

'Core' business of health care

Faculty prepare students for growing number of geriatric patients

Hartford Foundation grant to fund faculty development on care for older adults

Americans are living longer and need health care professionals prepared to care for the special needs of geriatric patients. The School of Nursing and Health Professions recognizes this boom in the nation's senior population with special initiatives to prepare nursing and health professions students to care for older patients.

One of the most recent developments in the school's focus on gerontology is the announcement of a \$4,900 Pioneer Resource Award from the John A. Hartford Foundation Institute for Geriatric Nursing. The funds will be used to provide nursing faculty development opportunities in the area of gerontology and to collaborate with other Hartford partners dedicated to improving geriatric care.

The New York-based Hartford organization was founded in 1996 to create a national thrust to improve health care for older adults by addressing the need for well-prepared nurses. The successful grant proposal was written for the School of Nursing and Health Professions by Dr. Martha Sparks, associate professor of nursing; Renee Dugger, instructor in nursing; and Dr. Nadine Coudret, dean. USI's social work program in the Bower-Suhrheinrich School of Education and Human Services also has received a Hartford grant for gerontological study.

Dugger attended a two-day Hartford Partners User Conference in New York City during January. Leaders of the conference offered a number of



Elizabeth Courtney—USI

USI nursing student Michael Condiff takes a health history from Ira Cox, a resident of Solarbron Pointe.

imperatives for including gerontological nursing information in baccalaureate programs. Mathy Mezey, director of the Hartford Foundation, said, "Geriatric patients are not one subgroup of patients but rather the core business of health systems."

Participants in the user conference were made aware that 20 percent of the nation's population will be more than 65 years old by 2030. Conference participants also learned that 58 percent of baccalaureate nursing programs have no full-time faculty certified in geriatrics. USI has two. Both Sparks and Dugger are certified gerontological clinical nurse specialists.

Dugger said, "Aging is a journey and nursing is in a prime position to walk with older persons through that journey and gently guide them toward a healthier path. Nursing has always been about caring for the whole person and that approach is critical when interacting and intervening with older adults."

As part of the Hartford program, Sparks and Dugger participate in the Geriatric Nursing Education Listserv created by the American Association of Colleges

of Nursing to enhance communication and collaboration among geriatric nurse educators.

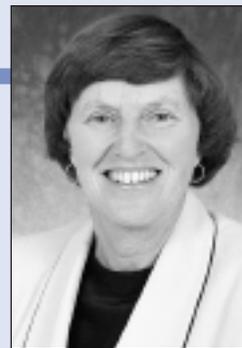
Other recent or ongoing elements of the USI nursing and health professions programs that prepare students to care for geriatric patients or provide community service to older adults include the following:

- field experiences for beginning nursing students at Solarbron Pointe Retirement Community
- a gerontology minor (implemented fall 2000) with more than 20 students now enrolled
- development of the Center for Healthy Aging Web site
- experiences at Regina Continuing Care Center that familiarized nursing students with assessment tools for long-term care, funded by a grant in

Center for Healthy Aging

See educational opportunities, local and national resources, topics of interest, calendar. Click the link at <http://health.usi.edu/>.

Dean's Notes



Dr. Nadine Coudret

Center for Healthy Aging offers multidisciplinary approach

The lead article in this issue of *Synapse* focuses on the school's involvement in the areas of gerontology and geriatrics. Regional and national demographics make this area of health care education and service a priority for our school. Today, 25 million Americans (13 percent of the population) are 65 or older and are the fastest growing segment of our population. The proportion of the elderly population in the Tri-State is higher than the state or national average with approximately 15 percent of the area population being 65 or over. These older adults look to area health care providers for wellness care as well as for illness care.

The older adult is the major recipient of illness health care. Sixty percent of all ambulatory adult primary care, 80 percent of all home care visits, and about 50 percent of inpatient care involve older adults. The majority (85 percent) of residents in long-term care facilities are 65 or older.

Students and graduates of our programs are directly involved in providing care for the older adult. Each of the nursing and clinical health profession education programs incorporates classroom study and clinical practice about care of the older adult. Regional clinical sites that assist these efforts include Solarbron, Regina Continuing Care Center, Holiday Health Care, Southwestern Indiana Regional Council on Aging (SWIRCA), Vanderburgh County Health Department, and hospital-sponsored senior centers.

The school has received two grants focusing on increasing geriatric learning activities in the nursing program. In addition to these curriculum enrichment opportunities, the school offers a gerontology minor to school and University students. These courses prepare health professionals and other majors to understand the special needs of the older adult and to develop skills to better address these needs.

The development of a Center for Healthy Aging is a priority goal for our school. The center will be a multidis-

ciplinary effort that will include participation by relevant departments from the other four schools in the University. The center will coordinate credit and continuing education offerings in gerontology and geriatrics with a long-term goal of offering a major in gerontology. Two additional functions will be to promote research and to serve the region by providing information about older adult issues and services. An important beginning effort to that end is the school's Center for Healthy Aging Web page which provides useful information links for area older adult and health care professionals. Visit the Center by accessing the school home page at <http://health.usi.edu/>.

School addresses concern for uninsured

The School of Nursing and Health Professions has joined a local and national effort to draw attention to the social, economic, and medical issues related to the uninsured. Nationally, more than 43 million individuals do not have health insurance. Most of these individuals are employed. In the Evansville metropolitan area, it is estimated that 43,000 individuals were without health insurance in 2001. The complexity of this national problem is a worry for all health care providers.

Locally, a group called Partners in Caring has organized to address the needs of those without health insurance. The school is committed to working with these community partners to provide care to the uninsured through affiliation with local health care providers. The school also is dedicated to informing students of the problem.

For additional information about the uninsured in our community or the nation, contact me.

Geriatric care

Continued from page 1

2001 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- clinical experiences to prepare students in the respiratory therapy program for the many elderly patients who require respiratory care
- in-service training on proper oral hygiene conducted by students

in the dental programs for staff at a number of area nursing homes

- one-on-one oral hygiene service and follow-up as well as education for residents of Holiday Health Care and educational presentations on dental hygiene to residents of Solarbron

Susan Ahmad, director of the occupational therapy assistant (OTA) program, said that many OTA graduates will be employed working with

older adults. Program curriculum includes a sensitivity experience that helps students learn about issues that often affect geriatric clients. Students participate in activities such as shopping at a discount store while using a walker or wearing glasses that simulate the effect of cataracts. OTA students also have field experiences in long-term care facilities and opportunities to observe in nursing homes.

Program Notes

Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene

11th year for sealant clinic

Dental hygiene students again offered their services to the community in April through a dental sealant clinic for fifth-grade students from Howard Roosa Elementary School in Evansville.

Junior dental hygiene students placed sealants and applied fluoride with assistance from sophomore dental hygiene students. Almost 35 children were treated with this preventive care procedure. The USI program has offered this special clinic for 11 years.

Continuing education

Sophomore and junior dental hygiene students provided continuing education opportunities for community dental hygienists when they presented scientific table clinics and periodontal case reviews at the April meeting of the Ohio Valley Dental Hygienists' Association. The clinics and reviews are developed by the students as part of their clinical and classroom experiences.

Open houses

The dental hygiene and dental assisting programs held open house sessions in March and April. Program applicants and their families were invited to campus to learn more about the educational programs and the professions and to tour the dental programs' facilities. Sophomore and junior dental hygiene students hosted the events.

Health Services

MHA classes

Candidates in the first class of the Master of Health Administration program are progressing toward graduation in December. Admitted in fall 2001, they will have completed 39 hours of master's level work by graduation. Students who began their course work in fall 2002 have heard from

interaction with the first class that the program is "rigorous and thorough" and that they will be well prepared to contribute to health care management upon graduation, said Carol Hermes, program director for health services/administration.

The two-and-a-half year program with much of the instruction delivered over the Internet usually includes three Friday nights a semester when students from both classes get together over dinner to discuss health care issues informally with classmates and faculty. Hermes said that these evenings provide an opportunity for students to apply acquired knowledge to the issues of the day.

At a recent Friday night event, students viewed a PBS "Frontline" presentation on artificial methods of human conception. Kevin Valadares, assistant professor of health services/administration, led a discussion of the ethical issues pertaining to the methods illustrated in the program. Graduate students and faculty also discussed the cost of infertility treatments and the fact that most insurance programs do not cover them.

Nursing

180 graduate students in five specialty tracks

The graduate nursing program has approximately 180 students enrolled in the five specialty tracks: acute care nurse practitioner (ACNP), clinical nurse specialist, family nurse practitioner (FNP), nursing education, and nursing management and leadership.

Of the 2002 ACNP and FNP graduates, all who have taken the certification exam have passed. Certification for both the ACNPs and FNPs is critical for employment and appropriate compensation.

First RN-MSN graduate

Forty-five students are enrolled in the RN-MSN program which provides experienced nurses an opportunity to proceed efficiently through the baccalaureate degree and complete the master's degree.

The first student to complete an MSN degree in this program will graduate in May. At the same time, three students will complete the BSN portion.

Occupational Therapy

Fieldwork supervisors

Janet Kilbane, assistant professor of occupational therapy, and Mary Edwards, instructor of occupational therapy, presented a program titled "Defining Supervision" at an annual meeting of fieldwork supervisors for the occupational therapy program.

Radiologic Technology

Record number of applicants

A record number of candidates have applied for admission to the Class of 2005 in the associate-degree program in radiologic technology. Dr. Martin Reed, director of the radiologic technology program, said 17 students have been selected from a pool of 180 applicants. The class will begin study in the fall semester.

Professional meeting

First-year students in radiologic technology attended the March 21-22 meeting of the Indiana Society of Radiologic Technologists to learn more about professionalism in the field of radiography. The meeting was sponsored in Evansville by the District 8 chapter of the organization.

See **Program Notes**, page 4

Faculty Notes

Roberta E. Hoebeke, assistant professor of graduate nursing, recently presented research findings from her dissertation study at a national conference. Her presentation "Low-Income Women's Barriers to Engaging in Physical Activity for Health Benefits" was given in April at the 29th Annual Meeting of the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties in Philadelphia. She presented the findings again April 16 on the USI campus at the Seventh Annual Research and Health Care Issues Conference, sponsored by the School of Nursing and Health Professions.

Eileen Morrison, associate professor of health services/administration, has been selected as a diplomate in the College of Mental Health of the American Association of Integrative Medicine, an organization of physicians and health care professionals from many areas of study. The organization promotes the idea of integrated medicine and advocates high standards of professional competence. Morrison's selection was based on a review of her credentials and publications.

Ann White, program director for graduate nursing, wrote the article "Clinical Decision Making Among Nursing Students: An Interpretive

Study" published in the March issue of the *Journal of Nursing Education*.

Deborah Carl, program director of dental hygiene, and dental hygiene faculty **Sheila Austin, Jennifer Bartek, Rhonda Gerst, Phyllis Maddox, Dr. Ralph Matacale, Holly Vidmar, and Mara Beth Womack** attended a one-day dental hygiene clinical educators' workshop in Chicago in February. The eight USI faculty were selected to attend the workshop which was limited to 20 participants.

Carl, Maddox, and Womack will attend the Indiana Dental Hygiene Educators Conference in May in Indianapolis.

Three faculty members in the occupational therapy program had articles published in the proceedings of the Seventh Annual Nursing and Health Professions Educator Conference held October 23 at USI. **Aimee Luebben**, program director for occupational therapy, and **Rick Hobbs**, assistant professor of occupational therapy, wrote "Journal writing: Parameters for success." The article "From a distance: Using Blackboard to manage level II fieldwork" was written by **Janet Kilbane**, assistant professor of occupational therapy.

Luebben and C.B. Royeen of Creighton University are co-authors of "Annotated bibliography of chaos for

occupational therapy" for the journal *Occupational Therapy in Health Care*, published 2002. Luebben also has written or co-written chapters in the text *Perspectives in human occupation: Participation in life*, published in 2003 by Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. Chapter titles include "Ethical concerns: Human occupation," "Core concept of occupation," and "Reaffirming the importance of occupation."

Hobbs was producer of The Really Big Show which raised more than \$50,000 for Evansville ARC in February.

Dr. Martha Sparks, associate professor of nursing, has been selected for the Graduate End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) project, a comprehensive, national education program to improve end-of-life care by nurses. She will attend a training session in June in Pasadena, California. The nurse educators in the program commit to incorporating information about end-of-life care into curriculum for graduate nursing programs. ELNEC is a partnership of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the Los Angeles-based City of Hope National Medical Center. The project received a \$1.4 million grant from the National Cancer Institute to expand its reach to graduate nursing programs.

Program Notes

Continued from page 3

Respiratory Therapy

New clinical affiliations

Respiratory therapy clinical affiliations have been expanded to include Good Samaritan Hospital, Vincennes, Indiana; Owensboro Mercy Health System, Owensboro, Kentucky; and Deaconess Women's Hospital, Newburgh, Indiana.

Physician support

Dr. David Harris, a pulmonologist, has joined the physician support group for the respiratory therapy program and is participating in physician/student rounds activities.

Pulmonary function unit

The respiratory therapy program now has a completely functional computerized pulmonary function unit. Robert Hooper, program director for respiratory therapy, expressed thanks to Deaconess Hospital of Evansville for donating the base unit and to Bemis, Inc., for the technological expertise and upgrade.

Professional meeting

The 18 students in the Respiratory Care Club raised money to attend the 30th Annual Meeting of Region II for Respiratory Care April 9-11 in Covington, Kentucky. During the meeting, the club fielded two teams in the 2003 Region II Sputum Bowl academic competition. Second-year team members were Wendy Barth, Rebecca Rose, Joseph Watson, and Brittany Ward, alternate. Jamie Harper, Alan Sims, Doneva Townsend, and alternate Chris Roundtree represented the first-year class.

The Witness Project®

Personal stories, educational sessions teach importance of cancer screenings

Welborn, Komen grants support program to reach at-risk African-American women

Changing lives with important health information is the goal of The Witness Project, said Debbie Kinney, breast health project coordinator for the School of Nursing and Health Professions.

The Witness Project® was begun in April of last year to reach African-American women with a message about the importance of early detection in surviving breast and cervical cancer. Since that time more than 1,900 persons, 88 percent of them African-American women, have been exposed to the message at health fairs in the Evansville area. Kinney said that 167 women have attended education programs and 57 had screenings.

The program received a \$50,000 grant in November from the Welborn Foundation to provide support through November of this year. The Welborn Foundation provided first-year funding for the program in late 2001.

The Witness Project® also has received a \$50,000 grant from the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

This money will provide mammograms and education and training during 2003.

Since inception, The Witness Project® has participated in 13 health fairs and other events, such as the Komen Race for the Cure, and has conducted 10 educational workshops.

Kinney has recruited six Witness role models, all of whom are cancer survivors, to tell their stories at health fairs and workshops.

Margaret Wilkerson, 81, a Witness role model, said, "I like to tell people when I witness that breast cancer has no respect for age because I was almost 80 years old when I found mine. I tell them early detection is the best method for protection."

If listeners say that mammograms are discomfiting, Wilkerson responds that that "three seconds of discomfort" are better than the consequences of letting a cancer grow undetected. A retired teacher, Wilkerson taught for many years at Lincoln School in Evansville.

Another Witness role model is Yvonne Herring, 43, a billing specialist for Physicians Health Group.

"I tell them about some of the fears that I went through when I found out that I had cancer. I tell them how my family supported me.



Debbie Kinney, right, project coordinator, helps a health-fair participant register for a screening.

My hair fell out 10 days after the first chemotherapy treatment. I didn't have to worry about any bad hair days. It was during the summer, and I put on a baseball cap or straw hat. I still went out and about and did the things I wanted to do," she said.

The Witness role models encourage women to seek treatment early.

"Do your breast self-exams and go to your annual physical," Herring tells her listeners. "If cancer is caught early, things will work out for you."

The Witness Project® also has 11 women trained as lay health advisors to teach the educational workshops. Three of the lay health advisors are USI students. One is majoring in business, one in education, and the other is undeclared.

The mammography unit of St. Mary's Health Care Services provides mammograms for African-American women reached through The Witness Project®. Students in USI's family nurse practitioner program also are involved in providing screenings.

National research indicates that African-American women have a lower incidence rate for breast cancer than Caucasian women but a lower five-year survival rate.

African-American women are twice as likely to develop cervical cancer and nearly three times as likely to die from it.

Kinney seeks church groups, sororities, or other groups interested in having a presentation about cancer awareness. The size of the group makes no difference. Contact Kinney at 812/465-1168 or dakinney@usi.edu.



Stacy Bailey, right, of St. Mary's Breast Center takes a mammogram for a participant at an area health fair.

Graduate student documents smallpox preparedness plan

A graduate nursing student who is in the forefront of smallpox preparedness for a region of Northern Kentucky is documenting her role with journal entries which will be reported by the *Cincinnati Enquirer*.



Hunter

Jennifer L. Hunter of Highland Heights, Kentucky, is quality assurance manager for the Northern Kentucky Independent District Health Department. She is a student in the nurse management specialty area, one of five tracks in the MSN program offered by the University of Southern Indiana School of Nursing and Health Professions.

Hunter was one of 11 nurses in the first group of persons vaccinated for smallpox in Kentucky in response to the nationwide alert for preparedness. She received the vaccine February 19 in Frankfort.

Hunter first became interested in nursing issues related to disasters in 1997 when, as a health department representative, she provided assistance following flooding in Falmouth, Kentucky. After the experience, she penned her feelings.

Following maternity leave in 2001, she returned to work on September 10 to learn that she would be assigned more responsibility in the area of disaster-related nursing. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon occurred the next day, making disaster-preparedness even more of a priority issue. Smallpox-readiness soon became a part of the mix.

The Northern Kentucky Independent District Health Department serves Boone, Campbell, Grant, and Kenton counties. For that area, Hunter was charged with modifying the national Center for Disease Control plan to suit local needs. Her plan has become the model for use throughout Kentucky. The Northern Kentucky region began smallpox inoculation clinics for first responders in March and will continue them through May.

Based on her experience with the 1997 flood, Hunter decided to keep a daily journal of her nursing experiences with the smallpox plan for historical purposes. *Cincinnati Enquirer* reporter Cindy Schroeder heard about the journal entries and is following Hunter's experiences, updating newspaper readers from time to time with progress reports on the implementation of the plan and Hunter's written reac-

tions. Hunter said the newspaper also is interested in writing about the "new generation of nurses" and learning more about Internet delivery of USI's MSN program.

Hunter entered the graduate program in fall 2002 after seeing information in a nursing magazine. "When I called for more information, everyone at USI was so nice and eager to help me," she said.

Internet-delivered instruction is ideal for Hunter because it allows her to advance her career knowledge and skills while continuing her full-time job and family responsibilities. Her family includes her husband Gary and two preschool daughters, Brennah and Laurel. Hunter expects to complete the MSN program in three years.

For two weeks following the smallpox inoculation, Hunter planned to stay with her mother so she would not be around her young children during the infectious period.

"I have a very supportive family," Hunter said. Her two sisters and her husband's family helped care for the girls during the period following her inoculation.

Hunter earned associate and baccalaureate degrees in nursing from Northern Kentucky University.

Calling all Alumni

We welcome comments from our alumni and friends regarding accomplishments, career activities, and special events in your personal life (marriage and births).

Return form to:
School of Nursing and Health Professions
University of Southern Indiana
8600 University Boulevard
Evansville, IN 47712-3593

Name _____ Your student record name _____

Degree/Year of graduation _____ Major _____ Phone _____

Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Current Position _____ Employer _____

Your news _____

News

Five students learn firsthand about health care in Jamaica

Michelle Carson, instructor in nursing, and five students from the School of Nursing and Health Professions traveled to Jamaica in February as part of a 24-member health care team providing services to the people of the Annotto Bay community.

"I think it was an eye-opener for students accustomed to the level of health care available in the United States," Carson said.

The experience was a study in how to deliver health care without much equipment or manpower and with limited supplies, Carson said. USI students had an opportunity to observe health care professionals using their own assessment skills without benefit of the usual diagnostic tools and laboratory work.

Carson said that in many cases the Jamaican people walked for miles to the Annotto Bay Hospital and clinics and still were patient and grateful while awaiting their turn to receive health care services.

Nursing students observed in the hospital, at mountain clinics, and at educational clinics held in schools. Health services students studied the operation of the administrative departments of the hospital.

Members of the health care team worked at the Annotto Bay Hospital while in Jamaica. From left are Michelle Carson, Kelly Moser, Aarti Jain, Jessica McGolden, Lesley Sykes, and Stan Melton.



Making the trip to Jamaica were nursing students Lesley Sykes, Kelly Moser, and Jessica McGolden, and health services students Stan Melton and Aarti Jain. Michelle Alvarez, USI professor of social work, also took part in the seven-day experience. The School of Nursing and Health Professions has been involved with the Annotto Bay Hospital in collaboration with Deaconess Hospital of Evansville since 1997.

Tammy Hargett named 2002 Distinguished Alumna in USI nursing program

Tammy Hargett, a family nurse practitioner, is the Distinguished Nursing Alumna for 2002 for the University of Southern Indiana School of Nursing and Health Professions. Hargett's caring attitude to patients and family was cited in the award presentation.



Hargett

The award recognizes professional work that reflects the excellence which the school strives to instill in its graduates.

Hargett has worked as a staff nurse, assistant nurse manager, and a clinical nurse coordinator and clinician. She currently is on staff

at Welborn Clinic Highland in Evansville.

In 1993, she was the recipient of Welborn Hospital's Outstanding Nursing Practice Award.

Hargett is a member of several professional organizations including the Tri-State Advanced Practice Nurse Association, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, and the American Association of Critical Care Nurses. She is a member of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society.

Hargett earned both undergraduate and graduate degrees in nursing at USI, completing a B.S.N. in 1993 and an M.S.N. in 1999. She serves as a guest lecturer and preceptor for the USI family nurse practitioner program.

The Distinguished Nursing Alumna was recognized in October during a nursing alumni gathering in the University Center's Carter Hall. Hargett is the second recipient of the annual award. Jerrilee Lamar was the recipient of the inaugural award in 2001.

Health Services student honored by Ivy Tech

Annabet Garner, a junior in the health services program, has been honored by Ivy Tech State College as 2002 Distinguished Alumna.

She was recognized October 11 in Indianapolis at the school's trustees and directors conference. A resident and former mayor of Milton, Kentucky, Garner earned a technical certificate in medical assisting from Ivy Tech in Madison, Indiana, in 1978 and an associate degree in applied science in 1995 at the Sellersburg, Indiana, campus. She is assistant professor and chair of the medical assisting program at Ivy Tech-Madison.

Check your calendar

Nursing and Health Professions Continuing Education

Workshops and Conferences

Ninth Annual Case Management Conference, May 8
Fifth Annual Advanced Practice Nursing Symposium, May 16
Radiology for Dental Auxiliaries, May 16-17
Emerging Concepts in Periodontal Therapy, September 13
**Eighth Annual Nursing and Health Professions Education
Conference**, October 24
Healing Touch Level I and II, October 24-26
Basic Parish Nurse Education Program, November 5-9

Certificate Programs

Anticoagulation Therapy Management, six-week
Internet-delivered program, begins June 2, August 18
Case Management, six-week Internet-delivered
program, begins July 7, September 22
Chronic Heart Failure, five-week Internet-delivered
program, begins June 30, September 8
Health Promotion and Worksite Wellness, 10-week
Internet-delivered program, September 22-
December 1
Lipid Management, six-week Internet-delivered
program, begins July 14, September 29
Pain Management, six-week Internet-delivered
program, begins May 5, July 21, October 6.

Customized programs

For programs tailored to meet the specific needs of your organization, contact
Peggy Graul, Coordinator of Continuing Education, School of Nursing and Health Professions
University of Southern Indiana
pgraul@usi.edu or 812/465-1161

Registration information: Contact Extended Services, 812/464-1989 or 800/467-8600; http://health.usi.edu/cont_ed/contined.htm



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