie Freeman, Ph.D.
Environmental health

Allyson Hall, Ph.D.
Health management
and policy

Amal Khoury, Ph.D.
Health management
and policy

Ellen Lopez, Ph.D.
Social and behavioral
sciences

Mary Peoples-Sheps, Dr.P.H.
Health management and
policy and director
of public health

Barbara Richardson, Ph.D.
Social and behavioral
sciences

Stephen Roberts, Ph.D.
Environmental health

Linda Young, Ph.D.
Biostatistics





A G I N G

With the leading edge of the 76 million-member Baby Boomer generation on the brink of their 60s, there is no time like the present to study aging, and there is no place better to study an aging population than in Florida. “The older population is growing rapidly, which is especially true in Florida,” said Jeffrey Harman, Ph.D., an assistant professor of health services research, management and policy. “Older people have a lot of health-care needs. It’s important to understand the burden on the health-care system, how we can best understand treatments and what kind of impact this will have on our society.” College researchers are working to make sure the country is ready to meet the demand.



MEMORY AND AGING

As people age, mental faculties — including memory and reasoning skills — often begin to slip a bit as part of the normal process of growing older. But for some adults, the decline in cognitive skills means more than just an inconvenience.

“It can transfer to everyday functioning and the ability to self-manage,” said Michael Marsiske, Ph.D., an associate professor of clinical and health psychology, who is running a National Institutes of Health study on memory and aging. “The notion of keeping intellectually fit in the post-retirement years is a whole new area which has been underinvestigated.”

In March 1998, Marsiske and several colleagues began an NIH-funded study of 2,802 adults between the ages of 65 and 94. In a two-year follow-up, researchers found that simple mental training techniques helped people over 65 improve their memory, concentration and problem-solving skills. Some of the gains observed were much larger than the amount of decline an average senior would experience.

Now, Marsiske and his colleagues are involved in a second phase of the study: an NIH-funded five-year follow-up of the original participants, to see if the effects of the simple mental training have lasted.

“At this point, you can forget the adage you can’t teach an old dog new tricks,” he said. “For an incredibly diverse group of people, we’re showing very large, lasting effects with minimal training. That’s not to deny that people experience natural declines as they get older. But there is a lot of room for improvement, even in their 70s and 80s.”

THE COLLEGE’S SERVICES AT OAK HAMMOCK

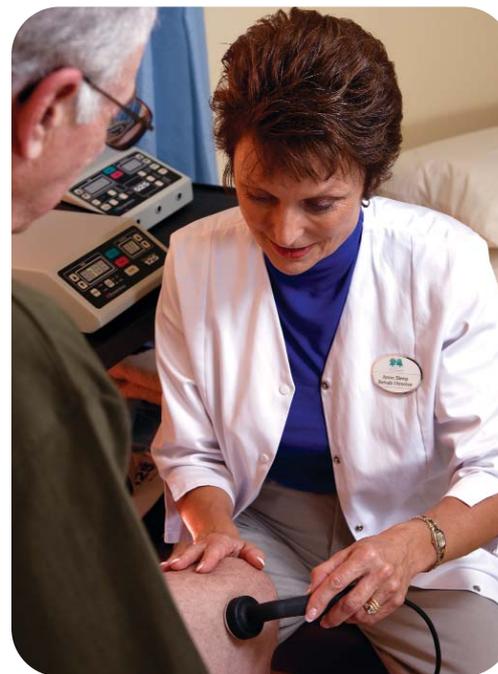
Clinical services, including physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech pathology, will be readily available to senior citizens at Oak Hammock, a new state-of-the-art continuing care retirement community that opened 2 miles west of the UF campus. With room for 400 residents, the facility offers a unique affiliation with the university, and the College of Public Health and Health Professions will play a major role in providing clinical services for its residents.

“It’s a wonderful opportunity to be creative and collaborate with other departments in the college,” said Emily Pugh, the director of the distance learning master’s program in occupational therapy, who is working with the staff at Oak Hammock to set up the college’s clinical services.

The college’s graduate students will work with residents on wellness and rehabilitation programs, and in the future, students and professors will be able to

include Oak Hammock residents in approved research programs.

“It’s a great opportunity to build a rehabilitation program from the ground up in a beautiful facility,” Pugh said. “Oak Hammock gives us an opportunity to provide services to the community, which is one arm of the university’s mission, and it allows clinical staff to practice in a very desirable setting.”



Oak Hammock resident Manny Lucoff is treated by Anne Sleep, the college’s director of rehabilitation at Oak Hammock at the University of Florida.



“Depression is often overlooked, but it has a really significant impact on people’s lives...”

GAIT AND BALANCE CLINIC

On the other end of the spectrum is the college’s collaboration with the Geriatric Gait and Balance Disorders Clinic at the Malcom Randall Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Gainesville. Launched in 1997 under the direction of Kathy Light, Ph.D., an associate professor of physical therapy, the clinic takes a multidisciplinary approach to restoring balance to those prone to falls, which cause more than 200,000 hip fractures each year.

“The primary goal is to reduce the number of falls they have,” said Mark Bishop, Ph.D., a lecturer in physical therapy and one of the people who collaborates with the clinic. “We’ve been successful. In a recent follow-up looking at people treated in the clinic, 67 percent hadn’t fallen in the six-month follow-up period. Fifty percent of the remainder hadn’t had a fall that resulted in injury.”

Patients meet with a physician, nurse practitioner, pharmacist and physical therapist, who devise a multidisciplinary approach for an individualized 12- to 20-week program. The solution is often a combination of changes in exercise, diet, medication and factors at home, as well as an individualized exercise program.

“This model, this integration, these clinical services are unique,” Bishop said. “We hope this provides some direction down the road.”

MENTAL ILLNESS AND THE ELDERLY

Jeffrey Harman, Ph.D., an assistant professor of health services research, management and policy, is tackling another area of interest in aging: mental illness and the elderly.

“Depression is often overlooked, but it has a really significant impact on people’s lives,” Harman said. “It affects their quality of life and their day-to-day functioning. There have been some estimates of disease burden and how hard a disease makes life for you, and depression is ranked second behind cardiovascular issues. It has also been associated with increased mortality.”

Harman recently has received a \$490,000 grant to study seniors, depression, and the reasons why some seek care and others do not.

“I think one of the reasons depression is not treated very often is not the economic factors, including prescription cost,” Harman said. “Social factors, such as stigma or the amount of social support, affect whether people seek treatment or stay in treatment. I hope to identify barriers to seeking and continuing care. By identifying these, we can suggest changes to policy to ensure that people get the help they need for their depression.”

Handing older drivers

THE KEYS TO INDEPENDENCE

By 2024, one in four drivers will be 65 or older, a fact which underscores the importance of the work being done in the college's National Older Driver Research and Training Center. The center was established in fall 2003 with \$1.6 million in funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Highway Administration.

“The primary goal of the center is to enable the elderly to remain ‘transportation independent,’ whether or not they drive,” said Dennis McCarthy, the center’s co-director. “This can be accomplished by identifying those who may not be able to drive safely any longer and providing them with alternatives to the car and identifying those who may be able to drive safely, for a longer period of time, by providing appropriate remediation and referrals to address specific deficits in driving skills. For example, during an evaluation, we may identify vision difficulties and make a referral to an eye specialist or to an occupational therapist to use adaptive equipment to operate the car.”

Directed by William Mann, Ph.D., chair of occupational therapy, the National Older Driver Research and Training

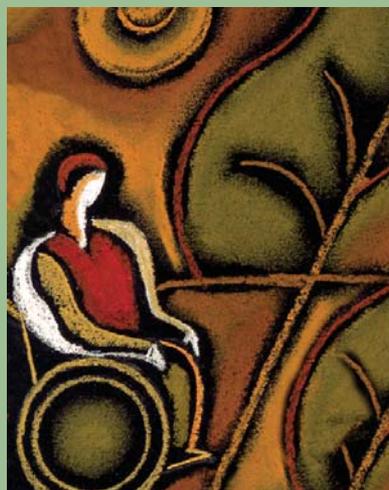


Center currently has several major research projects in the works. The first examines problematic roadway conditions — such as intersections, interchanges and construction zones — and their effect on older drivers. The second is to determine which clinically administered tests can accurately predict older drivers’ on-road performance. The third compares younger and older drivers in a high-quality driving simulator, which mimics real road conditions.

In addition to an older driver assessment and rehabilitation center in Gainesville called Independence Drive, researchers plan to open an Ocala assessment site. They are also collaborating with the Brooks Center for Rehabilitation Studies to conduct assessments in Jacksonville and with Adaptive Mobility Services Inc. in Orlando.

Above: Minette Hendler, seated, receives instruction on assistive devices that could make driving easier for seniors and others with disabilities from Desiree Lanford, a driving rehabilitation coordinator at Independence Drive. Photo by Lisa Baltozer.

“...we may identify vision difficulties and make a referral to an eye specialist or to an occupational therapist to use adaptive equipment to operate the car.”



DISABILITY & REHABILITATION

Focusing on issues ranging from rehabilitation science to physical therapy to health psychology, the College of Public Health and Health Professions is collaborating with other colleges in the university to address the issues of disability and rehabilitation from a multidisciplinary angle. By addressing a wide variety of physical and psychological factors in rehabilitation research, the college is at the leading edge of 21st century rehabilitative science in many different areas of study.



TRANSCRANIAL MAGNETIC STIMULATION FOR SWALLOWING DISORDERS

One of the unique ways in which the college is contributing to the growing field of rehabilitation therapy is through the work of Emily Plowman, a doctoral candidate in the college's rehabilitation science program, along with her research adviser, John Rosenbek, Ph.D., the acting chair of the department of communicative disorders, and William Triggs, M.D., an associate professor of neurology in the College of Medicine.

As many as 65 percent of people who have experienced a stroke sustain swallowing impairments, which can limit their ability to eat, their overall quality of life and their readiness to return home. Plowman is one of the only researchers in the nation working to understand and treat swallowing disorders through a technology called transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) that involves the placement of a magnetic coil over the scalp. The coil emits a magnetic pulse, which activates underlying neurons and enables researchers to map the areas of the brain that are stimulated by different activities.

"We're actually the only lab in all of America to be using transcranial magnetic stimulation specific to swallowing," Plowman said. "The mechanism of TMS has allowed us to track changes in the brain and see the underlying mechanisms that control swallowing. This does have clinical implications.

If someone were to have a left-sided stroke, for example, the right side could be trained to take over swallowing functions."

DISABILITY MEASUREMENT

How can you properly treat disability if you can't properly quantify it? That's a question that Craig Velozo, Ph.D., an associate professor of occupational therapy, has been asking. And now he is doing something about it.

"One of the concerns about measurement of disability in health care is that it takes a lot of time, and there are also questions about the precision of the existing disability measurements," said Velozo, who is also the associate chair of the department of occupational therapy. "There are now some emerging statistical and computer technologies that may allow us to make these instruments more efficient and more precise."

Assessing disability quickly and accurately could also save researchers and medical professionals considerable time and money.

Funded by a National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research grant, Velozo has developed a computerized, adaptive test that helps professionals quickly and accurately assess the extent of an individual's disability. Instead of asking a patient hundreds of questions, Velozo's test uses a series of questions specifically tailored for each individual to help quickly and easily quantify the severity of a person's disability.

RESPIRATORY TRAINING FOR PATIENTS ON VENTILATORS

Weaning patients from ventilators has been an issue that has been in the news for the past few years, and A. Danny Martin, Ph.D., an associate professor of physical therapy, has been on the cutting edge of the research. He has also been involved with one of the issue's foremost advocates, the late Christopher Reeve.

"We started working with him five years post-injury, when he could tolerate less than 30 seconds off the ventilator," Martin said. "With the training we helped provide, over a period of about a year, we got him up to where he could tolerate up to two hours off the ventilator."



Emily Plowman and Dr. William Triggs demonstrate the use of transcranial magnetic stimulation in the study of swallowing disorders.



“...children will be more likely to have access to therapies that will help them optimize their development.”

Martin and his team have weaned roughly 75 percent of their patients from ventilators using a tiny, spring-loaded device that provides a pressure load to the respiratory muscles. While still on the ventilator, patients do breathing exercises. The pressure on the device is increased each time they successfully complete an interval, which helps their respiratory muscles develop.

Martin’s team is in the first year of a five-year National Institutes of Health-funded controlled trial of 150 patients to validate the effectiveness of the technique.

“On any given day, there are 3,000 to 4,000 patients in the United States trying to be weaned off of mechanical ventilators,” Martin said. “Obviously we hope the study shows that our training method improves the weaning outcome for patients. Getting off the ventilator is a great improvement in quality of life and can help patients begin more vigorous rehab programs.”

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Stephen Boggs, Ph.D., an associate professor of clinical and health psychology and the director of the Center for Pediatric Psychology and Family Studies, is examining a completely different angle of disability and rehabilitation research.

Along with department colleague Professor Sheila Eyberg, Ph.D., Boggs is working to implement and

test a form of therapy called Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) for treating children with developmental disabilities, such as mental retardation. The therapy, developed by Eyberg, has already proven effective in children without developmental disabilities. Now Boggs has trained therapists in Jacksonville and Gainesville to use PCIT to treat children with developmental delays.

“We know that children who have development disabilities or delays are already at risk for more difficulty in academic and social development, and if they also have behavior problems, it could prevent them from participating in therapies such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, or even a school environment,” Boggs said. “By helping parents learn skills that will help them to manage their children’s behavior better, the children will be more likely to have access to therapies that will help them optimize their development.”

PCIT places emphasis on improving the parent-child relationship and changing the way in which the parent and child interact. This year, Boggs will also train therapists in Miami, Orlando, Tampa and Tallahassee to use the program.

“We hope that our study will demonstrate that it is an effective therapy for children with developmental disabilities and that it can be taught to therapists who are practicing in the field, outside of the academic setting,” Boggs said.

Enhancing recovery and quality of life

BROOKS CENTER FOR REHABILITATION STUDIES

The UF Brooks Center for Rehabilitation Studies is developing some of the nation's most cutting-edge rehabilitation research and is paving the way for major advances in rehabilitation.

Hosted by the College of Public Health and Health Professions, the Brooks Center is a universitywide initiative that incorporates researchers from many colleges as well as the Brooks Health System and Shands Health Care. The center also has close ties with the Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center and the Brain Rehabilitation Research Center, both Veterans Affairs centers.

“Colleges and centers have forged new collaborations through the center,” said Pamela Duncan, Ph.D., the director of the Brooks Center. “Our research is fairly groundbreaking in that we’re bringing together investigators that bridge the entire spectrum of research.”

More than 40 researchers are attacking the issue of disability from a multitude of angles, including neurorehabilitation, pain, balance, aging, human motor performance and health policy.

In the last few years, the Brooks Center has opened a research center in Jacksonville and collaborated with the VA to develop what Duncan calls “the most state-of-the-art human performance lab in the world.” They also have established a registry for patients and assisted several researchers in securing major grants for research.

Duncan has big plans for the future, too.



“We clearly need to increase our endowment, and we have identified the programs we plan to focus on,” she said. “Our initial focus was on locomotive recovery, and we now need to expand our focus to other aspects of motor recovery. We also want to expand our programs with aging, especially as it relates to physical dysfunction and cognition. We’ve developed strategic plans for each research area, and we’re moving forward.”

Above: Brooks Center research assistants demonstrate the Lokomat Robotic step training system at the opening of the center's Human Motor Performance Laboratory at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center. The equipment helps researchers understand motor function in people with neurological damage. Photo by Gerben DeJong.



H E A L T H - C A R E A C C E S S

UF is making numerous advances in the field of health, but for the many Americans who do not have proper access to care, those advances matter little if they never make it through a health provider's door. People from minority, low-income and rural populations are all disproportionately underserved, but researchers in the College of Public Health and Health Professions are involved in a variety of initiatives aimed at ensuring adequate health care is available to everyone.



COMMUNICATION AFTER STROKE IN SPEAKERS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN ENGLISH

On one end of the health-care access spectrum is the work of Charles Ellis, who is looking at post-stroke speech in speakers of African-American English.

“A lot of times, people who are standard English speakers have trouble distinguishing between dialect and mild problems with language,” said Ellis, a doctoral student in the rehabilitation science degree program. “People might be having more difficulty than it appears. If you’re not used to listening to someone from a different region or with different speech patterns, it might be difficult to pick up on the fact that their speech is disordered. Many physicians and clinicians are not trained or aware that these differences may exist. Therefore, these patients may not be as likely to have access to service.”

Ellis completed interviews as part of a larger stroke study, and compiled qualitative and quantitative information about post-stroke speech and language problems in speakers of African-American English.

“Very little research has been done on the interaction between the dialect of speakers of African-American English and people who have had a stroke and the resulting language

deficits,” Ellis said. “I hope that through this preliminary work, clinicians and physicians will have a clearer understanding that there are dialectal features that mask communication disorders after stroke.”

Ellis’ study was completed at the VA Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center, as part of a project supervised by Maude Rittman, Ph.D., with funding from the VA. John Rosenbek, Ph.D., the acting chair of the college’s department of communicative disorders, serves as Ellis’ faculty mentor.

OBESITY TREATMENT FOR WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

Michael Perri, Ph.D., a professor of clinical and health psychology and the college’s associate dean for research, is attacking another piece of the health-care access problem: access disparities based on geographic location.

“There are significant health disparities in the United States, and a particularly challenging one is the health disparities based on geographic regions,” he said. “People in rural areas make up 20 percent of the population, but those areas contain 75 percent of the medically underserved.”

Heart disease is particularly rampant in rural areas, with contributing factors including higher rates of smoking, obesity and sedentary lifestyle. But it is difficult to treat problems such as obesity when there are few medical clinics close by.

That is why Perri has devised a plan to help bring obesity treatments to women in rural areas by offering the program at county cooperative extension offices.

Perri and his colleagues have set up shop in the extension offices of six rural Florida counties: Bradford, Columbia, Levy, Lafayette, Dixie and Putnam. The women who enroll in the program receive six months of lifestyle intervention coun-



Clinical and health psychology graduate student Mary Murawski (right), a group leader for the weight loss treatment program in Levy County, provides instruction on how to examine nutritional labels on prepared foods. Shown with her are participants Sarah Miller and Patricia Daniels.



“Our aim is to produce a quick turnaround in our research and to have our reports used immediately in the development of future programs...”

selling and then are divided into three groups, one of which will receive follow-up treatment by mail, one of which will receive treatment by phone and the third of which will receive treatment in person. The goal is to see which of the three follow-ups is the most cost-effective and efficient at encouraging women to keep the weight off.

Currently, 200 participants are completing the lifestyle intervention phase of the study, which has, so far, been successful in helping the women drop an average of 20 pounds by reducing their food intake by 500 calories a day and increasing their walking by 3,000 steps a day.

“Moderate changes in lifestyle and diet can lead to significant weight reduction,” Perri said. “We can help people in rural areas learn about these changes by bringing programs to them and providing them with support.”

FLORIDA CENTER FOR MEDICAID AND THE UNINSURED

Under the guidance of Director Robert Frank, Ph.D., dean of the college, and Research Director Allyson Hall, Ph.D., the Florida Center for Medicaid and the Uninsured, a state health policy research center, is examining access-to-care issues for vulnerable populations. Funded by the state agency that runs Medicaid,

a federally and state supported health insurance program for people with low incomes, the center also seeks grants to sponsor UF researchers who want to look at underserved populations.

“The main goal of the center is to generate information around issues related to low-income and vulnerable populations, particularly those with Medicaid and those who are uninsured,” said Hall, also a research associate professor of health services research, management and policy. “We then seek to get that information to policymakers and advocates. Every year, we negotiate a big contract with the Agency for Health Care Administration to do a variety of projects, ranging from looking at consumer satisfaction to analyzing various programs that provide care for people with disabilities.”

Why is the Center so vital?

“Medicaid provides health-care coverage for approximately 2 million Floridians,” Hall said. “It is an expensive program, and the state is starting to think about ways to make the program more efficient. The center can contribute to this process by evaluating elements of the program for the agency. Our aim is to produce a quick turnaround in our research and to have our reports used immediately in the development of future programs, which allows us to have a direct impact on policy.”

Improving access

TEAM RESEARCHES MEDICAID SOLUTIONS

Many Americans have trouble getting access to health care, oftentimes because of financial reasons. In Florida, minorities — in particular, the state’s large Hispanic population — seem to face multiple problems getting access to health services.

In 2001, Florida’s Agency for Health Care Administration set up a variety of demonstration programs for Medicaid patients. One of those programs was the Minority Physician Network, in which the state contracted with two large physician-owned managed care organizations. In both of these networks, more than half of the physicians are members of minority groups serving a mostly minority population.

“The state was looking for alternative models for Medicaid,” said Christy Lemak, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the department of health services research, management and policy. “The Minority Physician Network was a way to support Medicaid physicians who receive lower reimbursements than through other insurers. It is hard for some physicians to remain in business when they serve poor people in poor neighborhoods. These predominately minority, physician-owned companies were attempting to make Medicaid work better.”

To see if the network was working, the state contracted with Lemak and department colleagues Allyson Hall, Ph.D., a



research associate professor, and Christopher Johnson, Ph.D., an assistant professor. The researchers conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the system, interviewing physicians and state officials, reviewing hundreds of reports and analyzing a database of 3.9 million Medicaid patient records.

“We found that in general, physicians were highly satisfied with the program,” Lemak said. “They particularly liked the local administrative support and the financial incentives to provide good care.”

The team also found that medical expenditures were lower in the network, saving the state \$8.3 million over traditionally administered Medicaid programs in just 15 months.

New health disparities legislation that would expand the program statewide was debated during the last legislative session, and the UF report was widely circulated by lobbyists and legislators. Ultimately, the state decided to expand the program.

Above: Drs. Christopher Johnson, Christy Lemak and Allyson Hall with some of the data gathered during their research.

“It is hard for some physicians to remain in business when they serve poor people in poor neighborhoods.”



Innovation marks physical therapy department

The physical therapy department has added several new innovative education initiatives in the last couple of years, which provide students with more opportunities to do hands-on work and learn from a variety of professionals already practicing in the field.

“Ours is one of the best programs in the country for physical therapy,” said Jane Day, Ph.D., the assistant chair of physical therapy and its director for education. “All of our tenured faculty

The spinal cord injury recovery research conducted by graduate students Michelle Woodbury (left) and Nicole Tester is supported by the predoctoral NIH training grant.

have grants from federal funding agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and are leaders in their research fields, so it’s a really dynamic program.”

The initiatives include:

- Clinical fellowships in collaboration with Shands at the University of Florida
- Research and clinical seminar series
- Predoctoral T32 training grant funded by the NIH
- New course for biomedical engineering and rehabilitation science doctoral students
- Expansion of Shands at UF clinicians as guest teachers

In addition, the department proposes to introduce a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree program, with a projected launch date of fall 2005. The entry-level clinical doctoral degree will take the place of the entry-level master’s, which is being phased out around the country, Day said.

“We want to be the No. 1 physical therapy department in the United States,” Day said. “Given the quality of our faculty, students and programs, we are poised to move into this position in the very near future.”

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF REHABILITATION RESEARCHERS

The only program of its kind in the Southeast and the largest of its kind in the nation, the college’s Rehabilitation Science Ph.D. program is home to more than 70 graduate students, most of whom are fulltime, and 28 faculty members. Established in 1998 and quickly gaining international acclaim, the program attracts students from all over the world.

“We are providing an educational program that is preparing rehabilitation professionals for academic careers,” said William Mann, Ph.D., the director of the program and the chair of the occupational therapy department.

The 90-semester-hour program gives students the chance to develop skills in teaching, research and interdisciplinary teamwork in rehabilitation science. More than a dozen students have graduated from the program and moved on to prestigious academic positions around the country.

Along the way, they have provided the college with some fascinating and widely varying research in the form of their dissertations.

Graduate Julie Prins, Ph.D., for example, studied the effects of spirituality on coping in frail

seniors in a variety of living situations and capability levels. Chien-Hui Huang, Ph.D., examined respiratory sensation in healthy study participants. Cynthia Townson, Ph.D., looked at the influence of activities of daily living skills and behaviors on patients who have experienced a stroke.

“These students have excellent mentors who are active in the field,” Mann said. “The students who serve with those faculty are going to learn a lot about how to get funding for research, how to conduct research and how to report on results of research.”



Exploring the brain through fMRI research

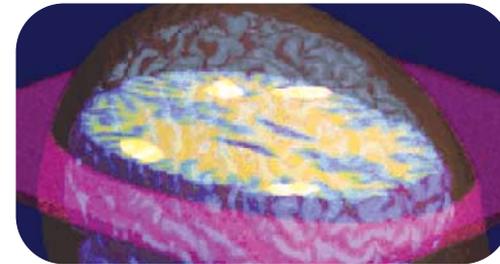
One of the areas in which the college is on the cutting edge of research is in the use of functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI. The college has more funding for fMRI research than any other college at the University of Florida, and several investigators are making fascinating use of the technology.

“We put people in an MRI scanner which has a very powerful magnet, many times the strength of the earth’s magnetic field,” explained Bruce Crosson, Ph.D., a professor in the department of clinical and health psychology. “We use radio frequency pulses, which excite protons in the brain into a higher energy state, and when they return to a normal state, they give off radio frequency energy from which an image can be created.”

Researchers can use this image to map blood oxygenation level changes in the brain, which allows them to evaluate exactly how the brain is processing various signals and situations.

Crosson has been successful in using fMRI technology to look at post-stroke aphasia, or loss of ability to speak or understand language.

But Crosson is not the only clinical and health psychology researcher using fMRI technology to break new research ground. William Perlstein, Ph.D., an assistant professor, is examining the neuroscience of emotion in patients who are healthy and those who have anxiety disorders. Michael Robinson, Ph.D., a professor and the director of the Center for Pain Research and Behavioral Health, is using fMRI technology to examine the neural mechanisms of



This image, produced through William Perlstein’s research, reflects brain regions that show increased activity associated with increased demand for working memory.

placebo analgesia in patients with chronic pain conditions. Peter Lang, Ph.D., a professor and director of the Center for Emotion and Attention, is using fMRI to study how the brain processes emotion. And in the department of physical therapy, department Chair Krista Vandenberg, Ph.D., is using a similar technology to study motor activities in patients with disabilities.

MOVING RESEARCH FORWARD



Dr. Michael Perri

Already one of the premier health research centers in the country, the college has taken two important steps forward in research by renovating the research annex and appointing Michael Perri, Ph.D., a professor in the department of clinical and health psychology, to the position of associate dean for research.

A six-month renovation of the college’s research annex began in March 2003, adding additional space for several labs and redesigning the building for better patient access.

“We’ve grown from \$2.5 million in research grants in 1998 to more than \$13 million,” said Tonia Lambert, the college’s coordinator for research programs, who oversaw the renovations. “As our funding has increased, so has our need for space to conduct those studies.”

Perri’s appointment also is a significant step for the college.

“I am very excited about the great strides our college has made in the research arena,” Perri said. “The growth of the research programs represents an amazing accomplishment —

a real tribute to the outstanding scholarship of our faculty.

“Our goals in the coming years will be to continue to support our faculty and students in their research endeavors,” he said. “For our faculty, we are particularly interested in fostering interdisciplinary research efforts and in assisting junior faculty members in getting their research programs off to a strong start. For our students, we have doubled the number of college-funded research awards, and we have initiated a new program that will fund equipment grants.”



“...we’re the only major university in the country that has developed this expertise and specialization in life care planning.”

Rehabilitation counseling trains professionals nationwide

The department of rehabilitation counseling is doing more than just sending qualified counselors out into the workforce; they are also partnering with MediPro Seminars, a national training company, to serve as academic consultants for training in Medicare set-aside arrangements, functional medicine and life care planning.

Above: More than 650 participants from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services attended a UF/Medipro seminar on Medicare set-aside arrangements in June 2004 at the Marriott Marquis in Atlanta, Ga.

This training is designed to advance the credentials and qualifications of practicing rehabilitation health professionals providing this specialty within their consultation practice.

Life care planning, or developing an organized plan for current and future needs with associated costs, is vital for individuals who have experienced catastrophic injury or have chronic health-care needs. Horace Sawyer, Ed.D., the chair of the department of rehabilitation counseling, is overseeing MediPro trainers across the country who speak to health professionals about life care planning. He also helps

evaluate MediPro’s curriculum and has a representative on-site during training programs.

“Life care planning is one of the most innovative and cutting-edge consultation products out of the private sector, and we’re the only major university in the country that has developed this expertise and specialization in life care planning, so it’s natural we extend out,” Sawyer said. “We also provide geriatric care management and Medicare set-aside arrangements, which are basically long-range care plans for Medicare patients.”

TREATING ADHD: A FAMILY APPROACH

In the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Clinic led by James Johnson, Ph.D., a research team is looking at more than just the kids affected by ADHD. They are taking research a step further and are looking at the effect of ADHD on families.

“We are interested in ways of assessing stress in families of children with ADHD and in looking at the multiple ways this stress can impact family functioning,” Johnson said. “Parents of children with ADHD display more anxiety, depression, and marital dissatisfaction, as well as other difficulties. We hope to be able

to find ways to help families cope more effectively.”

A professor in the department of clinical and health psychology, Johnson also is a member of UF’s interdisciplinary ADHD team, where he interacts with professionals from the College of Medicine and speech pathologists and audiologists from the College of Public Health and Health Professions.

The clinic has recently launched a new Web-based ADHD consultation service, providing busy area pediatricians with

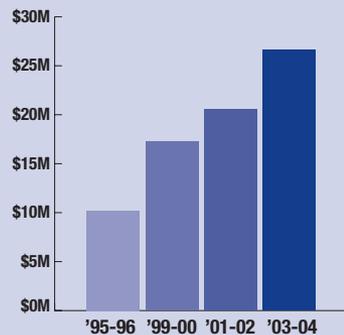
quantitative information that will facilitate accurate diagnosis and treatment plans for the child and his or her family. A unique tracking system assesses the effectiveness of the child’s treatment and measures stress levels of family members.

Johnson, who has been seeing children with ADHD for 25 years, hopes that his current research will have a positive effect on practitioners and families with children with ADHD.

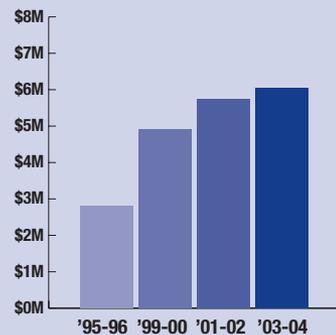
“As you make things better in the family, you make things better for the child,” he said.

College of Public Health and Health Professions

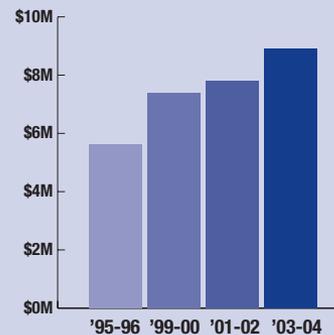
Total Income



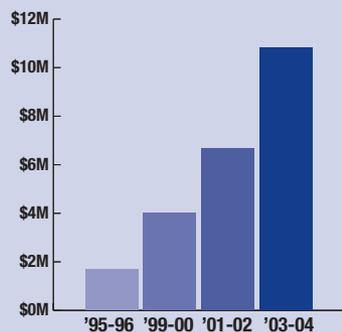
Clinic Income



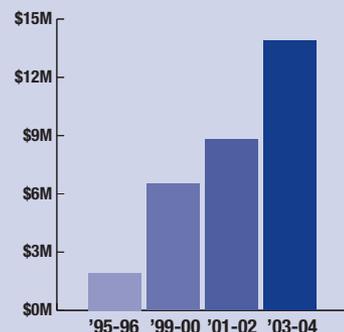
State Income



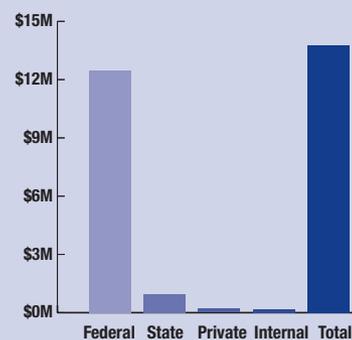
Grant Expenditures



Grant Awards



**Research Funding by Sources
(Fiscal Year 2003-04)**



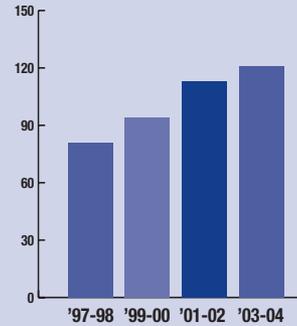
The College of Public Health and Health Professions' graduate programs are among the nation's best, as reported by *U.S. News and World Report's* rankings of the best graduate programs in 2003 and 2004.

Audiology	8
Rehabilitation counseling	9
Occupational therapy	15
Speech-language pathology	17
Clinical psychology	20
Physical therapy	25
Health services administration	29

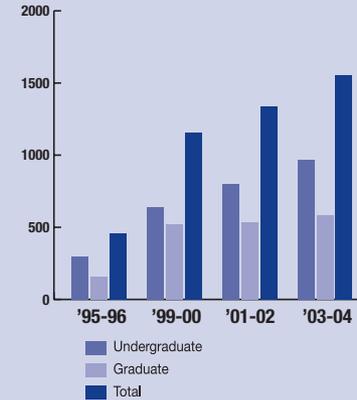


Current staff members recognized as College of Public Health and Health Professions Employees of the Year, 1995 to present, gather for a group portrait. Front row, left to right: Cina Thomas, department of clinical and health psychology (2003); Aleida Levine, department of clinical and health psychology (2002); Peggy Bessinger, department of clinical and health psychology (1995); and Julie Porumbescu, dean's office (2003). Back row, left to right: Tammy Hedman, department of communicative disorders (2003) and Tonia Lambert, dean's office (2000). Not pictured: Elena Casson, department of occupational therapy (1997).

Faculty Positions



Enrollment



DEGREE PROGRAMS

Bachelor's Degrees

- Health Science
 - General Health Science track
 - Rehabilitative Services track
 - Pre-occupational therapy track
- Combined BHS-MPH

Doctoral Degrees

- Ph.D.
 - Clinical and Health Psychology
 - Health Services Research
 - Rehabilitation Science
- Professional
 - Audiology

Master's Degrees

- Health Administration (entry-level and executive)
- Occupational Therapy (entry-level, advanced and distance learning)
- Physical Therapy (entry-level and advanced)
- Public Health
- Rehabilitation Counseling

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Assistant Professor

Mei Zhang, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor



College's programs enhanced through gifts

The groundbreaking research, education and service taking place every day in the College of Public Health and Health Professions has been strengthened through generous donations from individuals, family foundations and corporations, who have helped fund some of the college's most important work to date.

"We're state assisted but not state supported," said Stacey Marsh, the college's director of development. "And although our faculty generates enviable research funding, private gifts are essential to the operation of the college. The ability to attract private gifts virtually defines greatness among American public universities."



PHOTO BY DAN DASTIER

THE SMART HOUSE

The most visible product of donated money is the UF Gator-Tech Smart House, a research home located in the UF-affiliated Oak Hammock retirement community. There, researchers will test a variety of new technological advances designed to make living easier and safer for seniors.

"There are other smart houses that have been built in the United States, but for the most part, they are not set up for people to actually come and live in them," said William Mann, Ph.D., the director of

the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Technology for Successful Aging and chair of occupational therapy. "The Gator-Tech Smart House will have older people actually living in it for short periods of time, interacting with the technology and giving us feedback on the technology before we move it into product form."

Funding for the Smart House has come in the amount of \$200,000 from three major corporate donors: Praxeis, RDG Shutte Wilsam Burge and the Weitz Company. Other donors include Fisher & Paykel Appliances, the BSH Home Appliances Corporation, the Westye Group Southeast and the design firm of Arthur Shuster.

Working with computer science Professor Sumi Helal, Ph.D., the center's director of technology development, Mann and other researchers are developing and testing several fascinating features, such as a detection system that knows where the occupants are and whether they are having difficulties. The house will also include specially designed refrigerators and dishwashers, floors that can detect water leaks and a telephone that controls the lights, the stereo, the television and even the curtains simply through the sound of the homeowner's voice.

"The house will know where the occupants are and whether they are having difficulties and will be able to communicate with them," Mann said. "The house can call for help if necessary. The intercom system will be tied in so the person won't have to get up to talk to someone at the door. Residents can unlock the door from anywhere in the house, and

the occupant will even be able to ask the house if it is secure and if all doors are locked before going to bed."

RON AND MARY LYNNE ALDRICH'S GIFT

Former hospital CEO and college graduate Ron Aldrich (class of '66, master's in health administration and business administration) has also been a major donor whose contribution is funding several programs in the department of health services research, management and policy.

Aldrich and his wife Mary Lynne have donated \$50,000 toward the Louis C. and Jane Gapenski Professorship in Health Services



JANE KNIE

Administration, established by Gapenski, a faculty member and longtime college supporter, and his wife Jane. The professorship is currently held by R. Paul Duncan, Ph.D., the prominent chair of the department of health services research, management and policy. The Aldriches have also donated \$43,000 for a scholarship fund and an additional \$7,000 for a student lounge and a faculty fund.

"The Aldriches are critical partners in our endeavor for greatness," Marsh said. "Their commitment assures our ability to attract the best faculty members and the brightest students and enhances the resources with which we support them."



MAJOR GIFTS TO THE COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

DONOR

\$1,000,000 or more

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida

BENEFICIARY

Department of health services research, management and policy

\$750,000 or more

Brooks Health Foundation

Brooks Center for Rehabilitation Studies

\$100,000 or more

PRAXEIS LLC

UF Gator-Tech Smart House, department of occupational therapy

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Department of health services research, management and policy

\$50,000 or more

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Department of health services research, management and policy

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Department of rehabilitation counseling

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Darryl Tower

Department of occupational therapy

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Department of health services research, management and policy

THE BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF FLORIDA PROFESSORSHIP IN HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

With a gift from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, the college will expand its important research commitment to improved understanding of health insurance and factors affecting the uninsured through a prestigious professorship that will be filled in the near future.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida donated \$1.2 million, and state-matching funds brought the total amount to more than \$2 million.

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Professorship in Health Services Administration will support the appointment of a nationally known scholar of health policy dedicated to research on the widespread lack of affordable health insurance coverage.

The professorship appointee will establish a research program in the department of health services research, management and policy on critical areas

affecting health-care access, health insurance, financing of health care and public-private health partnerships.

HORACE SAWYER'S GIFT TO SUPPORT STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Horace Sawyer, Ed.D., chair of the rehabilitation counseling department, has been another generous and influential donor to the college. He and his wife Vivian have donated \$25,000 to support student scholarships in rehabilitation counseling.



JEFF KNUE

“I’ve been with the college since 1983, and I have a real commitment to the college and always have since I joined,” Sawyer said. “There comes a time when you want to start giving back and want to make other kinds of contributions. I’ve received a great deal from the college and think it’s a good idea to give back.”

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