NEW FRONTIERS IN RESEARCH:
This issue highlights some recent developments on research projects that are advancing the knowledge base for nursing and the health sciences. For more information on current research activities at CNHS, visit: http://cnhs.fiu.edu/research.html

Nursing Professors Lead NIH Study on Family Functioning After Loss of a Child
Assessing Risk and Intervention for Grieving Families

For most parents the birth of a child signifies the beginning of a new set of hopes and dreams. But what happens to parents when these hopes and dreams are cut short by the untimely death of their child? CNHS nursing professors Dr. JoAnne M. Youngblut and Dr. Dorothy Brooten are fielding a unique R01 class study on this subject titled, Death in the PICU/NICU: Parent & Family Functioning.

Backed by a $2.15 million grant from the National Institute of Health’s (NIH) National Institute of Nursing Research, the five-year study, now in its third year, focuses on how families function and relate with one another (i.e. mother-to-father, parents-to-surviving children) after the death of a child in a pediatric or neonatal intensive care unit (PICU/NICU).

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Do Bilingual Seniors Stay Sharper?
Communication Sciences Professors See Possible Protective Effect of Bilingualism on Cognitive Decline

In a recently published article, two professors from the CNHS Communications Science & Disorders Department point to another possible advantage of learning two languages – delayed onset of the dementia process. Professor Dr. Alfredo Ardila, and Department Chair and Clinical Associate Professor Dr. Eliane Ramos are two of the leading experts in the country on bilingual speech language development. Their article, “Normal and Abnormal Aging in Bilinguals,” appears in the journal Dementia & Neuropsychologia [December 2008; 2(4)].

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Occupational Therapy Researcher Looks at Elderly Driver Safety
Can Better Assessment and Rehabilitation Help Avoid Mishaps?

Why is Dr. Dennis McCarthy, Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy, studying skills assessment tools for elderly drivers? Because better assessment tools could help objectively determine when intervention is necessary for an older driver to mitigate accident risk, and how better rehabilitation techniques may improve driver safety.

McCarthy explains that older Americans are the fastest growing group in the population, and inadequate transportation alternatives result in many elders continuing to drive when they can no longer do so safely.

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CNHS Chosen for National Patient Simulator Research Project

The CNHS Anesthesiology Nursing Program (ANP) was selected to participate in a multi-center research project examining the utility of the Harvey® Cardio-pulmonary Patient Simulator in educating advanced practice nurses on cardiovascular assessment skills.

FIU ANP joins three other universities participating in this study: Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), Texas Tech University and the University of Pittsburgh.

In 2002, FIU was the first nursing program in the nation to own a Harvey simulator and integrate it into its undergraduate and graduate curriculums.

Associate Professor and ANP Director Dr. Jeffrey Groom and his colleague Lucie Dlugasch, Clinical Assistant Professor, are co-Principal Investigators representing FIU on the project. The project is sponsored by the University of Miami Gordon Center for Research in Medical Education, where the
We reviewed a number of different studies involving bilingualism and the process of aging, and the research suggests that there may be a protective effect when it comes to age-associated cognitive decline. It may even delay the onset of the dementia process,” said Ardila.

The authors also noted other important findings related to the decline of language abilities, and the effects of cognitive and psychiatric testing in different languages.

“Seemingly, during normal aging there is a more rapid decline of ‘acquired language’ skills compared to ‘native language’ skills, and elders clearly tend to prefer using their native language. In cases of dementia, the cognitive defect is more severe when the demented patient is tested in the second language versus the native language,” explained Ramos.

“Professors Ardila and Ramos are delving into a fascinating aspect of the aging process by looking at bilingualism as a factor in how we evaluate and care for patients with dementia,” said Dr. Divina Grossman, Dean of the College. “This is one more example of just how much we can do to advance health care practices by embracing diversity as a core value in nursing and health sciences education and research.”
• Divina Grossman, PhD, RN, ARNP, FAAN, Dean of the College, has been elected Chair of the Florida Association of Colleges of Nursing (FACN) for a two-year term. The FACN is comprised of deans and directors of some 50 baccalaureate and higher degree public and private nursing programs in the state. Together these educators serve as a voice for higher education in nursing in Florida, often working in collaboration with other health care organizations as advocates on nursing education and practice issues.

• Occupational Therapy Department Chair Alma Abdel-Moty, DrOT, MS, OTR/L, and Assistant Clinical Professor Elise Bloch, EdD, OTR/L, BCP, each had papers accepted for presentation at the 2009 American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference in Houston, Tex. Dr. Abdel-Moty's Engagement in Web-Assisted Learning Activities: The Relationship Between Participation and Academic Achievement and Dr. Bloch's Efficacy of Sensory-Integration Intervention to Enhance Social Skills in Children with Autism in a Group Setting will be featured at the conference in April.

• Kathy Anderson, PhD, ARNP, LMFT, Clinical Associate Nursing Professor, presented at the National Institute of Health's Summit on Health Disparities in Washington, DC last December about the Minority Health & Health Disparities International Research Training (MHIRT) Program, for which she is Co-Principal Investigator. Dr. Anderson also received a $5,000 research grant from the American Psychiatric Nursing Association for her study, Factors Affecting Health Promoting Screening, Treatment, Couple Relationships and Depression During Breast Cancer.

• Communication Sciences & Disorders Professor Noma Anderson, PhD, CCC-SLP, was a speaker at the 2008 Rite Care Conference, a conference of 177 Scottish Rite Mason centers for childhood language disorders. Dr. Anderson’s topic was, The Role of the Speech-Language Pathologist in Closing the Academic Gap.

• Alfredo Ardila, PhD, ABPN, Professor of Communication Sciences & Disorders, was invited to be a special lecturer by the Department of Psychology at Moscow State University (Russia). He also presented papers titled, A Proposed Reinterpretation and Reclassification of Aphasic Syndromes and Historical Origins of Executive Functions at the Conference on Cognitive Neurology presented by the Colombian Association of Neurology in Medellin, Colombia last year.

• Clinical Assistant Nursing Professor Cynthia Fletcher, PhD, RN, was presented with the 2008 Nurse of the Year Award by the Broward County Nurses Association.

• Assistant Director of the Anesthesiology Nursing Program Juan E. Gonzalez, MS, CRNA can now add PhD to his professional title after successfully defending his dissertation from Barry University (Miami, Fla.) entitled, The Effects of an ACLS Simulation-Based Educational Intervention On Performance, Self-Efficacy, and General Knowledge in a Group of First-Year Nurse Anesthesia Students.

• Associate Nursing Professor Sandra Lobar, PhD, ARNP-BC, was honored by the Miami-Dade County Health Department for her service on the School Health Medical Advisory Committee at their Volunteers Recognition Reception in October 2008.

• Dennis McCarthy, PhD, MEd, OTR/L, Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy, was invited to serve as a consultant at the Monash University Accident Research Center in Selangor, Malaysia for his research expertise on issues surrounding driving efficacy and safety among elders. He is also serving as a guest editor for two special editions of Topics in Geriatric Rehabilitation journal, the first of which is the January/March 2009 edition titled “Transitioning from Driver to Passenger.”

• Occupational Therapy Assistant Professor Amy Paul-Ward, PhD, was inducted into Sigma Xi scientific research society this past November.

• Eliane Ramos, PhD, CCC-SLP, Chair of the Communication Sciences & Disorders Department, presented a poster titled, Haitian-Creole and English Acquisition in Typical and Atypical Bilingual Learners at the Annual American Speech-Language Hearing Association Convention in Chicago last November.

• Nursing Professor Luz Porter, PhD, MSN, BSN, ARNP, FAAN, FAANP, will be presenting her study Recovering Substance-Abusing Mothers: Depression, Demographics and Safety at the 9th International Family Nursing Conference in Reykjavik, Iceland in June. She will follow that up with a presentation of another study, Importance of Infant Massage in Parenting
CNHS Promotes PhD “Meeting of the Minds” for Health Equality

On February 4, the CNHS hosted its first-ever “Meeting of the Minds” PhD Program Colloquia addressing advances in trans-disciplinary research to promote health equity. Dr. Anahid Kulwicki, Director of CNHS’ Graduate and PhD Nursing programs, organized the meeting featuring two nationally prominent guest speakers on the topic of women’s health – Angela Barron McBride, PhD, RN, FAAN, Distinguished Professor-University Dean Emerita at Indiana University School of Nursing, and Joan Shaver, PhD, RN, FAAN, Professor and Dean for University of Illinois at Chicago’s College of Nursing.


Dr. Shaver is a biobehaviorist known for her two decades of research on sleep disorders in women. She and her team were among the first to study sleep problems as part of menopause transition.

ANP Receives $3.4M For Faculty Through 2020

Miami Beach Anesthesiology Associates (MBAA) has signed an agreement to extend faculty funding support totaling $3.4 million for CNHS’ Anesthesiology Nursing Program (ANP) through the year 2020. MBAA, which was instrumental in the implementation of the FIU ANP, has been providing financial faculty assistance since the program’s inception in 2001. The ANP is a highly regarded, prestigious program nationwide, thanks in part to the generous continued support and guidance of MBAA and its CEO Dr. Howard Wittels (pictured above), Chief of Anesthesiology at Mt. Sinai Medical Center.

Federal Support For SEÑORITAS STD Prevention Project

The Department of Health & Human Services’ Office of Women’s Health awarded a $88,333 grant to continue the SEÑORITAS Project at FIU. This is the sixth year of consecutive funding for this program, which stands for “Student Education Needed in Order to Reduce Infection and Transmission of AIDS/HIV and STIs (sexually transmitted infections).” Through SEÑORITAS, CNHS nursing students act as Peer Educators to develop and teach classes on HIV and STD prevention targeted towards Hispanic and Caribbean female students at FIU (see Amazing Students section for more information).

The project and its Principal Investigator, Associate Nursing Professor Dr. Sandra Jones, were featured in a September 18, 2008 South Florida Sun-Sentinel story on the various approaches for HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention among minority and immigrant populations in South Florida.

FIU Commends Local Health Care Leader

L to R: Dr. Fernando Trevino, Dean of FIU Stempel School of Public Health; Marvin O’Quinn, former CEO of Jackson Memorial Hospital; Dr. John Rock, Dean of FIU College of Medicine; and Dr. Divina Grossman, CNHS Dean at the Winter 2008 graduation ceremonies last December where Mr. O’Quinn received a Distinguished Service Medallion for his contributions to South Florida health care access and advancements.
Family Functioning After Loss  continued from page 1
The goals of the study are to (1) understand why some family members are more at risk than others to function less well, (2) recognize what the signs of declining functionality are, and as a result (3) identify which families may be at greater risk to deteriorate as a unit after such a loss. “The many years of nationally recognized research and academic accomplishments of Dr. Youngblut and Dr. Brooten put them in the top echelon of our profession,” said Dr. Divina Grossman, Dean of the College. “Their achievement in earning the prestigious R01 classification for this groundbreaking study reflects the importance of this work.”

“Research in this area is crucial so that NICU/PICU health care professionals and primary care providers can identify parents and families at risk for poor outcomes and target them for early intervention,” says Youngblut, Principal Investigator of the study. “By knowing what signs to look for in someone’s behavior that point to a potential for deterioration, NICU/PICU team members can take the necessary and appropriate steps, both in and out of the hospital setting, to help these parents and families deal with a child’s death before they have significant difficulty functioning,” added Brooten, the study’s Co-Investigator.

Unlike other studies of this nature, the project includes interviews with families soon after a child’s death and at subsequent time points to study their bereavement process, mental health and daily functioning so as to identify factors that are important to a family’s recovery. Also, it is the first study to provide data on cross-cultural similarities and differences in the aftermath of a child’s death. The research team is studying more than 70 families from the NICU and PICU units of Miami Children’s Hospital and Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami-Dade County, and Broward General Medical Center and Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital in Broward County. Because the families are equally representative of White, Black and Hispanic descent, the study will also serve to detect racial, ethnic and cultural differences and similarities that may play a role in the success of a family’s recovery process.

Studying Elder Driver Safety  continued from page 1
According to the 2006 Traffic Crash Statistics Report from the Florida Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles, which includes statewide statistics on 12 age groups:

- 1,501 drivers were killed in car accidents – 417 were age 55+
- 133,380 drivers were injured in car accidents – 25,211 were age 55+

McCarthy commented, “One method of enabling elders to drive safely for a longer period of time is to identify those who may be at greater risk for crashes and provide them with opportunities to improve safe driving ability through driver assessment and rehabilitation programs.”

Dr. McCarthy's specialty is in the research of driving performance and occupational therapy outcomes for elderly and disabled populations. In his research on the topic, he has studied existing approaches to assist with older driver safety, targeted areas for additional research, and also conducted his own research to evaluate driving-related skills tools currently used by physicians and other health care professionals to assess elderly drivers.
Tampa Foreign MD-RN Class Makes Headlines

The second class of the Tampa Bay contingent of CNHS’ award-winning Foreign-Educated Physician to Nursing program was the subject of a feature article in the February 20 edition of Centro Mi Diario, a Spanish-language newspaper affiliated with the Tampa Tribune. The program, which is a permanent curricular offering headquartered on the Biscayne Bay Campus in North Miami, Fla., was offered a second time to candidates on Florida’s West Coast, thanks to financial assistance for operating costs, faculty and scholarships from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida and Largo Medical Center. The 18 Tampa students began classes in January and will be graduating in Summer 2010.

Scholarship Recipients Honored

Congratulations to the nearly 200 CNHS undergraduate and graduate students who were recognized for their academic perseverance and accomplishments during the College’s 10th Annual Donors-Scholars Luncheon on March 12. These students were the recipients of scholarships for the 2008-2009 school year awarded by 20 community partner organizations to help them meet financial obligations that would otherwise impede or even halt their academic careers. Student scholars from all CNHS departments were able to meet one-on-one with the following donors to thank them personally for their unwavering support of nursing and health care education: Arnold S. Friedman Memorial, Betty Florman Family Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida, Florida Heart Research Institute, Dr. John T. Macdonald Foundation, Gertrude E. Skelly Charitable Foundation, Greg Esposito PT Memorial, Health Foundation of South Florida, Hospital Corporation of America Florida Division, Largo Medical Center, Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation, Marilyn Trager Nursing Award, Mary Hurst Book Memorial, Matthew Forbes Romer Foundation, Miami Children’s Hospital, Mt. Sinai Medical Center, North Dade Medical Foundation, Nurses Charitable Trust of District V, Seecharan Family Scholarship for Nursing and Dr. Stephen & Abby Dresnick.

SEÑORITAS Prepare Students for a Safe Spring Break

On March 13, CNHS nursing students participating in the SEÑORITAS project held their first-ever, campus-wide Spring Break Sendoff event to help educate and prepare university students as they set off for Spring Break the following week. The CNHS nursing students set up interactive display tables at “The Pit” – the landmark gathering point for students in the Graham Center Student Center. Nearly 125 visiting students took part in a four-station “Info Course” where SEÑORITAS educators provided them with information on condom usage and STD/HIV prevention. The Spring Break Sendoff was both in preparation of Spring Break and in recognition of National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, which is March 10.
When the new College of Nursing & Health Sciences building opens in December 2009, the principal seats of knowledge will be located in the impressive 300-seat auditorium on the first floor of the West Wing. It is here where our future nursing and health sciences professionals will do much of their learning. And it is here where you can leave your legacy for these students and the future of the CNHS.

With the “Name Your Seat” campaign, CNHS alumni have the special opportunity to make their mark on health care professions education at FIU by purchasing an individual seat license. For a donation of $500, you can name an individual seat. Or for $1,000, you can name a premium seat.

All funds will be used to purchase equipment and technology for the new building. Your gift will enhance our academic excellence, support our future students and enrich the quality of life for the College of Nursing & Health Sciences community.

View a layout of the auditorium, pick the seat of your choice, and make a donation all online at http://cnhs.fiu.edu/advancement.html

Construction of the new CNHS building is on schedule for a December 2009 opening. Visit http://cnhs.fiu.edu/advancement.html to view real-time construction progress, and to find out how you can give to the new building.

Contact the Office of Development to inquire about giving opportunities for the College of Nursing & Health Sciences at 305-348-1336 or givingtoCNHS@fiu.edu. For more information, visit http://cnhs.fiu.edu/advancement.html
Capt. Jacinto J. Garrido  
BSN 1986 / MSN 1994  

There are caring men in medicine and courageous men in the military. And occasionally, you will come across someone who exhibits the unique combination of both. CNHS alumnus Captain Jacinto J. Garrido, RN, ARNP, MSN, CCHP, USPHS, Senior Program Management Officer Consultant and Special Operations Chief for the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Division of Immigration Health Services (DIHS), is such a person.

Capt. Garrido’s path into the world of military medicine began more than 30 years ago when he joined the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps – a team of more than 6,000 full-time, well-trained, highly qualified public health professionals dedicated to delivering the nation’s public health promotion and disease prevention programs and advancing public health science. After graduating with his Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree from FIU in 1986, Garrido joined the DIHS in Miami as both a staff nurse for their Infirmary and a flight nurse with the Immigration and Naturalization Service’s (INS) Health Care Program air operations, where he accompanied detainees as a medical escort on airplanes during facilities transfers. It was during this time he helped spearhead a pilot program for prisoner air transport which later developed into the U. S. Marshall Air Transport known as “Con Air.”

Garrido returned to FIU for his Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN). He graduated in 1994 and became certified as an Adult Nurse Practitioner. That same year, he was Principal Investigator on a research project for the USPHS titled, “Descriptive Demographic Study of the Relationship Between Syphilis and HIV Among Immigrants Under the Custody of the INS in the Southern U. S.”

He continued to advance his career within the DIHS as Chief of the General Nursing Unit at Krome Service Processing Center (1991-1996); Senior Supervisor Program Management Officer/Health Service Administrator for Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) division (1996-1999); Senior Program Management Officer Consultant/Utilization Review Officer (1991-2001); Nurse Consultant/Managed Care Coordinator for the placement of all medical cases for Florida’s East Coast and the Caribbean (2001-2002); and ultimately to his current position.

As Senior Program Management Officer Consultant for the DIHS ICE, Capt. Garrido founded and developed the DIHS Special Operations Program to provide highly skilled medical support for the DHS ICE complex and for politically sensitive missions during domestic and international air transport, interdictions out at sea in international waters, and during domestic and international tactical ground support. He is responsible for coordinating and developing policies and procedures for the Aviation Medicine Program for international and domestic patient transports and medical escorts, acts as a liaison between the U. S. Air Force, U. S. Coast Guard and ICE in organizing and developing operational procedures for division deployments, and partners with the Department of Defense, federal, state and local government health and law enforcement agencies in developing an ongoing Caribbean mass migration plan. As a certified flight nurse graduate from the U. S. Air Force, Capt. Garrido also helps develop, teach and coordinate educational flight medicine classes for flight nurses, nurse practitioners and physicians assistants at DIHS, and assists DIHS with student recruitment and enrollment in the U. S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine Flight Nurse Course.

Capt. Garrido’s experiences with military medicine go far beyond the administrative. As Assistant Commander to the Emergency Medical Response Team at the Krome North Service Processing Center, he was deployed to Guatemala to set up and provide medical care to undocumented Chinese immigrants in coordination with the U. S. Embassy, Guatemalan military and the U. S. Army and Special Forces. He assisted in the coordination of medical cases during Haitian and Cuban exodus to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba Naval Base. He has been deployed as a medical escort for government missions to Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines and Cambodia, and was part of a rescue mission to assist American citizens stranded in the Cayman Islands after Hurricane Ivan.

With all of Garrido’s training, education and experience, he is now one of the top people in the medical division of the U. S. military, and a highly decorated officer. Among his many recognitions, Capt. Garrido has been given the Secretary’s Award for Distinguished Service by the Department of Health & Human Services, the DIHS Director’s Award for Leadership, a Commendation Medal, three Bronze Stars, eleven Hazardous Duty Service Ribbons and a Bicentennial Unit Commendation from the USPHS, the U. S. Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendation, the Chief Nurse Officer Award, and two Aide de Camp Awards – one from the U. S. Surgeon General and one from the the U. S. Deputy Secretary of Health.

In Memoriam
Sheila Leader, a 1999 Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) graduate, passed away on February 11, 2009 at the age of 69 after a long battle with breast cancer. Ms. Leader was an accomplished woman. Having started as a Math & Science teacher in New York City's Public School System, she eventually pursued a nursing career, which led her to FIU’s graduate nursing program. She was FIU School of Nursing’s first-ever recipient of the Douglas Coffin Clinical Research Excellence Award. Upon graduating with her MSN, she went on to become a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner with South County Mental Health Center in Delray Beach, Fla.