

\$1.1M grant helps to grow new RN-to-MSN program

Nursing students at Hinds Community College now have a springboard to launch them toward a master's degree at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, thanks to a new grant-funded program in the School of Nursing.

Pathways to Advanced Practice Nursing is an initiative that aims to funnel RNs with associate degrees into one of the School of Nursing's six master's degree tracks by way of the RN-to-MSN program, which was initiated in the summer.

Last fall, the school received a \$1.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration to expand that RN-to-MSN program by adding an early-entry option for students currently working toward their associate degree in nursing at HCC.

Dr. Patricia Waltman, associate dean for academic affairs, is project director for PAPAN. She says that, with the state's complex health determinants, Mississippi needs nurses who can step into leadership roles, can teach at all levels and can provide primary care. Partnering with HCC will have a direct impact on those needs, she said.

"Only about five percent of ADN-prepared nurses in the state move on to the master's degree level," she said. "This is a great opportunity to move these students through the pipeline as quickly and effortlessly as possible."



SON faculty members Dr. Sharon Lubert (from left), Dr. Marcia Rachel and Dr. Patricia Waltman

Waltman said more than half of the licensed nurses in the state hold an associate degree and twice as many students graduate from ADN programs each year than from BSN or MSN programs.

The goal is to offer a flexible degree program so RNs can improve their education without having to quit their jobs. To give those nurses easier access, the curriculum will be delivered in a variety of ways, including distance education.

"A big piece of this grant will be to deliver the educational technology for the delivery of this program across the state," Waltman said.

The grant also will provide funding to hire an instructional designer to help develop online content and to put in place distance-education delivery equipment.

Hinds students who entered the ADN program this fall will be the

first targeted for early entry. In the spring, those who meet the admission criteria and have satisfactory GRE scores will be automatically admitted to the master's track they choose once they graduate in spring 2012.

Hinds site coordinator Dene Bass will mentor the students, helping them develop their writing skills and preparing them for a seamless transition into graduate education.

Dr. Libby Mahaffey, HCC dean of nursing and allied health, said the project is a wonderful opportunity for Hinds students.

"It will provide future nursing educators so that we can continue to meet the needs of our communities," she said. "With the largest number of associate degree nursing graduates in the state, Hinds has a great pool of students who are eligible for the early entry program."

Message to alumni

Greetings from over 4,000 University of Mississippi School of Nursing alumni.

We are an integral part of many health-care facilities, educational institutions and research venues in Mississippi as well as around the country. In its 61 years of existence, the nursing alumni chapter has supported the School of Nursing in many ways.

Among the recent opportunities for us to participate is for us to serve as standardized patients. A script is provided and the student has the opportunity to interact with an experienced person in various clinical situations. The students and faculty are very appreciative of this personal involvement, and we as alumni provide a rich experience for the students.

Consider this meaningful connection with our school. This nursing newsletter is a great venue for us to stay connected and informed of our varied activities. We are launching a Class Notes section with this edition and hope you will access it for more information so that our connections will be even stronger.

As always, please make the alumni office aware of your current address including your e-mail address so that we keep you informed.

Stay in touch!

— Sandra West, 1968, president of the Alumni Chapter



West

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Class Notes

■ **Jan Magee Evers, 1960:** Jan has been spending her spare time with her three-year-old grandson, Charles Jackson Crump (Charlie). He is the son of Charles and Julie Evers Crump.

■ **Julia Hodnett McCormac, 1965:** Julia's career took her from Calif. to Fla. before she joined the Air Force. Before moving to Brandon in 2008, she lived with her husband in Ala. for almost 20 years. Sadly, her husband passed away in 2003.

Julia served as Nursing Alumni Chapter President from October 2007 to October 2009 and remains involved with alumni and the School of Nursing.

■ **Mary A. Ware, 1967:** Mary is retired and lives with her husband, Joe, in Pearl River, La.

She served in the Miss. Army National Guard for 23 years. She has worked in nursing education at UMMC, Hinds Community College, Mississippi University for Women,



Sandra West, president of the nursing alumni chapter, welcomes Dr. Kim Hoover, dean of the School of Nursing, at a recent MDA event.

William Carey University and served as director of Nursing Education at the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning.

In her retirement, she enjoys her two grandchildren and her hobbies of sewing, machine embroidery and making jewelry. A small group of her classmates stay in touch and meet quarterly for lunch. She enjoys this connection to her classmates and the School of Nursing.

■ **LaDonna Northington, 1979:** LaDonna currently serves as director of the Traditional Undergraduate Program. Last year, she was awarded

Nurse Educator of the Year at the 2010 MNA Nightingale Awards.

■ **Michelle Burns, 1997:** Michelle graduated in 1997 and earned her M.S.N. at the nursing school in 2008. Michelle loves her job as the nursing workforce specialist in the Office of Nursing Excellence. She is currently on the Alumni Board and enjoys being active in local and state professional organizations such as the Mississippi Nurses Association and Oncology Nurses Association. She serves as the 2nd vice president for MNA District 1 and is the secretary for the MNA board of directors.

Upcoming Events

■ **April 29:** School of Nursing's Eliza Pillars Reception - 5:30-7:00 pm. in Biloxi.

■ **May 6:** SON Honors Day.

■ **May 18:** School of Nursing student orientation lunch - 11:30 a.m. in the R153 auditorium.

■ **May 26:** School of Nursing Pinning Ceremony

■ **May 27:** Commencement



NURSING

Spring 2011



Dr. Lisa Haynie treats 2-year-old KaMaria Amos with her mother, Jameneqwa Graves, at the UNACARE clinic in March. Haynie is the co-principal investigator for the \$1.5M HRSA grant recently awarded to the clinic.

BOOST for UNACARE

\$1.5M federal grant will enable nurse-run clinic to see more patients

Since its opening in the late 1990s, the School of Nursing's UNACARE clinic has become a medical home for many residents of Jackson's midtown neighborhood, who visit the clinic regularly to manage their diabetes, seek prenatal care or just to get a flu shot.

A \$1.5M federal grant recently awarded to UNACARE promises to result in a more robust clinic, able to expand its services to more community members as well as enhance its educational opportunities.

Pamela Helms, assistant professor of nursing and director of the clinic, said the grant will provide a much-needed boost.

"It's like a dream come true. We've operated UNACARE clinic for a long time with very limited resources. This grant will allow us to expand our services to the community."

To cover three years, the grant was awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration through an Affordable Care Act initiative to support community clinics across the nation and nurse-run clinics in particular. Helms said UNACARE is one of only two locations in the southeast to receive one of the grants.

Helms wrote the grant proposal last year with fellow nurse practitioners Dr. Audwin Fletcher and Dr. Lisa Haynie, both professors of nursing.

"One of the big things the grant will allow us to accomplish is to drastically increase the number of patients we see," said Fletcher. "Faculty are limited in the amount of time spent at the clinic due to other

faculty responsibilities. But most of us have committed to one or two days per week of practice time at UNACARE."

Since receiving the grant, the clinic has added a full-time nurse practitioner, a full-time medical office assistant and a registered nurse.

Sherrilee Causey, who came on board in December, is the clinic's first full-time staff nurse practitioner. Before graduating with her master's last year, Causey rotated through the clinic as a student nurse practitioner.

"It's a very good learning environment. That's why I wanted to come back," she said.

Requiring all of the nursing school's family nurse practitioner (FNP) students to serve rotations at UNACARE is part of the clinic's emphasis on education and exposing students to community-based care.

"We are committed to increasing the number of students who rotate through here," Fletcher said, adding that "the goal is requiring that all FNP students complete a minimum of 90 clock hours at the clinic. Similarly, all accelerated BSN students gain clinical experience at the clinic as well as many traditional students."

Through a partnership with what is now the non-profit group Midtown Partners, UNACARE opened in the neighborhood in 1998 with a goal to help



UNACARE faculty, staff and students include (from left) Dr. Lisa Haynie, Shonda Brown, Catrina Prather, Virginia Norquist, Sherrilee Causey, Carolyn Mitchell, Laurie Selman, Rochelle Anthony and Director Pam Helms.

improve a low-income, underserved part of Jackson.

UNACARE is part of a unique affiliation among the School of Nursing, Jackson Housing Authority, The Walker Foundation and Baptist Health Systems. Midtown Partners provides the funds for rent at the location at 1207 North West Street in the heart of the Midtown Community.

"The other support we provide is mainly facilitating patient care, providing transportation," said Executive Director Kristi Hendrix. "We try to help them with any barriers between them and getting the health care they need."

Helms points out that with the opportunities for research that are available, the clinic allows faculty to contribute UMMC's three-part mission in many ways.

"UNACARE is the result of partnerships with a community of people. This grant allows us to do a better job of our contribution to that community," she said.



the Dean's Corner

As this newsletter reaches you, nurses across the nation are gathering to reflect on the recent Institute of Medicine's (IOM) report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*. The authors of the study identified a number of barriers that may prevent nurses from responding effectively to our evolving health care system. The report offers recommendations for stakeholders, including nursing education. We are challenged to ensure that nurses achieve "higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression."

The School of Nursing is already in the midst of change that addresses this national challenge as well as challenges unique to our state. We recently received two grants of over one million dollars each to fund innovative pathways to advanced practice nursing in partnership with Hinds Community College and to expand our clinical services in the midtown nurse practitioner run clinic. The expansion of UNACARE services means more clinical opportunities for undergraduate and graduate nursing students.

Use of simulation as an effective method of teaching clinical reasoning continues to grow. Visit the campus and any given day, you might find nursing and medical students sharing obstetrical simulation experiences or OT students and nursing students teaching each other. Our state-of-the-art simulators are also being made available to other area schools that might not otherwise have the resources.

The title of the IOM report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, is descriptive of our stellar faculty and staff, without whom none of this progress would be possible. They work to make sure the UMMC School of Nursing remains at the forefront, leading change and advancing health.

As always, your support is critical to our success. An example of how alumni funding helps is our current change in student study areas. Through your generous support, we are able to act on recent student requests for an improved study environment. The student lounge will be renovated to house individual study carrels for a quieter environment.

I hope you enjoy reading more of our faculty, staff, student and alumni accomplishments.

— Dr. Kim Hoover, dean



Trial-by-fire SIMULATION

A sedated patient is getting a check-up from a pair of nursing students when he suddenly quits breathing. One student grabs an AMBU bag and ventilates him while the other injects a dose of Narcan to counteract a potentially fatal overdose of morphine. Their instructor stands back and watches.

It may sound like trial-by-fire learning — and that's precisely the point — but luckily the patient's life is not actually on the line: He was never alive to begin with. He's a SimMan G3 high-fidelity patient simulator. The life-size manikin speaks, bleeds, presents at least 60 different health scenarios, and is the latest addition to the School of Nursing's simulation lab.

"Simulation is a bridge between didactic and clinical instruction," said Dr. Jan Cooper, assistant professor of nursing and director of the Clinical Simulation Center. "They can't hurt anyone here, but we can show them the outcomes of their interventions."

The heavy demand for RNs nationwide, combined with Mississippi's unique health-care disparities, means that nurses entering the workforce today must be fully prepared to face the challenges of frontline patient care. Simulation experiences are a vital part of that preparation.

"In a clinical setting, we're going to make decisions for students," Cooper said. "But in simulation, we can step back and make them think for themselves. That's hard to teach."

Cooper has been steadily building her simulation activities over the years, but new support promises to enhance nurse training at the school. The existing skills lab in the basement is equipped with a number of simu-

lators and "task trainers," but she's now working to transform a nearby classroom into a lab devoted exclusively to simulation. That's where nursing students encountered SimMan overdosing on morphine.

The lab is populated with other artificial patients, but SimMan is the newest and most advanced.

Cooper says more improvements are on the way. Thanks to a \$4,000 gift from Regions Bank, video cameras soon will be installed in the lab. At the end of a typical class, the students and faculty members discuss their reactions to the training scenarios. Cameras will provide playback for students to critique their own performances.

The donation also will help fund the construction of a control room complete with a one-way mirror to house the simulators' computers.

According to Cooper, simulation not only builds confidence but also helps engage a generation of students who have a different way of learning.

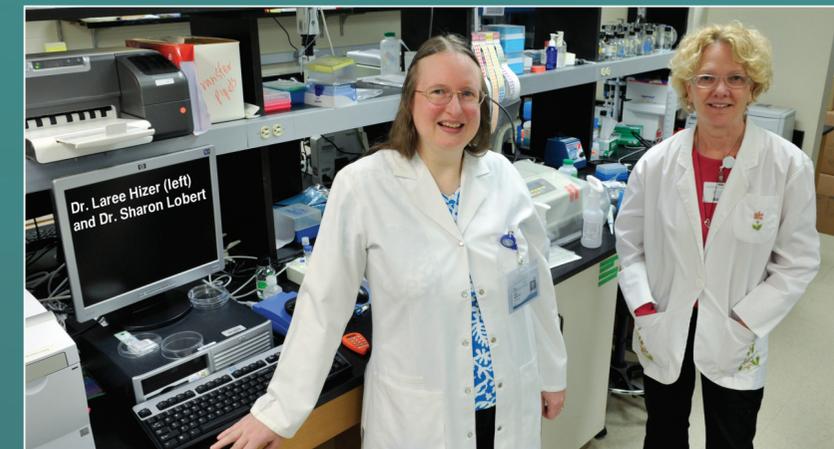
"The trend now is, you can't stand up and lecture," she said. "You have to make it relevant. How easy is it to make it relevant when you can bring in the simulator and say, 'We've talked about this for 20 minutes; now what are you going to do about it?'"

Cooper is planning more interdisciplinary simulation experiences as well as new "community-practice" scenarios where the students interact with live standardized patients — faculty members or graduate students who play the part of the patient or family member — in a home setting.



Above: Under the guidance of Dr. Jan Cooper (second from left), assistant professor of nursing and director of the Clinical Simulation Center, students discuss their simulation experience with the SimMan G3. Left: Nursing student Morgan Self.

Scientists study diseases, drugs in SON's research lab



Dr. Laree Hizer has been a School of Nursing faculty member since 2002, but she's not a nurse.

Hizer is a scientist with a Ph.D. in biochemistry, and she spends much of her time conducting research in the school's basic science lab. Located in the nursing school's basement, the lab is the only one of its kind in the south.

"The buzzword is 'translational research,'" said Hizer, associate professor of nursing and neuroscience, in describing the lab's mission. "It's an environment that supports research that directly affects humans."

As a researcher, it's Hizer's ultimate goal to see her work have a direct impact on people coping with multiple sclerosis. That's due, at least in part, to the fact that she herself was diagnosed with the disease 10 years ago.

"There wasn't much research using cell culture that was being applied to the disease at the time," she said. "I thought I might be able to apply my background to the molecular process."

Multiple sclerosis disrupts the communication between nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. Nerve cells contain long projections called axons, Hizer said, which are wrapped in the insulating substance myelin. Multiple sclerosis is characterized by destruction of myelin.

Within the axons of a nerve cell, structures called microtubules provide roadways for substances to travel from the nerve cell body.

"For some reason, the roadways are disrupted when you lose myelin. We're testing drugs that maintain that function," Hizer said.

Hizer joined the School of Nursing in 2002.

A few years earlier, the school had undergone a major renovation project that added two floors to the building. Then-dean Dr. Anne Peirce set aside space for a research lab, which was launched by Dr. Sharon Lobert and Dr. Barbara Rogers in 1999.

Lobert, associate dean for research and evaluation in the School of Nursing, says very few basic science labs are attached to nursing schools nationwide, and there are none in the Southeast.

She focuses her research on discovering why some tumors are resistant to — or become resistant to — a class of chemotherapy drugs called antimetabolites; specifically, how drug receptors change with drug treatment.

"Some people have an automatic resistance to these drugs," she said. "A person might respond well to a certain drug, but after remission, that drug doesn't work anymore."

"We'd like to understand this problem at the receptor level. We can study the regulation of the receptors using polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and other molecular biology and protein chemistry techniques."

Both scientists acknowledge research is an increasingly important aspect of nursing education and practice.

"From my perspective, nurses need to become more and more knowledgeable of the science behind diseases," said Hizer, who is in remission and very healthy. "That will help them be more involved with diagnosing patients and treating patients."

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Evers continues UMMC support

Jan Magee Evers and her late husband, Dr. Carl G. Evers, have a history with the University of Mississippi Medical Center that stretches back to 1956. In the decades since, the couple has left a legacy of giving that continues to grow.

Dr. James Keeton, vice chancellor for Health Affairs and dean of the School of Medicine, honored the couple for their contributions to the Medical Center in a ceremony last August.

A native of Tylertown, Miss., Jan Evers came to UMMC in 1956 and received her B.S.N. in 1960. That same year, she married Dr. Carl Evers, who would go on to serve as associate dean of Aca-



demetic Affairs. Together they had three children: Karen, Julie and Gus (Carl Jr.).

In 1975, Jan Evers joined the faculty of the SON shortly after earning her master's degree, and she was named the associate dean of continuing education after establishing the school's first continuing education program.

After her husband passed away in 1992, Evers worked to establish the Carl G. Evers Scholarship, awarded yearly to medical students, and the Jan Evers Faculty Fellowship Research Award at the School of Nursing. Last year, Evers donated her husband's medical library to UMMC's Rowland Medical Library.

MNA honors Dr. Edrie George-Royals

By Janis Quinn

After her distinguished career as a nursing educator, Dr. Edrie George-Royals literally sailed into the sunset.

She was dean of the School of Nursing at UMMC from 1974 until her retirement in 1989. She was a member of the nursing faculty from 1966 until her appointment as dean. Two months after her retirement, she sailed with her new husband to the Bahama Islands, the first of many voyages they took together on the trawler *Sunshine II*.

Members of the Mississippi Nursing Association honored her with

membership in the MNA Hall of Fame during the annual Nightingale ceremony earlier this month. The award recognized her major contributions to nursing in Mississippi.

Among those who supported her nomination, Bobbie Ward, former professor of nursing at UMMC, said, "She always put the nursing needs of the state in the forefront of every decision she made."

During her tenure, she and her faculty established a continuing education program in nursing, changed the master's of nursing to a master's of science in nursing (essential to

accreditation), secured funding for a director of research that began that program, and received approval for the doctoral program in nursing. She was the school's second dean, following Christine Oglevee.

"Everything accomplished during my tenure was because I had a great faculty and excellent people working beside me," she said.

In 1988, she married for the first time at age 47 to Dr. Jimmy Royals, a retired physician. He was a highly respected ob-gyn and a key member of UMMC's clinical faculty in ob-gyn. He died in 2006.



UMMC's 2011 Nightingale Awards recipients include (front row, from left) Jana Neely, Nurse Rookie of the Year; Edrie George-Royals, Mississippi 2011 Hall of Fame; Michelle Welander, Nurse Manager of the Year; (back row from left) Tina Martin, Faculty Member of the Year; Rebecca Askew, Nurse Educator of the Year; Chris Powe, Advanced Practice Nurse of the Year.