

# Initiatives

Developing efficacious strategies for preventing harm and promoting health among youth.

Spring 2007

## Meet the AHB Research Institute

### Highlights:

- Meet the Institute
- Current Research News
- 3rd Symposium Planned for 2007
- Graduate and Post-Doctoral Fellowships Available
- Health Behavior Insights



Photograph by Masarra Sandage

The AHB Research Institute Faculty & Staff



### Make A GIFT

For information on making a gift to the University of Florida's Addictive & Health Behaviors Research Institute, please call (904) 281-0726.

**F**ounded in 2004, the University of Florida's Addictive & Health Behaviors (AHB) Research Institute is located in Jacksonville, Florida, and is affiliated with the Department of Health Education & Behavior, College of Health and Human Performance. The AHB Research Institute is directed by Dr. Chad Werch, Ph.D., and employs over thirty Research Coordinators and Assistants, Research Communications Specialists, Trained Health Behavior Interventionists, and Collaborating Research Scientists. During its brief existence, the Institute has been awarded over \$4 million in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding to conduct research examining strategies to prevent harm and promote health among adolescents and young adults, and is poised to receive significant additional NIH funding to develop and test efficacious health behavior interventions for youth.

search Institute has co-hosted annual Symposia on Addictive & Health Behaviors Research, along with Mayo Clinic and the University of North Florida, providing a forum for the multi-disciplinary exchange of both scientific and application knowledge in health behavior intervention. The Institute also provides Graduate Student Fellowships and Post-Doctoral Appointments in health behavior and prevention intervention research. ■

Since its inception, the AHB Re-

The mission of the Addictive & Health Behaviors (AHB) Research Institute is to develop efficacious strategies for preventing harm and promoting health among vulnerable populations such as children, adolescents, and young adults.

## Current Research News

**A**ddictive behaviors cause most of the nation's premature and preventable morbidity, mortality, and injury. These health risk behaviors include alcohol and alcoholism, smoking and nicotine addiction, drug use and misuse, eating disorders, and compulsive behaviors (e.g., gambling). Meanwhile, other health behaviors, such as participating in regular physical activity, eating nutritious foods, managing stress, obtaining adequate sleep, and setting personal growth goals, are known to be critical to longevity and quality of life of individuals and populations. Lacking are cost-effective, efficacious, and easily adaptable interventions to protect those most vulnerable to harm caused by addictive and other health-damaging behaviors, while promoting their overall well-being and development.

Since its creation in 2004, the University of Florida's Addictive & Health Behaviors Research Institute has conducted randomized community trials providing over 2,200 adolescents and young adults with prevention and health promotion interventions. This research supplies critical health services to a broad range of at-risk youth, while examining strategies and mechanisms for enhancing their well-being and personal development. These studies have evaluated innovative strategies found to significantly reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug use and problems, while increasing physical activity, nutritious eating, sleep, stress management, self-control, perceived health status, and personal goal setting among participating adolescents and young adults.

### Plan for Success:

The primary purpose of this on-going National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) funded research is to test the feasibility and efficacy of innovative drug abuse prevention strategies using positive career and personal development messages for young people who are transitioning from high school into careers and college. Preliminary results from this study indicate that brief image-based positive youth development interventions are feasible and have the potential to significantly impact multiple problem and positive behaviors among high risk adolescents transitioning into adults.

### Project FITNESS:

The primary purpose of this on-going National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) funded research is to test the validity, feasibility and efficacy of brief, innovative screening and preventive interventions using fitness and positive image communications for high-risk older adolescents in a university primary health care setting. Preliminary results from this study indicate that brief interventions based on the Behavior-Image Model are acceptable to college students, can be feasibly implemented in a university setting, and have the potential to significantly impact multiple health promoting and risk habits of college-age youth.

### Project Sport 2:

The primary aim of this planned project is to test the efficacy of innovative, brief alcohol abuse prevention strategies in the form of an interpersonal consultation, parent communication materials, and a combined strategy, which integrate positive youth development messages and health risk messages for substance using adolescents in diverse high school settings.

### Research Projects Conducted with Mayo Clinic:

In addition to research projects lead by the AHB Research Institute, a number of other studies are directed by Mayo Clinic in collaboration with the Institute, primarily examining smoking cessation and tobacco use among young adults. ■

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## 3rd Symposium on Addictive & Health Behaviors Research

The University of Florida's Addictive & Health Behaviors Research Institute, in collaboration with Mayo Clinic, the University of North Florida, and The American Academy of Health Behavior, hosts the 3<sup>rd</sup> Symposium on Addictive & Health Behaviors Research titled **Health Behavior Intervention: Combining Research and Practice**. This is the first year that the Symposium will be open to

national participation, and the first time it will be held at the beautiful Amelia Island Plantation Resort in northeast Florida, September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Symposium will provide a forum for the multi-disciplinary exchange of both scientific and application knowledge of *health behavior intervention*. Visit our registration website for more details at <http://www.doce-conferences.ufl.edu/addictive/>. 

### Invited Speakers and Topics:

**Gilbert J Botvin, PhD** - Cornell University  
"Advances in School-Based Prevention: Effects on Multiple Health Behaviors"

**Thomas H Brandon, PhD** - H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute  
"Two Approaches to Preventing Smoking Relapse"

**Kelly Brownell, PhD** - Yale University  
"A New and Important Frontier: Food and Addiction"

**K. Michael Cummings, PhD** - Roswell Park Cancer Institute  
"What the Marlboro Man Can Teach Us About Tobacco Control"

**Meg Gerrard, PhD** - Iowa State University  
"Using Social Images in Health Behavior Interventions"

**Frederick X. Gibbons, PhD** - Iowa State University  
"A Dual-Focus, Dual-Path Model for Health Intervention"

**Michael G Perri, PhD** - University of Florida  
"Improving the Long-Term Management of Obesity"

**Judith Prochaska, PhD, MPH** - University of California, SF  
"Multiple Risk Behavior Change: What Most Individuals Need"

**Linda Carter Sobell, PhD** - Nova Southeastern University  
"Self-Change: Processes and Implications for the Treatment of Addictive Behaviors"

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## Graduate & Post-Doctoral Fellowships

Currently, the Institute offers two opportunities for graduate and doctoral students to receive research training:

### Graduate Research Fellowships

- 9-12-credit hours
- 30 hours/week minimum

### Post-Doctoral Fellowships

- 2-4 year appointments
- 40 hours/week minimum

Graduate Research and Post-Doctoral Fellows work under the supervision of Chad Werch, Ph.D., with assistance from the Institute's professional staff. Graduate and doctoral students from the Department of Health Education & Behavior will be given preference. Students should have a basic knowledge of experimental research methods, health behavior theories, and descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Applications are due on the pre-registration deadline for the requested semester.

For more information about the application procedure, contact Melissa Wezniak by email at [mwezniak@hnp.ufl.edu](mailto:mwezniak@hnp.ufl.edu) or by calling (904) 281-0726. You may also visit our website for additional Institute information at <http://www.hnp.ufl.edu/heb/Institute>. 



**T**he AHB Research Institute is located in Jacksonville, Florida, a major metropolitan area with access to urban, suburban, and rural populations. This location is critical to the successful planning and implementation of studies involving a broad range of populations located within easily accessible settings, including schools, health clinics, hospitals, health departments, businesses, and other institutions and agencies. ☐



### **NEW!! Health Behavior Insights -Coming Soon NEW!!**

*Health Behavior Insights* is a new publication designed to provide researchers, practitioners, and students with critical knowledge of health behavior intervention, practical suggestions for professional advancement, and recommendations about the future of health behavior intervention, encompassing health promotion, health education, prevention, and treatment. Interviews with nationally and internationally recognized health behavior scientists will provide invaluable information and frank commentary on the steps to follow and the pitfalls to avoid in developing, implementing, evaluating, and disseminating efficacious programs for affecting the health and wellbeing of individuals and populations. Explicit knowledge about health and addictions research and practice abounds in textbooks and professional journals. This is the first publication, however, to systematically gather and present the wealth of tacit experiences, knowledge, and recommendations from foremost health behavior scientists regarding their personal opinions about conducting intervention research and practice, how one can become a prosperous researcher and practitioner, and what are the key issues to advance health behavior intervention in the future.☐

## **Faculty & Staff:**

### **Institute Director**

C. Chad Werch, PhD - University of Florida

### **Research Coordinators & Assistants**

Hui Bian, PhD - Coordinator, Data Management  
Michele Moore, PhD - Coordinator, Project FITNESS  
Alison Sutliff, MS - Coordinator, Plan for Success  
Alan Alfaro, BS  
Alfred Barba, BSCS  
Amber Barnes, BA  
Heather Boggess, BA  
Elizabeth Breting, BSH  
Andrea Carroll, BS  
Heather Frost, MS

### **Communication Specialists**

Melissa Wezniak, BA - Coordinator  
Jennifer Hamilton, BA - Senior Secretary  
Zendra Mathis, AA - Office Assistant

### **Collaborating Research Scientists**

Dolores Albarracin, PhD - University of Florida  
Steven Ames, PhD - Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville  
Tom ter Bogt, PhD - Utrecht University, Netherlands  
Britt Brewer- PhD, - Director, Visual Brands, LLC  
Carlo C. DiClemente, PhD - University of Maryland  
Virginia Dodd, PhD - University of Florida  
David Foxcroft, PhD - Oxford Brookes University  
I.C. Huang, PhD - University of Florida  
Dennis Thombs, PhD - University of Florida  
Julia Watkins, PhD - University of North Florida  
Robert Weiler, PhD - University of Florida

### **Health Behavior Interventionists**

Cecelia Adams, RN	Sue Kreichelt, RN
Nancy Archer, RN	Kaye Morris, RN
Jan Foster, RN	Mary Padzer, RN
Regina Fountain, RN	Stevie Schoof, RN
Susan Landmark, RN	Marie Wilkinson, RN

**UF** UNIVERSITY of  
**FLORIDA**

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