

ROUNDS

The University of Alabama College of Community Health Sciences
School of Medicine, Tuscaloosa Campus

the SHIC



Teaching
today's
students for
tomorrow's
health

How the Student Health Center
helps the College fulfill its
mission of improving health
care in Alabama.

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA
HEALTH SCIENCES

WINTER/SPRING 2010



E. Eugene Marsh, MD

Dean, College of Community Health Sciences

WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR SOLVING THE HEALTH CARE CRISIS

As the national debate over health care reform continues, we still hear a great deal about what is wrong with our health-care system. It is interesting to me that little of this discussion has provided meaningful insight into what each of us needs to do to improve health care and to improve our country's return-on-investment for our health-care dollar. There has been little genuine recognition about the gravity that our current situation poses for our nation, and there has been much finger pointing about who is responsible for the fact that we spend more per capita on health care than most other industrialized countries, while at the same time posting embarrassingly low rankings on health-outcome indicators. People seem intent on blaming others and positioning themselves in ways to benefit from possible changes to our health-care system. Few, it seems, have reflected on how they are contributing to the problem and, more importantly, what they can do to help. At this time, it appears that health reform efforts, which are currently stalled in Congress, will probably generate little meaningful improvement in our health-care system.

Individuals in a position to know have said the solutions to our health-care crisis will not come from Washington but rather from places willing to look honestly at the problem and apply the same scientific rigor to health-care policy that is applied to clinical decision-making. Change will come from places that focus on improving health care by emphasizing wellness, prevention and chronic disease management; places that are not so dependent on and invested in the status quo that they cannot seriously consider other options; places that view health care through a broad lens and recognize that solutions will require a collaborative and integrated effort of health-care providers from different disciplines; places

willing to compromise with other stakeholders and retool health care for the ultimate benefit of patients.

Where are these places? I suspect they can be found in many parts of the country. I know one place is here at the College of Community Health Sciences.

This issue of OnRounds provides information about the innovative activities occurring within and emanating from our College and our increasing commitment to meaningful collaboration with those on campus and off who are equally dedicated to improving health care in Alabama. You will read about our Student Health Center, which cares for the University's 28,000-plus students and also educates them about healthy life choices and their future role as health partners and advocates for the communities where they will one day live. You will read about University Medical Center, a clinical facility that practices what it preaches when it comes to providing high-quality, patient-centered, cost-efficient health care. You will read about our commitment to teaching the next generation of physicians to become successful practitioners and community leaders. You will read about our faculty and their outstanding efforts in teaching, research and service. You will read about the steadfast commitment of our supporters to the College's mission.

We are all responsible for our current health-care crisis, and we are all responsible for finding solutions to this crisis. The College of Community Health Sciences, because of our mission, our flexibility, our resources and our commitment, is uniquely positioned to help find real and sustainable solutions to our national health-care dilemma, which will ultimately benefit the people of Alabama and beyond.



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THE
COVER

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ON
ROUNDS

The University of Alabama College of Community Health Sciences
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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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COLLEGE
HELPS WITH
DISTRIBUTION OF
DEFIBRILLATORS
ON CAMPUS



The University of Alabama's Coleman Coliseum has three Automated External Defibrillators, including this one by the main entrance.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are being distributed to 75 high-traffic buildings on campus thanks to a combined gift from the College's Capstone Foundation and EMPACT West Alabama.

To date, four buildings have received a combined seven AEDs – Rose Administration, Bryant Hall, Coleman Coliseum and the Rise School.

An AED can determine if a person in cardiac distress needs an electric shock, and then deliver that shock. Text and voice prompts help the user know when to administer the defibrillation, and the AED stores important data for medical responders.

Putting AEDs throughout campus has been a goal of several faculty and staff for a number of years. Bill McDonald, director of sports medicine for Intercollegiate Athletics, has worked with Glenn Davis, EMT-P, of Tide EMS and EMPACT West Alabama, who is also a member of the College. College Dean E. Eugene Marsh, MD, led the team in securing the gift from the College's Capstone Foundation. Environmental Health and Safety, University Facilities and the Office of Emergency Preparedness are also playing a role in deploying the life-saving devices.

"AEDs represent a critical initial link in the 'chain of survival' for patients with heart attacks. I have no doubt that this equipment will help save lives on our campus. We welcome the opportunity to support this and other

efforts of The University of Alabama to provide the best health care for its community of students, faculty and staff," Marsh says.

EMPACT West Alabama is a non-profit organization that provides emergency medical and community training programs. Tide EMS provides first-responder services and non-transport emergency medical services at athletic and other University of Alabama events. In addition to his responsibilities with Tide EMS and EMPACT West Alabama, Davis is also project director of a multi-year grant awarded by the Alabama Department of Public Health Office of EMS and Trauma to the College's Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science.

Each University building that receives an AED will have a team of employee volunteers trained to operate the equipment. "Initial training takes a little over an hour, and two hours of training in CPR are offered later," Davis says.

To train as many people as quickly as possible, a video will be placed on the Web for volunteers to view. Trainers will then conduct a hands-on assessment. The state's Good Samaritan law protects volunteers from legal liability in using the device.

Every minute that passes after a heart attack decreases chances of survival by 10 percent, McDonald says. "The time frame is sort, and this saves critical time," he says.

HEALTH EDUCATION



The Student Health Center's Department of Health Promotion and Wellness team, from left: Michelle Harcrow, Margaret Garner, Sheena Quizon and Delynn Wilcox.

The Student Health Center's Department of Health Promotion and Wellness Helps the College Fulfill its Mission of Improving Health Care in Alabama

By Leslie Zganjar

For more than three decades, the College of Community Health Sciences has educated and trained medical students and resident physicians to care for the people of Alabama. Today, the College is adding to the ranks of these health-care providers by teaching students across The University of Alabama campus about healthier lifestyles now and how to be partners in Alabama's health when they graduate.

The health education activities are spearheaded by the Student Health Center's Department of Health Promotion and Wellness. The Student Health Center is part of the College, which is also the Tuscaloosa branch campus of The University of Alabama School of Medicine.

The Department of Health Promotion and Wellness is a unique feature in the student health-care setting and one that complements the Student Health Center's traditional practice of medicine by providing health education to students. The department's staff includes professional health educators and a registered dietitian who work closely with campus stakeholders to address health issues of concern in the state and nationally that might affect University of Alabama students.

But the work does not stop there. The department, through Strategic Health Teams and a peer-educator program, Project Health, integrates students into its efforts, teaching them to be partners in their own health, as well as health educators and advocates for their peers and, ultimately, the communities where they will one day live.

Health education and advocacy are critical in Alabama, where a high percentage of the state's population suffers from heart disease, stroke and cancer, the most prevalent but also the most preventable of chronic health conditions. If students learn to live healthy lives, they can take this information and model this behavior and serve as health partners in the communities where they will live and, in this way, help improve the health of Alabama, says College Dean E. Eugene Marsh, MD.

"The mission of the College is to prepare physicians to practice medicine, particularly primary care. But a missing piece of primary care – a critical piece – is educating and empowering individuals, communities and the general public to be partners in their health," Marsh says. "What we are doing at the Student Health Center is not just providing medical care for students while they are here at The University of Alabama, but teaching them what it means to be healthy and what they can take back to their communities to improve health care in Alabama."

Campus to Communities

The concept is a powerful one and consistent with the guiding principles of the American College Health Association, according to Heather Zesiger, chair of the association's Health Promotion Section.

"We want students to take responsibility for their lifelong wellness, but what Alabama is doing – training students and how that is matched so intentionally to what the state needs – is powerful, Zesiger says. "The University of Alabama has really wrapped itself around the concept of enhancing the collective health of communities. Students can be change agents in their communities."

Margaret Garner, who directs the work of the Department of Health Promotion and Wellness, says her staff continuously looks for creative ways to engage students in learning that leads to behavioral changes and healthier living. Garner is also the College's assistant dean for Health Education and Outreach.

"We desire that students leave The University of Alabama not only prepared to be active citizens, productive and excelling in their chosen vocation, but well prepared to live their lives in optimal health because of what they learned here, and that their future families and communities will be better for that as well," Garner says.

Zesiger, who is also director of Health Education

and Promotion for Emory University's Student Health & Counseling Services, says the intent of health promotion in post-secondary educational settings is not just to help students stay well, stay in class, be successful in their studies and succeed personally, but to instill in them a belief that they share responsibility for community health.

"In some places, these ideals have yet to translate into action, but it sounds like The University of Alabama is putting into place measurable steps to put this into action," Zesiger says.

Team Health

The Department of Health Promotion and Wellness has a rich tradition at The University of Alabama of promoting a healthy campus environment and enhancing student well-being so that students can achieve optimal health and academic success. That mission was further strengthened when the department, along with the Student Health Center, were

brought into the fold of the College in 2003 and, two years later, when faculty and staff from throughout the University came together in a strategic planning session to develop a more focused approach to addressing significant health issues facing U.S. college students.

An outcome of this process was the formation of seven Strategic Health Teams that work to address key health issues for college students – alcohol and drugs, tobacco, nutrition, eating disorders, mental health, healthy relationships and sexual health, and financial health.

Each team is comprised of faculty with teaching and research interests in the targeted health areas, professional staff from the University's divisions of Student Affairs and Financial Affairs, and representatives of the Campus-based Ministers Association, the Alabama Credit Union and the Tuscaloosa Public Health Department. The teams meet approximately monthly during the academic year to discuss and recommend prevention and intervention strategies, and to develop health promotion activities that effectively reach students.

"The University of Alabama is one of only a few higher-education institutions in the country implementing a public health model that engages key campus and community stakeholders in addressing



student health and well-being,” says Delynne Wilcox, assistant director of Health Planning and Prevention for the Department of Health Promotion and Wellness. “We are able to draw from the strengths of our faculty and their research expertise and integrate that with the skill set of the professional University and community staff. We are able to work more innovatively and effectively to enhance students’ personal health and the health of the campus and community.”

Wilcox says faculty involvement with the teams has resulted in increased integration of health issues in classes, particularly in health planning and evaluation, health communication, social work, sociology and advertising and public relations courses. Team discussions have also spurred faculty to pursue research grants that fund studies of important student health issues, she says.

Although students are not yet members of the Strategic Health Teams, they gain valuable experiences from the work of the teams that will benefit them in future roles as health advocates in their communities. Wilcox cites as an example the success of the Tobacco Strategic Health Team in establishing a 30-foot perimeter, no-smoking zones around entrances to University of Alabama campus buildings. The purpose of the no-smoking zones is to provide clean air space that benefits everyone and sends a message that smoking and second-hand smoke are harmful, Garner says.

The city of Tuscaloosa in 2006 approved a smoke-free policy in restaurants and other establishments. Wilcox says the Tobacco Strategic Health Team tapped into that momentum and recommended establishing the no-smoking zones around entrances to campus buildings. She says to get campus support for the policy, the Tobacco team obtained endorsements from the University’s Faculty Senate, Professional Assembly and Student Government Association.

“This is one example of involving students in community health policy,” Wilcox says.

Student leaders are also involved in advocacy for health through peer-education programs in the seven target areas and, in turn, engage other student groups into the process, Garner says.

Students Teaching Students

Peer education – teaching students to teach students – is also a critical component of the work of the Student Health Center’s Department of Health Promotion and Wellness.

Michelle Harcrow, the department’s assistant director of Health Promotion, serves as lead advisor for Project Health, a University of Alabama student organization that provides students with peer support, as well as education and awareness about health issues important to college students. Through Project Health,

students learn to become peer educators and to provide their peers with information and support that encourage healthy lifestyle choices.

“Engaging students through an initiative in peer education for health and wellness is one way we are addressing student involvement and commitment to healthier lifestyles,” Garner says.

“Through this dynamic

peer-education program, we can more effectively shape the campus culture toward healthier lifestyles.”

In addition to teaching their fellow students through information and interactive programs, workshops and displays, Project Health peer educators also have the opportunity to take a for-credit course – Health and Wellness Advocacy – in preparation to receive certification as a peer instructor. To date, all students who have taken the course have become certified peer instructors. Project Health currently has eight officers and more than 40 members.

The Health and Wellness Advocacy course addresses the seven areas of college health targeted by the Strategic Health Teams, providing students with opportunities to develop skills – response and referral, intervention, programming, presentation and group development – to better serve their peers and communities. The course also offers guest lectures by local health experts, and peer educators have the opportunity to participate in leadership training and group projects and presentations.

“Students have the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills while acquiring a well-rounded approach for providing information to their peers,” says Harcrow, who teaches the course. “Best of all, their classroom experiences equip them to better handle discussions



that involve sensitive and conflicting information about college health and wellness issues.”

The American College Health Association’s Zesiger says while university peer-educator health programs nationwide range from teaching students how to have informal health conversations with other students to training them to conduct presentations and workshops, “the most robust models incorporate academic credit and certification.”

New this year to Project Health is the GAMMA Greek Leadership Initiative, which provides peer health education within the University’s Greek community and allows for health education programs to be tailored to that community.

GAMMA chapter members serve as liaisons to their respective Greek chapters and as peer mentors to the University. To date, all 16 Panhellenic sororities on campus have appointed GAMA delegates, for a total of 48 members. In addition, work is underway to develop an eating disorders prevention initiative with GAMMA members that will be conducted through the Department of Health Promotion and Wellness and the University’s Counseling Center.

“We are excited about this new collaborative, peer-led initiative and look forward to the impact that this group of committed students will have not only on the health and wellness of our Greek community but on the University as a whole,” Harcrow says. “The influence we hope to have will be accomplished by having a few students make and model one healthy decision at a time.”

Harcrow says Project Health, which has received awards and recognition at the national, state and local levels, is positively impacting the health of students and that it will ultimately “produce graduates who are more informed and aware and who can be leaders in their own communities.”

Wilcox adds that through the work of the Strategic Health Teams and Project Health, students receive opportunities to learn more about health on both a personal level and a community level.

“Our goal is that students will be able to take some of their experiences in promoting health on campus with them to help transform the health of other communities where they may live in the future,” she says. “Because



AWARDS —

The BACCHUS Network

National Level Awards

Outstanding Prevention Program in Mental Health Award – 2009

Outstanding Advisor Award – 2009

Regional Level Awards

Advisor of the Year Award – 2009

Outstanding Peer Educator of the Year Award – 2009

The Student Health Center’s Department of Health Promotion and Wellness received the Outstanding Prevention Program in Mental Health Award for creativity in mental health programming and in recognition for services provided through the peer-educator program, Project Health. Michelle Harcrow, Project Health advisor and the department’s assistant director of Health Promotion, received the Outstanding Advisor of the Year Award at both the national and regional levels, while Courtney Worley, a student leader in Project Health, was recognized as an Outstanding Peer Educator of the Year. The BACCHUS Network annually recognizes peer-education programs for outstanding prevention efforts in college student health.

they live and work in a (campus) community, which is working more intentionally with a health focus both individually and communitywide, their experiences will go with them when they graduate. Ideally, when they are in other decision-making capacities in the communities where they live, they will think about the health of the community there, too.”

Campus Outreach

The health education efforts of the Department of Health Promotion and Wellness are also enhanced by internships it offers to students interested in health promotion and education, dietetics and health communication.

“These internships provide real-world experiences for students, with the benefit of expert supervision,” Garner says. “Student interns from public relations and graphic arts programs, for example, learn the nuances important in media and print publications that convey essential health messages to students, and at the same time they help the department produce high-quality media and advertising products.”

Senior dietetic students from the College of Human Environmental Sciences perform their community rotation at the Student Health Center, where the Department of Health Promotion and Wellness provides them with opportunities for peer education through supervised one-on-one diet counseling and development of educational materials for campus and community populations.

The department offers the popular *Dietitian on the Go* program at the University’s Ferguson Center every Thursday during lunch. Assistant Director for Health Education and Nutrition Sheena Quizon oversees the program, which provides nutrition information to students. Students can also ask questions about their diet and receive information about nutrition-related services at the Student Health Center, which include individual nutrition counseling, medical nutrition therapy and presentations for student organizations.

In addition, dietetic students can assist with programs developed by the Eating Disorders Strategic Team. “Our *Fashion Rocks and So Does My Body* fashion show has had great success involving University students and spreading awareness about National Eating Disorders Awareness Week,” Quizon says.

“We are also very excited about our strides with sports nutrition and we are working closely with

University athletes through one-on-one counseling and group nutrition presentations,” she says.

The Department of Health Promotion and Wellness supports the clinical side of the Student Health Center by preparing and providing timely patient education materials. During flu season, Harcrow spearheaded production and distribution of informational brochures, e-mails, television spots and articles in the *Crimson White* student newspaper.

“Being away from home for the first time, many students are new to the notion of self-care,” Harcrow says. “Providing them with messages and materials about the importance of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, students were empowered to take responsibility for their personal health during the cold and flu season.”

The department collaborates with campus partners to provide special health awareness events, including the Student Health and Fitness Fair, Safe Spring Break, Sexual Responsibility Week, World AIDS Day, The Great American Smoke Out and Eating Disorders Week.

In light of the current economic situation and its

impact on students and their families, the Financial Health Strategic Team last fall implemented a financial management program at no cost for students. The program included lessons from the *Financial Peace for the Next Generation* series, as well as question and answer sessions with representatives from the local financial industry and financially-focused University of Alabama departments. The sessions were facilitated by a senior student in Consumer Science and attended by other students in the College of Human Environmental Sciences’ Consumer Science Department who helped answer questions. “Financial management strategies are essential to everyone, regardless of their economic situation,” Harcrow says.

In addition, the Department of Health Promotion and Wellness has developed special initiatives to heighten visibility of and attention to the top two health concerns facing U.S. college students – alcohol use and



Dietetic students help other students choose healthy meals at Lakeside Dining Hall during an event sponsored by the Department of Health Promotion and Wellness.

mental health issues.

In 2006, the department launched AlcoholEdu™, a web-based education program required of all incoming University freshmen. The program uses the latest prevention techniques and science-based research to educate students about the impact of alcohol on their health. The department added a parent version in 2009 that includes strategies for talking with their students about alcohol.

“Our aim in implementing this program is to take a proactive, caring approach to help students make the best decisions regarding alcohol not only for themselves, but to be equipped with the knowledge and confidence to be an advocate with their friends to make responsible decisions in this area,” Garner says.

While the department administers the course, its implementation was a collaborative effort with the University’s divisions of Financial Affairs, Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. The program has been nationally recognized, receiving Prevention Excellence Awards in 2006 and 2007, and its completion rate – between 94 percent and 98 percent of entering freshmen complete the program each year – is remarkable.

“The completion rate is a phenomenal accomplishment,” says Wilcox, project manager for the online course. “We have had overwhelming support from parents and students.”

Another significant health-related concern is mental health and wellness. The department’s MentalHealthEdu™ is an online educational tool designed to raise awareness of student mental health issues and to provide University faculty, staff and students with useful resources that help identify and properly refer students who may be in distress. Parents are also encouraged to complete the program.

During implementation of the program, mental health coordinators were selected for each administrative division on campus. The coordinators were chosen by the Mental Health Strategic Team and trained by the University’s Counseling Center. They serve as liaisons to the faculty.

Garner says focus groups have consistently reported the positive value of MentalHealthEdu™. Those involved with the program say they have a better understanding of the signs of stress, distress and depression among students, and that they find comfort in encouraging students to get help.

“The impetus in bringing this program to campus is simple – we care about our students and we know that mental wellness is a growing concern nationally within the college-bound community,” Garner says. “The program has been well received, and this past year funding for it was actually provided by The University of

A W A R D S —

Alcohol Prevention Excellence Award – 2007, 2006

The Student Health Center’s Department of Health Promotion and Wellness received national recognition two years in a row for its AlcoholEdu™ program, a web-based alcohol prevention program required of all incoming University of Alabama freshmen. The Prevention Excellence Award honors colleges and universities that have significantly influenced the quality of student life through their alcohol prevention efforts. The Prevention Excellence Award is given by the Boston-based OutsidetheClassroom Inc., which helps education, corporate and government institutions battle high-risk drinking and other health problems among employees and students and which developed the AlcoholEdu program. Awardees are reviewed by a panel of national prevention experts and researchers.

Alabama Parents Organization.”

Student Health Center Director John Maxwell believes the focus on student education, engagement and empowerment with regard to health, coupled with a desire to help the College meet its mission of improving the health of Alabama, distinguishes the Department of Health Promotion and Wellness from similar departments on other university campuses.

“Before students go out into the real world, we can impact them by giving them information about health problems that affect our campus community and Alabama’s communities,” Maxwell says. “Everything students learn they can take back to their communities.”

Adds Dean Marsh: “The University of Alabama is educating young bankers, teachers and lawyers who, if we do our job here at the Student Health Center and the College, can go out as health-care advocates and understand what it means to be a partner in their health and the health of the communities where they will live.”

touching lives



STRATEGIC HEALTH TEAMS

The Student Health Center's Department of Health Promotion and Wellness helped form seven campus-wide Strategic Health Teams that focus on health issues important to University of Alabama students. Team members include University faculty, staff and administrators.

Alcohol and Drug Strategic

Team: Recommends strategies and policies to help students adopt healthier practices in regard to alcohol and drug use. The team is currently assessing existing prevention and intervention programs on campus and was the impetus behind the adoption of AlcoholEdu™, an online alcohol education course required of all freshmen students and the cornerstone of alcohol prevention efforts at The University of Alabama. The team also:

- Established the *Rising Tide Student Tailgate*, which provides students with an alcohol-free, pre-game social event during football season. More than 400 students participate in the annual event.
- Brings to campus annually the *SaveALife Tour*, a three-dimensional, interactive program that stimulates the effect of increasing levels of blood alcohol on the body and mind. Students who participate in the program indicate a greater resolve to avoid drinking and driving, as well as being a passenger in the car of a driver who has been drinking.

Eating Disorders Strategic Team: Recommends strategies and policies to help students adopt healthier attitudes about body image and healthier practices in regard to diet. The team supports the University's annual *Eating Disorders Week* and has developed an assessment tool to determine student knowledge about eating disorders. The team also:

- Established the B.A.S.K. (Body Acceptance and Self Kindness) program to facilitate a healthier body image and improve self-acceptance.
- Coordinated the *Fashion Rocks and So Does*

My Body fashion show to promote a healthier body image. The program received the Most Outstanding Program of the Year Award at the 2009 Student Awards Celebration.

- The eating disorder prevention program *Reflections* will be piloted in the spring in collaboration with the University's Counseling Center and through a University Greek peer-education group.



Financial Health Strategic

Team: Strives to improve the financial well-being of students. The team is currently assessing University resources and seeking opportunities to network with those resources to help students improve their financial health. The team also:

- Established the *Money Matters* website, providing students with tools to assist them in managing their finances.
- Coordinated *Financial Peace for the Next Generation* as a pilot program last year with free classes for students interested in personal budgeting and financial planning. Classes will again be offered this year.

Healthy Relationships and Sexual Health Strategic

Team: Recommends strategies and policies to encourage students to adopt healthier practices in regard to relationships and sexual health. The team also:

- Helps coordinate annual awareness campaigns on campus promoting healthy relationships.
- Provides education programs to student groups and organizations.

Mental Health Strategic Team: Recommends strategies and policies to improve the University community's awareness of and response to student mental health issues. The team provides University faculty, staff and students with information about how to recognize distressed students early and refer them for help. The team supports use by freshmen students of the e-learning

mental health module *Bama Mind and Body*, developed by the Department of Health Promotion and Wellness.

The team also:

- Developed with the University's Counseling Center and Women's Resource Center the *Healthy Transitions* brochure and web page with tips for a positive transition to college. Last year, an electronic version of the brochure was developed and sent to entering freshmen.
- Implemented MentalHealthEdu™, an e-learning mental health education and prevention module for faculty, staff, student employees and parents. In 2009, its first year, more than 850 individuals completed the program.

Nutrition Strategic Team: Recommends strategies and policies to encourage students to adopt healthier nutrition practices. The team has worked with the University's Auxiliary Services to encourage the placement of healthier food items in campus vending machines as well as labels on all vending machine items with nutritional information and the amount of calories, fat and sodium. The team also:

- Established *Take the Challenge: Eat for your Health* last year at the Lakeside Dining Hall, which drew approximately 200 students for a night of healthy eating.
- Worked with the Greek community to develop healthy menus in sorority and fraternity houses.
- Helped produce a cookbook written by students for students, which is now available at the University Supply Store.

Tobacco Strategic Team: Recommends approaches to encourage healthier attitudes about tobacco use among students. The team has identified four areas of focus – prevention, smoking cessation, addressing the link between alcohol and smoking and research – and is working to develop a three-to-five-year plan to address these areas. The team also:

- Collaborates with the University's Office of Health Promotion and Wellness on the 30-day *Tobacco Free Challenge* each year, which supports students, faculty and staff in their efforts to give up tobacco.
- Partners with the Alabama Department of Public Health to promote the *Alabama Tobacco Quitline* as a smoking-cessation program that assists students, faculty and staff in their efforts to stop smoking.

AWARDS —

The University of Alabama Awards

Crimson Star Award – 2009, 2008

Foundation Award – 2009, 2008

Most Outstanding Program of the Year – 2009

The Student Health Center's Department of Health Promotion and Wellness received the Crimson Star Award and the Foundation Award two years in a row in recognition for leadership and service provided through the peer-educator program, Project Health. The Crimson Star Award, the highest honor a University of Alabama student organization can receive, is presented by the University's Coordinating Council of Student Organizations and recognizes superior service and outreach at the University. The Foundation Award recognizes excellence in collaboration and education.

The department received the Most Outstanding Program of the Year award for its involvement with the inaugural *Fashion Rocks and So Does My Body* fashion show during National Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

Project Health is a student-based health organization that promotes health and wellness throughout the University and surrounding communities.

A MEDICAL HOME FOR STUDENTS

The Student Health Center is a state-of-the-art facility that provides a high-quality medical home for the 28,000-plus students of The University of Alabama.

The center is staffed with board-certified physicians and nurse practitioners, some with more than 25 years of experience in college student health care, as well as registered dietitians and health educators. There is cutting-edge medical technology, an in-house pharmacy and examination rooms with flat-screen televisions and murals of the University's scenic campus adorning the walls.

The Student Health Center offers a wide range of clinical services to students, including urgent care and care for non-emergency illnesses, psychiatry services, laboratory and x-ray services, and nutrition education and medical nutrition therapy. The center recently hired a female gynecologist and an additional psychologist, and has added specialized care for students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

The center is located adjacent to University Medical Center and that proximity means the University's students also have access to specialty medical services and care not typically available in traditional student health centers, such as orthopedic care and sports medicine.

The Student Health Center is making significant strides in the use of patient-centered technology and has implemented Medfusion, an online service that allows students to schedule appointments, refill prescriptions, ask questions of doctors and nurses and complete health forms and other paperwork online, thus meeting students' needs for shorter waiting times and quicker responses, says center Director John Maxwell.

Physician faculty at the Student Health Center conduct research and present papers at national medical conferences, keeping them up-to-date with current knowledge and medical practices in student health care.



Student Health Center

Maxwell says the Student Health Center has more than doubled the number of patients it sees since 2004, when the new facility was opened. That year, the center had 19,000 patient visits; last year, the center recorded 43,000 patient visits.

The high quality of care provided by the Student Health Center has been recognized by the state, which awarded Alabama Quality Awards, its highest honors for quality and performance excellence, to the center in 2007 and again in 2009. The center received the Level 1 Commitment to Excellence Award in 2007 and the Level 2 Progress Toward Excellence Award in 2009.



Student Health Center Lobby

A letter notifying Student Health Center officials that the center had received the 2007 award said that “the examiners and judges were very impressed with the commitment your organization has made to performance excellence.”

The Student Health Center recently earned another three-year accreditation from the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Care, making the center a premier student health center in the state of Alabama. The center joins only 175 other student health centers nationwide that have received such a distinction.

“The Student Health Center’s voluntary accreditation reflects the center’s commitment to high-quality student health care,” Maxwell says.

Maxwell says he frequently receives inquiries from other university student health centers throughout the country seeking information and advice.

“We get tons of calls asking us how we do things. When we go to national meetings, they say, ‘Here comes Alabama,’” he says. “They know who we are.”

—Leslie Zganjar

AWARDS —

The Student Health Center is the recipient of prestigious awards from national and state organizations.

Alabama Quality Awards

2009 Level 2 Award – Progress Toward Excellence

2007 Level 1 Award – Commitment To Excellence

These are the state’s highest awards for quality and performance excellence and are given each year by The University of Alabama Productivity Center and the Alabama Technology Network. The awards are based upon performance criteria that include excellence in leadership, strategic planning, attention to customers and other stakeholders, market focus, process management and analysis of organizational performance. The awards recognize organizations that use effective productivity and quality improvement practices that can be shared with other organizations to help contribute to the economic well-being of the state of Alabama.

The Gallagher Koster Innovative Practice in College Health Award – 2008

The American College Health Foundation presented this award to a Student Health Center dietitian for serving as an outstanding on-campus professional resource for obesity.



STUDENT HEALTH CENTER CLINICAL SERVICES

The Student Health Center provides a wide range of clinical services for students at The University of Alabama:

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Initial screening as well as medication management.

Allergy Clinic: Allergy injections are administered to students under the direction of their allergist or other physicians.

Dermatology: Diagnoses and treatment of common dermatological problems.

Laboratory Services: A variety of in-house tests are offered that assist in the diagnosis and treatment of most illnesses.

Nutrition Education and Medical Nutrition Therapy: Registered and licensed dietitians provide individual nutrition counseling and medical nutrition therapy on a range of nutrition concerns including diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, eating disorders, weight management, sports performance nutrition and general nutrition and wellness.

Orthopedic/Sports Medicine: Physicians and other health-care providers in the adjacent University Medical Center are available to students to evaluate and treat injuries and common, painful conditions related to muscles, bones and joints.

Pharmacy: Common prescription items and over-the-counter medications are offered.

Psychiatry: A psychiatrist is on staff to conduct evaluations, provide counseling and assist with medications on a referral basis.

Travel Medications: Oral medication and injections (Typhoid, Polio and Hepatitis A and B) that protect against illness are available for students planning to study or travel abroad.

Urgent Care: Available during all hours of operation.

Walk-in Clinic: Available during all hours of operation for non-emergency illnesses.

Women's Health: Routine pelvic exams, pap smears, and other female health services are offered.

X-Ray Services: Available during all hours of operation.

STUDENT HEALTH CENTER HOSTS SOUTHERN COLLEGE HEALTH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The Student Health Center hosted the Southern College Health Association Summer Nurses Conference, “Nursing ... It’s a Work of Heart,” last year, at the Hotel Capstone on The University of Alabama Campus.

The Nurses Conference is designed for nurses working at student health centers and ambulatory clinics in a university setting. Approximately 90 people attended, including licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, nurse practitioners and other health-care professionals.

Keynote speakers included: Jeffrey S. Novick, RD, director of Health Education for the National Health Association and a nutritionist/dietitian for the McDougal Program in Santa Rosa, California; Phillip Barkley, MD, director of Student Health and associate clinical professor of Community Health and Family Medicine at the University of Florida; David Miller, PhD, professor of Operations Management and director of the Alabama Productivity Center; and Donald Nester, principal sales consultant for Informatica.

Conference session topics included mental health education, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in a college population, women’s health, alcohol education and nutrition. Session speakers included Mark Thomas, MD, Susan Arnold, MD, and Irma Higginbotham, MD, physicians at the Student Health Center. Also speaking at the sessions were staff members of the center’s Department of Health Promotion and Wellness, including: Margaret Garner, RD, LD, director; Delynn Wilcox, MPH, assistant director of Health Planning and Prevention; and Michelle Harcrow, MS, assistant director of Health Promotion.

The Student Health Center, which is operated by the College, is a member of the Southern College Health Association (SCHA), which is part of the American College Health Association. The SCHA includes the states of Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Mississippi and Florida and works to represent and serve professionals who provide health services and programs to members of higher education communities.

SCHA President Jennifer Swails praised the work of the Student Health Center in putting together the Summer Nurses Conference, held June 17-19.

“You know a student health center takes pride in their work and clinic when you walk through the door for an open house and are greeted with every staff member smiling and in either hounds tooth or crimson,” says Swails, who is also administrative director of Vanderbilt University’s student health center. “It was my pleasure to report back to the American College Health Association of their work.”

The Student Health Center will host the Southern College Health Association annual meeting in 2013. Also during that year, John Maxwell, director of the Student Health Center, will serve as president of the association.



From left: John Maxwell, director of the Student Health Center; and keynote speaker Jeffrey Novick, director of Health Education for the National Health Association.

COLLEGE RECEIVES FUNDING FOR RURAL PHYSICIAN PROJECT

The College has received \$225,000 in federal funds for a project that seeks to recruit future physicians to rural Alabama, particularly the state's Black Belt region, and to support physicians who currently practice there.

The project, "The Rural Alabama Black Belt Physician Recruitment, Development and Retention Project," will enhance the training of students in the College's rural medicine programs by enabling students on campus and those training offsite in rural primary-care physician offices, hospitals, mental health centers, community health centers and public health departments to participate in collaborative teleconference activities. In this way, medical students and residents can learn and practice the consultative styles necessary in a modern rural practice.

The project will also support existing rural physicians by providing practice, operational and health care delivery support through various health information technologies. In addition, rural physicians and community members will be able to consult with

specialists from the College, which is also the Tuscaloosa branch campus of The University of Alabama School of Medicine, and the College's University Medical Center.

"We hope to grow our own physicians who will practice in the Black Belt, stay connected with those who are already there and work with physicians and communities to move forward in providing health care and reducing health disparities in this region," says John C. Higginbotham, PhD, associate dean for Research and Health Policy and director of the College's Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, which wrote a grant that secured funding for the project.

The Alabama Black Belt region includes some of the poorest counties in the United States and people living there have some of the highest rates of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and other health conditions. The region also suffers from a serious primary-care physician shortage. In the Black Belt, there are approximately four physicians per 10,000 residents. Additionally, a large number of primary-care physicians in the Black Belt are nearing retirement age.

10TH ANNUAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE – PROMOTING PREVENTION

The College and its Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science hosted the 10th Annual Rural Health Conference in Tuscaloosa last year. The theme was prevention, a critical component of the College's overall mission to produce needed primary-care physicians, particularly for rural Alabama, and to meet a growing demand for the kind of care that primary-care physicians are known for – preventing

illness and managing chronic diseases.

The conference, "Prevention: More Than Just An Apple A Day," was held September 17-18 at the Hotel Capstone and the Bryant Conference Center. Keynote speakers included: David Mathews, PhD, president and CEO of the Kettering Foundation and a former University of Alabama president who was instrumental in the creation of the College; Mark Williams, MD,



Pamela Foster

MBA, JD, chief medical officer of the North Mississippi Health System, the country's largest rural health care system, and chairman of the board of the Alabama Quality Assurance Foundation; Jeff Ingram, senior vice president of Healthcare Networks for BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama; and Pamela Foster, MD, an assistant professor in

the College's Department of Community and Rural Medicine and deputy director of the Rural Health Institute, which conducts research to improve health in rural Alabama.

The conference featured breakout sessions focusing on prevention for particular health issues, such as stroke, cancer, obesity and mental health, as well as the importance of prenatal care and immunizations. Each breakout session was facilitated by a member of the College's medical faculty along with a community leader from rural Alabama. Together, they presented their unique perspectives and findings and discussed their efforts to improve health in rural Alabama.



Jeff Ingram

The annual Rural Health Conference typically draws several hundred attendees, including community leaders and residents, physicians, researchers, nurses, hospital administrators, social workers, nutritionists, government officials, policy makers and representatives of faith-based organizations. In addition to presenting prominent speakers in the

field, the conference also provides a forum for attendees to share knowledge and information and build partnerships – all in an effort to improve the health of rural Alabama and the people who live there.

Working together with concerned citizens and health-care providers from rural communities to identify solutions to the health issues that affect rural Alabama has always been a hallmark of the College's efforts and will continue to be as the College looks to educate physicians and health professionals to practice in new collaborative ways.

HEALTH CARE REFORM WILL CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PREVENTION, COMMUNITIES



David Mathews

Health-care reform will create opportunities to look at prevention and the important role that communities play in improving health, says David Mathews, PhD, president and CEO of the Kettering Foundation and a former University of Alabama president.

Mathews, who provided a keynote address at the 10th Annual Rural Health Conference, says health-care reform will likely add millions of currently uninsured individuals to insurance rolls, which will ultimately place more emphasis on improving and expanding preventive care.

"Health-care reform will provide an opportunity to take prevention more seriously, not because it will reduce costs, it probably will not, but because it will improve outcomes," he says. "People want more control over their lives and their health, and preventive measures give them that control."

Mathews says enabling people who are currently without health insurance to obtain insurance is a positive, but it will also put pressure on the health-care system, primarily at the primary-care level. Still, he says those pressures will also create opportunities for communities to have a voice in shaping quality health care.

"We've spent most of the last part of the 20th Century trying to figure out how to build big institutions and large systems," Mathews says. "We've now arrived at the 21st Century with a growing awareness that we are more and more dependent on communities than we ever realized."

Mathews says there are marked differences in communities, with some having dismal health indicators while others have reasonably healthy populations. "If you look for answers, it's only partly in the quality of medical care available. They're in other factors."

The most important factor, Mathews says, is the community itself. "If people make decisions together, they are much more likely to act on them. Collective decision-making, what to do about our behavior, will change our behavior at a greater rate than if we give people information, and at a greater rate than if we get out there and exhort them – do this, don't do that."

The Rural Health Conference is hosted each year by the College and its Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science.

Mathews was president of The University of Alabama from 1969-1980 and was instrumental in the creation of the College. During his tenure as president of the University, Mathews also served as U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare under President Gerald Ford from 1975-1977.

Currently, the College is developing an interdisciplinary, patient-centered, medical-home model of care that employs the knowledge of primary-care physicians, nurses, nutritionists, social workers, mental health workers and health educators in patient care while emphasizing wellness, prevention and chronic disease management. College Dean E. Eugene Marsh, MD, says that such an approach is needed particularly in Alabama, where a high percentage of the population suffers from heart disease, stroke and cancer, and where risk factors such as high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes are disproportionately represented. Research has shown that good primary care contributes to longer life expectancy and fewer deaths from these conditions.

“Prevention and quality-driven chronic disease management can make a difference and are critical as we look for cost-effective ways of impacting the health



Mark Williams

problems and health disparities in Alabama,” Marsh says.

Collaboration with rural communities spurred the creation of the annual Rural Health Conferences a decade ago. At the time, says William Curry, MD, former dean of the College and now associate dean for Primary Care and Rural Health for The University of Alabama School

of Medicine, College leaders believed it was important for academic instructors and researchers to collaborate with rural community leaders and policy makers “to learn from one another – about needs, about opportunities, about the history of what had been tried around the state and nation.”

HISTORY OF MEDICAL EDUCATION IN TUSCALOOSA DEPICTED IN DRAWING

More than 300 images come together to create the ballpoint drawing of the historic Jefferson Hospital in Birmingham and they tell the story of medical education in Alabama, including the years that medical education was headquartered in Tuscaloosa.

The drawing illustrates the founding in 1859 of the state’s first medical school, the Alabama Medical College in Mobile, the college’s move to Tuscaloosa in 1920 and, later, in 1944, the Alabama Legislature’s decision to headquarter medical education in Birmingham, says creator Don Stewart, MD.

The Alabama Medical College was moved from Mobile to Tuscaloosa in 1920 following the release of the Flexner Report. Commissioned by the New York-based Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Flexner Report took a critical look at medical schools in the United States in response to national concerns about the quality of medical education.

The report recommended that the Alabama Medical College be moved to Tuscaloosa so that it could be an integral part of The University of Alabama, the state’s largest university, and that it be reduced from a four-year institute to a two-year basic sciences program.

“In 1920, they just packed everything up, loaded it on a train and moved it to Tuscaloosa,” Stewart says.



Don Stewart

The new Medical Department of The University of Alabama provided classes and lectures in chemistry and anatomy, among others, and was housed in Nott Hall. An image of the front of that building, with its columns and portico, can be seen at the bottom center of the drawing. Up and to the left of Nott Hall is a license plate reading “20” and “2 TUSC,” signifying the year 1920 when the medical program moved to Tuscaloosa.

Stewart says he chose the image of a license plate also as a reference to medical licensure.

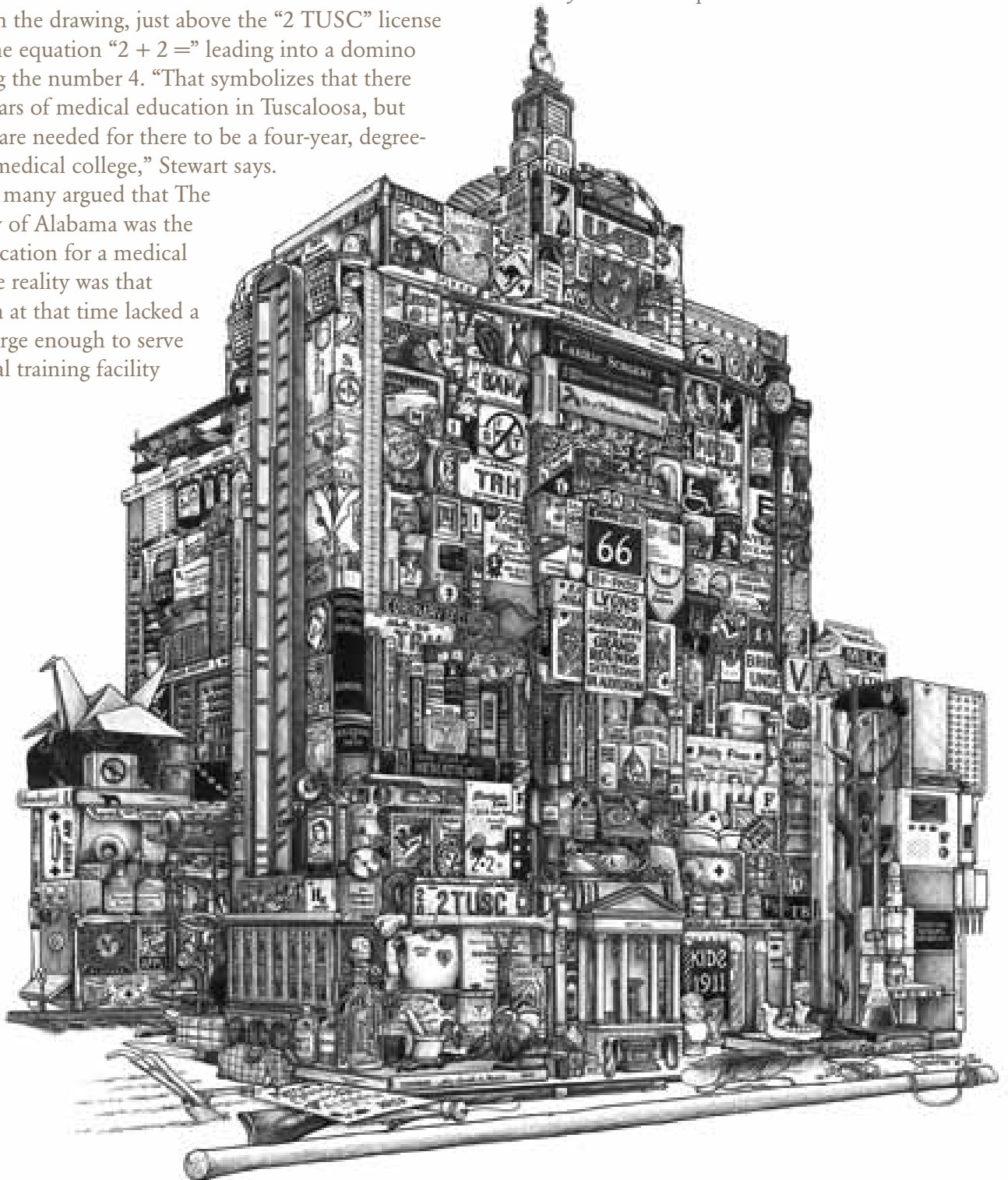
The medical education program remained in Tuscaloosa until 1942. Unfortunately, no physicians were produced during this time because the program was a two-year program and not a four-year, degree-granting program. Stewart says when students finished their two years in Tuscaloosa, they moved to other states to complete their medical education and training and many never returned.

Within the drawing, just above the “2 TUSC” license plate, is the equation “2 + 2 =” leading into a domino containing the number 4. “That symbolizes that there are two years of medical education in Tuscaloosa, but two more are needed for there to be a four-year, degree-granting, medical college,” Stewart says.

While many argued that The University of Alabama was the rightful location for a medical school, the reality was that Tuscaloosa at that time lacked a hospital large enough to serve as a clinical training facility

(Druid City Hospital, now DCH Regional Medical Center, had only 75 beds). Birmingham was chosen as the most suitable site since no other city in Alabama could match the facilities available through the Hillman Hospital and the newer 17-story Jefferson Hospital, and the city offered to let the University have exclusive rights to operate both hospitals.

In 1945, medical education moved to Birmingham where students also received their clinical training at Jefferson Hospital.



W I N T E R N I T Z
C O N F E R E N C E
S E R I E S

The William W. Winternitz Conference Series features prominent speakers who address such topics as ethics, communication, professionalism and quality improvement. The conferences are named in honor of William W. Winternitz, MD, a longtime and distinguished member of the College's faculty. Winternitz, now retired, joined the College in 1977 and chaired the Department of Internal Medicine.

Health care is in the midst of a culture change that many physicians are trying to grapple with and that will impact medical schools as they train and prepare students to meet the health-care needs of the future, says Darrell G. Kirch, MD, president and chief executive officer of the Association of American Medical Colleges.

"For doctors today, there is a massive culture shift going on that they didn't sign up for," he says.

Kirch, who spoke about "Teaching Doctors to Shape a New Health Care World," says the practice of medicine has



Darrell G. Kirch

traditionally been an individualistic profession, focusing on physician expertise in specialty areas. But today, patients want collaborative, team-based, patient-centered and service-oriented care, he says.

Kirch says "fragmentation of the system" is evident early in medical education, where students are first in pre-medicine curriculums, then medical schools, residencies and fellowships and, finally, medical practices. "We put students in boxes," he says. He says the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) is "rigidly focused on undergraduate science and is not friendly to students with a liberal arts background."

And, he says, there is a wide gap in the United States between the small number of primary-care physicians and the large number of specialists. "We have created disparities within our own health-care system," he says.

Kirch says cultural changes are also evident in the push by younger physicians to achieve a work-life balance in an effort to spend more time with their families. "Older physicians might think this is a work-ethic deficit, but it's really just a change," he says.

Technology is also contributing to the culture change, Kirch says. "Older physicians are immigrants to the digital world. Our students are natives of the digital world." He says in his early days of practice, he could not necessarily look at a book when he was with a patient – he had to already know enough facts to make a good decision. Today, physicians can access information while they are with patients from person digital assistants (PDAs) and electronic medical records.

"Today it's not just how much you know, but how good you are at accessing and using information," Kirch says.

In the midst of this culture change, Kirch says patients are primarily concerned about access to care, the cost of care and knowing that physicians "care."

Kirch says the College of Community Health Sciences is uniquely positioned to meet these cultural changes in health care. Patient-centered care and prevention and wellness are critical components of the overall mission of the College, which is to produce primary-care physicians. He cites the College's relationships with other health-related colleges on campus as an opportunity to enhance multi-disciplinary education and service, another component of most future health models, particularly the patient-centered medical home.

And, Kirch says the College's TERM Program and Rural Medical Scholars Program are innovative ways to structure medical education to achieve specific goals, such as providing more physicians for rural Alabama. The Tuscaloosa Experience in Rural Medicine (TERM) program is designed to introduce third-year medical students to rural health care from the perspective of practicing physicians and to provide students with hands-on clinical experience at rural, primary-care practices. The Rural Medical Scholars Program is part of a sequence of programs the College created 15 years ago to help rural students enter health professions and prepare for rural service.

Kirch became president of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) in 2006 after six years as senior vice president for health affairs, dean of the College of Medicine and chief executive officer of the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center at The Pennsylvania State University.

The AAMC represents the nation's medical schools, teaching hospitals and academic societies and works to improve the nation's health through medical education, research and high-quality patient care.

Technology can help physicians provide high-quality, cost-effective, patient-centered care to more people, particularly in rural areas like the Alabama Black Belt,



John P. McGowan

where there is a serious shortage of doctors, says John McGowan, PhD, vice provost and chief information officer for The University of Alabama.

Citing such technologies as telemedicine and electronic health records, McGowan says "you can reach a lot more people in a short amount of time if you have the technology.

And if you want to provide patient-centered care, the technology has to be there."

The College is working to develop an inter-disciplinary, patient-centered model-of-care that employs the knowledge of primary-care physicians, nurses, nutritionists, mental health workers and health educators. The College has used an electronic medical records system at its University Medical Center for some time and is currently expanding its telemedicine efforts.

McGowan, who spoke on "Advanced Cyber Infrastructure Enablement of Medicine," noted that technology is an important component of patient care at the famed Cleveland Clinic. Located in Cleveland, Ohio, the multi-specialty medical center is a pioneer in internet-based medicine and a trailblazer in electronic medical record keeping and interaction with patients.

Many patients leave the clinic with home devices to test heart rate, blood sugar levels and blood pressure that automatically use wireless transmissions to send the results to the clinic. In addition, the clinic's electronic medical records let patients upload their health information, including the weight-loss or blood-sugar data collected from the home devices.

McGowan says medical technology will continue to evolve as Internet 2, or I-2, grows. I-2 is a high-speed internet used only by research and educational communities that is intended to foster collaboration. "I-2 will significantly transform science and education," McGowan says, adding that I-2 allows for the instant translation of magnetic resonance imaging or MRIs.

Prior to joining The University of Alabama, McGowan served as chief information officer for both the University of Texas at San Antonio and Florida International University and as chief technology officer for the University of Southern Mississippi. Before moving into information technology, McGowan spent 11 years as a research biochemist in the fields of cancer research and molecular biology. He earned his doctorate in pharmaceutical chemistry at the University of the Pacific.



RURAL HEALTH INSTITUTE GRANT WILL EXPAND TELEMEDICINE EFFORTS

The College's Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science has received funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program to expand telemedicine efforts in rural Alabama.

The Rural Health Institute was awarded \$99,800 for one year and was one of 191 applications that competed for funding. The Institute conducts research to improve health in rural Alabama.

Through the grant, the Rural Health Institute will assist the College in increasing the availability of clinical telemedicine in rural areas in Alabama, especially in regard to psychiatry and obstetrical services. The project will also enable medical students and residents to learn more about telemedicine and its application in rural areas, according to Institute Director John C. Higginbotham, PhD, who also serves as the College's associate dean for Research and Health Policy.

The College currently provides tele-psychiatry services to rural mental health centers in West Alabama. Through a program with the West Alabama Mental Health Center in Demopolis, mental health centers in

that city and in five surrounding counties are directly linked to psychiatrists at University Medical Center, which the College operates.

The USDA grant will enable the College to purchase more cameras, monitors and other special digital equipment and add four more rural primary-care clinics to its telemedicine efforts, Higginbotham says. Those clinics are located in Walker, Bibb, Pickens and Monroe counties.

The Walker County facility in Parrish, established in 2001 by faculty from the University's Capstone College of Nursing, is a nurse practitioner operated community health center where care is provided by University of Alabama nursing faculty and students. The Bibb County facility is currently used for training the College's family medicine resident physicians. The other two sites in Pickens and Monroe counties are part of the College's Tuscaloosa Experience in Rural Medicine (TERM) program, an undergraduate medical education program that provides clinical education to third- and fourth-year medical students through an extended 17-week clerkship in a rural setting.

FOSTER, GASKINS RECEIVE FUNDING FOR HIV/AIDS RESEARCH

Pamela Foster, MD, deputy director of the College's Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, and Susan Gaskins, PhD, a professor in the University's Capstone College of Nursing, are collaborating on a recently funded grant that will study the impact on rural African-American men of disclosing an AIDS diagnosis.

Gaskins is the principal investigator of the \$100,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Nursing Research. Foster is a co-investigator. The purpose of the two-year study is to explore the process and context of HIV disclosure by African-American men to partners and family, and the perceived health outcomes, benefits and consequences of the disclosures.

Gaskins and Foster want to learn to whom the participants have disclosed their HIV diagnosis, what motivated them to disclose, the content of the disclosure message and the consequences and benefits of disclosure. "The findings of this study will provide essential information for developing culturally relevant interventions to guide disclosure decisions that will be supportive of the health and quality of life of rural HIV-positive African-Americans," Gaskins says. "These interventions will help educate health-care providers and case workers as they assist individuals in managing their lives with HIV/AIDS."

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in the rural south, African-Americans account for 56 percent of all AIDS cases, with men having the highest rate of HIV infection. Residing in rural areas compounds the problems of living with the disease because of a lack of services, resources and transportation, as well as conservative cultural norms that result in shunning and stigmatization, Gaskins says. She says these factors create an environment that makes HIV-positive men reluctant to disclose their disease to others.

But Gaskins says that people who fail to disclose their HIV/AIDS status have been found to lack the knowledge and skills necessary to manage their disease, use health-care services less, potentially infect others and



Susan Gaskins, left, and Pamela Foster

lack social support.

Foster and Gaskins have collaborated on several HIV/AIDS-related grants and research projects. The most recent was a study, one of the first, to look at the stigma of AIDS in older, rural African-Americans in the South.

COLLEGE PARTICIPATES IN STUDY OF VACCINE THAT SHOWS PROMISE IN PREVENTING COMMON VIRUS

The College's Division of Clinical Investigations participated in a clinical trial of a vaccine that shows promise in preventing cytomegalovirus (CMV), a common virus that is passed on to infants while they are still in the womb. Each year, approximately 8,000 infants in the United States develop severe hearing, mental or movement impairments after becoming infected with CMV.

In the recently completed clinical trial, women who received the trial vaccine were 50 percent less likely to later become infected with CMV than were women who received a saline injection. The findings were published last spring in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The trial was sponsored by the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and involved 441 CMV-negative women recruited at The University of Alabama School of Medicine campuses in Tuscaloosa and Birmingham.

Healthy women between the ages of 14 and 40 were invited to participate in the trial. After seven years and the screening of 18,463 women nationwide, the trial reached its enrollment goal.

The women enrolled in the study were divided at random to receive either the candidate vaccine or a saline injection. Vaccinations were given to women within one year after they had given birth.

In the final analysis, women who received the trial vaccine were significantly more likely to remain uninfected throughout the 42-month follow-up period than those who received the saline injection.

While the trial demonstrated that a statistically significant degree of protection against maternal CMV can be achieved through vaccination, study investigators say a larger trial would be needed to conclusively prove the efficacy of any candidate CMV vaccine for this purpose.

COLLEGE ONE OF SITES FOR MEASLES, MUMPS, RUBELLA STUDY

The College is participating in a nationwide clinical trial that will compare the effectiveness of two measles, mumps and rubella vaccines.

Through its Division of Clinical Investigations, the College is one of 49 sites enrolling children between 12 months and 15 months of age into the trial, which is sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline.

The nationwide trial will compare two different combination vaccines that provide protection against all three diseases – one manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline and the other by Merck and Company – in terms of their effectiveness and longevity. An estimated 1,200

participants are to be enrolled in the study, which began in June 2009 and is expected to be completed by October 2011. Participants will have follow-up visits six months and two years after receiving the vaccine.

Measles, mumps and rubella are common childhood illnesses but they are highly infectious diseases with potentially serious complications and are responsible for considerable morbidity and mortality throughout the world. In countries where immunization against the diseases is routinely practiced, significant reduction in disease incidence is reported.

RURAL MEDICAL SCHOLARS

DISCUSS HEALTH ISSUES WITH

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION



The College's Rural Medical Scholars traveled to Washington, D.C., last year with physicians from the Medical Association of the State of Alabama to participate in discussions with Alabama's congressional delegation about health services and government policies that affect patient care.

"The annual trip helps these future rural Alabama physicians learn how government programs affect services to patients, especially in rural areas where more residents depend on Medicare and Medicaid for basic medical care," says John Brandon, MD, medical director of the Rural Medical Scholars Program, who accompanied the students to Washington. "Joining Alabama's doctors in the political process to help shape health care legislation is part of developing the skills they will need to be effective community leaders as doctors in small towns."

Brandon is also a family physician in Gordo, Alabama, where he has practiced since 1981.

Pre-medicine students in the Rural Medical Program at Auburn University, a program similar to the College's Rural Medical Scholars Program, also attended the Medical Association's meetings in Washington. Their attendance provided an opportunity for joint participation by the two groups of students from the two universities prior to their entering medical school at the University of Alabama School of Medicine in Birmingham, Brandon says.

The following Alabama counties were represented in Washington, D.C., by the College's Rural Medical Scholars: Etowah, Fayette, Morgan, Walker and Winston

On the Capitol steps, from left: Elliott Bishop and Grey Naughton, Auburn University Rural Medical Program; the College's Rural Medical Scholars: Scott Wakefield, John Brandon, MD, medical director, Jessica Grayson, Sara Phillips, Leslie Smothers, Justin Yancey, and Ross Summerford. Partially hidden in back on left is Chad Williamson of the Auburn University Rural Medical Program.

RURAL MEDICAL SCHOLARS RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIPS

All eight of the College's 2009-2010 Rural Medical Scholars have been awarded scholarships from the Alpha Lambda Chapter of Theta Xi Endowed Scholarship.

Each student received \$1,000 in scholarship support. The College hopes to award scholarships to Rural Medical Scholars each year.

"We greatly appreciate the College's support and recognition of the financial burden these students face as they follow their dreams. And we are appreciative that there may be funds for these scholarships in the future," says Rural Medical Scholars founder and director, John Wheat, MD, a professor in the College's Department of Community and Rural Medicine.

The Rural Medical Scholars Program includes students selected from rural Alabama counties who are part of the class of students who spend their third- and fourth-years of medical school at the College. The Rural Medical Scholars begin their program with a premedical year of studies that includes coursework in epidemiology, biostatistics, behavioral medicine, community clinical processes, and rural environmental and occupational health. The program is part of a sequence of programs the College created about 15 years ago to help rural students enter health professions and prepare for rural service.

"I want to be a doctor but I want to stay in a rural area. That's what drew me to this program," says Rural Medical Scholar Justine Vines. "Supporting us this way,

with the scholarships, shows that the College is dedicated to this program."

Adds Brittney Anderson: "It is good to know that people are interested in and support what we are doing."

Many of the Rural Medical Scholars say they hope to return home one day to practice medicine.

The Alpha Lambda Chapter of Theta Xi Endowed Scholarship was established in 2006 by Theta Xi alumni to support graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in rural health programs offered through the College.

In addition to the Rural Medical Scholars, the endowed scholarship fund provides \$3,000 scholarships for TERM students who successfully complete their third year of medical school. The Tuscaloosa Experience in Rural Medicine (TERM) program provides enhanced training in rural medical practice by introducing students to rural health issues from the perspective of practicing physicians and providing students with clinical experiences at rural primary-care practices. To date, three TERM students have completed their third year of medical school and been awarded scholarships. The College started the TERM program in 2007.

"Both of these programs – the Rural Medical Scholars Program and TERM – are examples of the innovative thinking that is needed to respond to the growing need for well-trained primary care physicians in rural Alabama," says College Dean E. Eugene Marsh, MD. "This is a critical part of the mission of the College and we are thankful to the Alpha Lambda Chapter of Theta Xi for their support through these scholarships."



Rural Medical Scholars, from left: Theresa Berry, Fayette County; Arnelya Cade, Marengo County; Justine Vines, Elmore County; John McDaniel, Lauderdale County; College Dean E. Eugene Marsh, MD; Elliott Dansby, Covington County; Heath Mitchell, Hale County; Katie Leonard, Cullman County; and Brittney Anderson, Autauga County.



LISTER HILL SOCIETY BOARD THANKED FOR YEARS OF SERVICE

Members of the Lister Hill Society Board, from left: Eddie Sherwood; Heike Harris; Virginia Ennis; Tommy Hester; College Dean E. Eugene Marsh, MD; Anne Monfore; Michael Taylor, MD, professor and chair of the College's Department of Pediatrics; Sammy Watson; Susan Woods; Jim Shamblyn, MD; and Lisa Russell Underwood. Not pictured: William W. Winternitz, MD, former chair of the College's Department of Internal Medicine; Phillip Young; and Betty Shirley.

As they worked to create the College of Community Health Sciences more than 30 years ago, College leaders reached out to the community for support and a partnership was formed that continues today.

The Lister Hill Society, named for the state's senior senator at the time who was a major supporter of health programs in Alabama, was established as a way for businesses and community groups to contribute to and be a part of the College's mission of promoting and providing primary and rural health care throughout Alabama.

"The Lister Hill Society was designed to be a liaison between the citizens of Tuscaloosa and West Alabama and the College of Community Health Sciences to spread the news about what was happening in Tuscaloosa," says Tommy Hester, a retired banker and active community leader, as well as a longtime member of the Lister Hill Society Board of Directors.

The board held its final meeting on September 21, 2009. While the board will no longer be active, the Lister Hill Society, which serves as the annual fund for the College, will continue and efforts are underway to create a new board with a statewide reach to support and advise the College.

E. Eugene Marsh, MD, dean of the College, praised the work of the Lister Hill Society Board of Directors and says with the board's help, the College has been able to do so much to improve health care in Alabama. During the board's tenure, funds were raised to underwrite new initiatives at the College, purchase

new equipment, provide student scholarships, support medical student and resident travel to national meetings and provide start-up funds for research projects. In addition, funds raised by the Lister Hill Society assisted the College with such major projects as the renovation of Willard Auditorium at DCH Regional Medical Center in Tuscaloosa, construction of the new building that houses the College and the state-of-the-art University Medical Center, and provided support for the College's Sports Medicine Fellowship, the Bill deShazo Sports Medicine Center and The University of Alabama Endowed Chair of Sports Medicine for Family Physicians.

Members of the Lister Hill Society Board of Directors also served an important steering function for the College by providing evaluations of current programs and helping anticipate and provide funds for future needs.

Marsh says the next step is for the College to reach out across the state, including rural areas, and, through the creation of a Board of Visitors, seek input that will continue to support and shape the College's mission.

"The goal is to have people serve on a Board of Visitors who have an interest in what we are doing so that they may advise us in how to achieve our mission," Marsh says. "No one else has the potential that this College has for meeting the needs that this state has for health care. Advice, input and exposure are so important. By listening to the Board of Visitors and visiting with people from all over the state, we can learn what is really needed out there."

DR. JOE W. AND VIRGINIA HURSEY O'NEAL ENDOWED LECTURE SERIES

The first presentation of the Dr. Joe W. and Virginia Hursey O'Neal Endowed Lecture Series was held at the College last fall. Lisle Nabell, MD, an associate professor of Medicine at the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center in Birmingham, gave a talk titled "The Breast Cancer Diagnosis and Not-So-Friendly Suggestions for your Patients."

The Endowed Lecture Series was created by Dr. Joe W. O'Neal, MD, to honor the memory of his wife, Virginia, who passed away in 2001 after a courageous battle with breast cancer, and to support the teaching of cancer prevention and early detection.

Virginia O'Neal was born in Indiana. After graduating from high school in 1942, she enrolled in the Wesley Memorial Hospital Nursing Program, served in the Nurse Cadet Corps during World War II and received a nursing degree in 1946 from Northwestern University in Chicago. She worked as a pediatric nurse until entering the nurse anesthetist school in 1952 at the Medical College of Alabama in Birmingham, where she met her future husband.

After graduating and marrying Joe O'Neal in 1953, she worked as a nurse anesthetist at South Highlands Hospital in Birmingham before moving to Tuscaloosa with her husband in 1960.



Dr. and Mrs. Joe W. O'Neal

Joe O'Neal began his pre-medical education at The University of Alabama in 1942. His studies were interrupted by World War II and he served three years in the U.S. Marine Corps before returning to the University, where he received a bachelor of science degree in Biology in 1949. He received his medical degree in 1954 from the Medical College of Alabama in Birmingham and, after completing his residency, he and his wife returned to Tuscaloosa to open a private practice.

Virginia O'Neal was active in her husband's surgical practice. She was also involved in many civic organizations. Together with her husband, she raised five children, four of whom earned degrees at The University of Alabama. Joe O'Neal played a role in the early years of the College, assisting with surgery education efforts. He is retired from the Tuscaloosa Veterans Administration Medical Center.

FIRST O'NEAL ENDOWED LECTURE – THE BREAST CANCER DIAGNOSIS

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women, and deaths from breast cancer are second only to deaths from lung cancer. But breast cancer death rates appear to be relatively flat and have even declined somewhat, demonstrating that there has been some success in terms of prevention and treatment, according to Lisle Nabell, MD, an associate professor of

Medicine at the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center in Birmingham.

Nabell gave the first lecture in the College's Dr. Joe W. and Virginia Hursey O'Neal Endowed Lecture Series. Nabell says in addition to treatment, a decrease in the use of hormone replacement therapy is also likely contributing to flat and declining death rates from breast cancer.

There are a number of pre-disposing factors that put women at risk for breast cancer – age and family history among them, Nabell says. “Breast cancer is a disease of aging women, with the uptick starting in the mid-40s and falling off at about age 75. Age is the strongest factor associated with breast cancer,” she says.

Family history also plays a role, particularly if a first-degree relative, such as a mother, has had breast cancer and if the cancer appeared before menopause, Nabell says.

There are ways to try and reduce the risk of breast cancer, she says. While there are side effects, the use of such medications as tamoxifen have shown positive results in reducing breast cancer cases. Surgery is an

option. Nabell says lifestyle modification can also be beneficial.

She says women need to maintain a healthy body weight and avoid excessive alcohol intake (more than two drinks per day). A diet rich in fruits and vegetables, as well as regular exercise, seem to have a positive influence. In addition, there is new research being conducted into the role that Vitamin D plays in preventing breast cancer, Nabell says.

“There has been an explosion of interest here. Lower levels of Vitamin D have been associated with higher risk of breast cancer. What is not known is the appropriate level of Vitamin D that might be needed to reduce breast cancer risk.”

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



Allison Leitner

creation of a Board of Visitors, I want to say “thank you” to all the current and previous board members.

The College’s Campaign Steering Committee completed its work on June 30, 2009, after exceeding the College’s campaign goal. Our College raised \$3,362,424 during the campaign and these funds have endowed student scholarships, supported our beautiful facility and created new educational programs. The University raised more than \$612 million and endowed more than \$250 million in scholarship support. Thank you!

Finally, I want to thank each person who has supported the development and funding of the Dr. Patrick Lee Trammell, Sr. Excellence in Sports Medicine Program. To date, fundraising efforts for this project have successfully created the Dr. Bill deShazo Sports Medicine Center and The University of Alabama Endowed Chair of Sports Medicine in Family Medicine. With just a quarter of a million dollars left to raise, this project is almost complete. Thank you!

Each day, I look for ways to help advance the exciting vision of this College. It would be my pleasure to meet with you or schedule a time for you to meet with Dean E. Eugene Marsh, MD. Please call me at (205) 348-5701 or email aleitner@cchs.ua.edu.

Allison Leitner
Director of Advancement
College of Community Health Sciences

As I reflect back on 2009 and look forward to 2010, I want to take a moment to thank three special groups that have advanced the College of Community Health Sciences, both through their time and financial support.

The Lister Hill Society Board of Directors has been a wonderful advocate for the College and has worked for years to inform the West Alabama community about our mission. As the board becomes inactive to allow for the

DAVID MATHEWS HONORED AT COLLEGE'S ANNUAL COCKTAIL PARTY

David Mathews, PhD, former president of The University of Alabama who was instrumental in the creation of the College, was honored at the College's Annual Cocktail Party held September 18, 2009, at the home of Jean and Jimmy Hinton. The event provides the College with an opportunity to thank donors, volunteers, adjunct faculty and friends for their generous support and service.

Mathews, who is currently president and CEO of the Kettering Foundation, was also a keynote speaker at the 10th Annual Rural Health Conference, which is hosted each year by the College and its Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science. The conference was held September 17-18, 2009, at The University of Alabama.



From left, Bill deShazo and Martha deShazo



From left, MarLa Sayers with Marly and Joab Thomas



From left, David Mathews and Anne Laura and Rollins Tindell



E. Eugene Marsh, MD, dean of the College, shakes hands with Mark Ezell as Patricia Ezell looks on.



From left, Jean Hinton, Mary Jean Hinton and Lib Thomason.



From left, Shelley Jones, John Hicks and Camille Cook

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2009

Special Thanks

Thank you to all of our donors and friends who gave to the College of Community Health Sciences in 2009 through cash donations, in-kind gifts, estate gifts or matching funds. The gifts benefit faculty, medical students and residents by providing resources for scholarships, classrooms, clinics and research.

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The College would like to thank everyone who donates to the AMA Foundation Scholars Fund. Our medical students truly benefit from the scholarships that we are able to award with your help. The scholarships assist third- and fourth-year medical students with their tuition expenses.

To make a donation to the fund, please follow these directions to ensure that your donation is received by The University of Alabama School of Medicine, Tuscaloosa Campus. Visit www.ama-assn.org and click on "About AMA," then "AMA Foundation," then "Ways to Give," and then under "Cash Donation" click on the "online donation form."

Or, enter this entire link: www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/ama-foundation/donate-now/donate-online.shtml. You will see the section that says "Please apply my gift to the following section" and a choice "The Scholars Fund." There is a box that you **MUST FILL IN** to designate a school. If you do not designate a school, your donation will simply go to the Scholars Fund as a whole and be divided among all schools in the country. **NO ABBREVIATIONS**, so please enter The University of Alabama School of Medicine, Tuscaloosa Campus.

Thank you, again, for donating to the Scholars Fund. Our medical students are very appreciative.

2010 SAVE THE DATES

WINTERNITZ CONFERENCES

Speakers and topics TBA

March 2, April 6, May 4

12:15 p.m.

The University of Alabama School of Medicine, Tuscaloosa Campus Building

Classrooms 1-3

Contact: Dawn Hodo at 205-348-0093 or at dawn@cchs.ua.edu

SPECIAL EMPAHSIS WEEK - NEPHROLOGY

DCH Regional Medical Center – Willard Auditorium Tuscaloosa, AL

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

April 12 – “Salt and Water”

Richard H. Sterns, MD

April 13 – “Chronic Kidney Disease”

Robert C. Stanton, MD

April 14 – “The Anion Gap Metabolic Acidosis – Anything New?”

Michael Emmett, MD, MACP

April 15 – “Resistant Hypertension”

David A. Calhoun, MD

April 16 – “Drugs and Renal Disease”

William M. Bennett, MD

Contact: Dawn Hodo at 205-348-0093 or at dawn@cchs.ua.edu

11TH ANNUAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

September 1-2

Bryant Conference Center

The University of Alabama

Contact: Marquetta Marshall at 205-348-0025 or at mmarshall@cchs.ua.edu

IRMA HIGGINBOTHAM, MD

By Leslie Zganjar

As a young girl, Irma Higginbotham knew she wanted to be a physician. She had aunts and uncles who were doctors and they encouraged her interest in medicine. Sports-related injuries she suffered in her youth put her in contact with “some great physicians. I admired the profession.”

Today, Higginbotham is clinical director of The University of Alabama Student Health Center, where she also practices. She is a graduate of the College’s Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Residency.

While these are the bookends, the chapters in between detail a life of meager beginnings in her native Moscow and hopes for Olympic competition, a successful struggle to become a physician in communist Russia, and a move half way around the world to the Deep South and an American medical degree.

Higginbotham was born and raised in Moscow. Her mother was Russian and her father was from neighboring Georgia. The family was poor and she remembers that for breakfast there was often only hot tea and bread. “It was good if we sometimes had butter or sugar for the bread,” she says.

But Higginbotham was a talented cross-country skier and from the ages of 9 to 15, she attended special schools where, when classes were completed for the day, she and her fellow students trained for pre-Olympic competition. Unfortunately, injuries she sustained during this time eventually prevented her from continuing to compete.

After graduating from high school, Higginbotham began what would become a two-year effort to enter medical school. She applied first in Moscow. While the Russian government paid students’ higher education costs, because Higginbotham’s father was a native of the wealthier country of Georgia, officials wanted her to pay. They also wanted more Russians and fewer Georgians in medical school, she says. “I suffered discrimination.”

While she waited to get into medical school, Higginbotham worked as a nurse’s aide in a Moscow hospital, feeding patients, changing their bed sheets, and



Irma Higginbotham

cleaning bed pans and floors. At age 19, she was accepted into medical school in Smolenski, a city west of Moscow. Higginbotham studied in Smolenski for three years and completed the remaining three years of medical school in Moscow, where she also had opportunities to treat patients. She graduated in 1993 and, after an additional year of training in obstetrics and gynecology, she began an OB/GYN practice in Moscow.

During this time, a friend introduced Higginbotham to an American, a geologist from Mississippi, whom she would eventually marry. The couple spent time together in Russia, and when they were apart they wrote

and called frequently. During one visit, “he brought an engagement ring and asked my parents for permission to marry me. That was common to my father’s Georgian culture,” Higginbotham says. They married in 1998 in Moscow and three months later, Higginbotham arrived at her new home in Clinton, Mississippi.

FROM MOSCOW TO MISSISSIPPI

“It was a big cultural change for me,” she says. “I was a big city girl and Clinton was very rural. Everyone had a car, and the humidity was shocking.”

Higginbotham was not able to practice medicine in the United States until she passed the requisite exams and completed a residency. While in Clinton, her son was born and she spent her time caring for him, learning “American” English and studying for the exams. “I had studied English in school in Moscow, but they taught British English,” she says. “When I first came to this country, I liked to watch British television shows because I could understand the language perfectly.”

Once she passed all the necessary exams, Higginbotham applied to several residencies, including the College’s Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Residency. She initially thought she might continue practicing in obstetrics and gynecology but found herself drawn to family medicine. She says she wanted to be more broadly trained, and had a goal of doing medical mission work in the future. In addition, her husband had been raised in Tuscaloosa and had a master’s degree from The University of Alabama.

Higginbotham says during her visit to Tuscaloosa, she was impressed by the University and the College. “I liked the faculty, the attending physicians and all the people I met. Everyone was friendly. I never felt discrimination. I put this residency as my first choice and I matched. I was very happy to get accepted here,” she says.

The residency was to begin in July 2003, but since she had little experience with the American health-care system, Higginbotham and her family moved to Tuscaloosa in April and she spent three months shadowing attending physicians and residents already in the program.

“I didn’t realize until I got into this training how well organized the care is here, and the strong focus on preventive care, which is very important in family medicine,” she says. “Now I understand why life expectancy is high in this country.” She says in Russia, the life expectancy for men is 59 years.

Higginbotham says she initially struggled in the residency. Many years had passed since she had been a student, and she had forgotten what it was like to work long hours and not be in control of her time. She credits her residency supervisor, Jerry McKnight, MD, a professor in the College’s Department of Family Medicine, for encouraging her not to give up.

“He was so supportive. I know it was not easy with my foreign background, but he was so patient. I think I wanted to quit, but he had faith in me so I didn’t quit,” she says.

Higginbotham graduated from the residency in June 2006. After weighing a family medicine clinical practice versus an urgent-care setting, she chose a position with a Tuscaloosa urgent-care clinic. But then she received a call from John Maxwell, director of the Student Health Center, who offered her a position at the center. Higginbotham initially split her time between the center and the urgent-care clinic. She has since increased her time with the Student Health Center and currently serves as the center’s clinical director.

“I was looking for family medicine and a walk-in clinic and here you can do both,” she says.

Higginbotham says the College’s family medicine residency prepared her well for the work she is currently doing and she has high praise for the program.

“When you finish the residency here, you can do anything. You can work in an emergency room, be a hospitalist, practice family medicine or practice at an urgent care or out-patient clinic. You can get additional training in obstetrics and gynecology or sports medicine,” she says. “The residency also provides opportunities for a lot of hands-on care with patients. There are so many good things about this residency and that’s why I chose it.”

Higginbotham adds that she is grateful for the many opportunities that the College has provided her – “for the residency program, for the opportunities I’ve had at the Student Health Center and for the people with whom I work. I am very blessed.”

RUBIN HONORED FOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Nancy Rubin, PsyD, a clinical psychologist and professor in the College's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, was selected as a 2009 Master's Program Scholar at her alma mater, the University of Denver.

The Master's Program is designed to connect some of the university's most successful alumni with current students by providing a forum in which alumni share experiences and insights about their career paths, says Jeffrey Howard, executive director of Alumni Relations for the University of Denver.

"The university is striving to offer as many opportunities as possible to re-engage our alumni while making sure current students have access to the many years of professional achievement these alums have garnered," Howard says.

A Master's Program event was held in April 2009 and featured 15 prominent alumni from nine different academic departments across the University of Denver campus. Rubin was one of two alumni chosen for the program from the university's Graduate School of Professional Psychology. This year was the first time that the school has participated in the Master's Program.

Rubin, who also is director of psychology clinical services, research and training for the College, spoke to students about her work, including her therapy, research and service. "The Master's Program is a way to bring alumni back to the university to talk with students about their work and about doing more – about contributing to the world outside, about contributing to society," she says.

Rubin has been active professionally at both the state and national levels. She served as president of the Alabama Psychological Association in 2001. From 2003 to 2007, she represented Alabama on the American Psychological Association's Council of Representatives, which develops policy for the national organization. From 2004 to 2006, she served on the American Psychological Association's Task Force on Assessment of Competencies in Professional



Nancy Rubin

Psychology. Rubin's work on the task force resulted in four articles that were published in the peer-reviewed journal, *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*.

She joined the College in 1990 after graduating from the University of Denver with a doctoral degree in clinical psychology and completing a clinical psychology internship at West Virginia University Health Sciences Center in the Department of Behavioral Medicine and Psychiatry. She received bachelor's degrees in speech therapy/communication disorders and Spanish in 1980 from the University of New Hampshire.

Her areas of specialization include Family Systems Therapy, Health Psychology/Behavioral Medicine and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. Her academic interests include medical psychology, education, and assessment of competencies.

One area of focus of Rubin's research efforts has been on the use of standardized patients in medical student and resident training and patients' perceptions of their own health care providers following their experience as a standardized patient. Standardized patients are individuals trained to act as real patients during an interview and physical examination. Through these interviews, medical students learn how to communicate with patients in a situation that does not require the use of actual patients. These simulated interactions also help students improve their physical examination skills in order to aid in making an accurate diagnosis.



Marisa Giggie

Marisa Giggie, MD, has joined the College as an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine. She worked previously for Taylor Hardin Secure Medical Facility and Brewer Porch Children’s Center, both in Tuscaloosa, and was in private practice at the Psychiatry Clinic of West Alabama. Giggie

specializes in forensic, adult and pediatric Psychiatry. She received her medical degree in 2001 from the Medical College of Pennsylvania/Hahnemann School of Medicine in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (now Drexel University College of Medicine). She completed a residency in Psychiatry in 2004 and a fellowship in Forensic Psychiatry in 2007 at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. Giggie received a bachelor’s degree in Economics from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, and a master’s degree in Public Affairs from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin.



Melanie Tucker

Melanie Tucker, PhD, CCRC, has joined the Department of Community and Rural Medicine as an assistant professor. Tucker has been a Senior Clinical Research Associate in the College’s Division of Clinical Investigations, a position she continues to hold. Tucker joined the College in 2005 after

working in clinical trials at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Tuscaloosa and the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Prior to beginning her work in clinical research, she was a marriage and family therapist in Indiana and Pennsylvania. Tucker received a doctoral degree in Health Education and Health Promotion from The University of Alabama in May 2009. She received a master’s degree in Counselor Education from The University of Alabama and a bachelor’s degree in Personnel Psychology from Athens University.



Kristy Graettinger

Kristy Graettinger, MD, has joined the College as an assistant professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Graettinger recently completed her OB/GYN residency training at University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics in Madison, Wisconsin. Graettinger received her medical degree in 2005

from The University of Alabama School of Medicine. She received a bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a master’s degree in Civil Engineering from Northwestern University in Chicago.



Elizabeth Smith

Elizabeth Smith, C.R.N.P., has received a faculty appointment as an instructor in the College. In addition, she also has a full-time clinical appointment as a Certified Nurse Practitioner in the College’s Department of Pediatrics, and a faculty appointment as an instructor in the University’s Capstone

College of Nursing. Smith graduated from the Family Nurse Practitioner Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 1983. She is board certified in nursing as a Family Nurse Practitioner.

MEDIA RESEARCHER WINS BURNUM AWARD

Jennings Bryant, PhD, the Reagan Endowed Chair of Broadcasting and associate dean for graduate studies and research for The University of Alabama College of Communication and Information Sciences, has been selected as this year's recipient of the Burnum Distinguished Faculty Award.

The award was established by Dr. and Mrs. John F. Burnum of Tuscaloosa to recognize and promote excellence in research, scholarship and teaching and is one of the highest honors the University bestows on its faculty. The late John Burnum, MD, was a long-time faculty member in the College of Community Health Sciences who played a major role in the creation of the College.

The Burnum Distinguished Faculty Award is presented annually to a professor who is judged by a faculty selection committee to have demonstrated superior scholarly or artistic achievements and profound dedication to the art of teaching.

"Receiving this award is sincerely an incredible honor," Bryant says, "especially because the selection was by many of our University's most esteemed scholars across many different disciplines."

Bryant came to the University in 1987 to teach in the Department of Telecommunication and Film. In 1989, he founded the Institute for Communication Research and served as director for more than 15 years. He has published 25 scholarly books and more than 70 articles in peer-reviewed journals, and was founding co-editor of the journal *Media Psychology*. He has received the Distinguished Scholar Award from the Broadcast Education Association, the leading national scholarly association for broadcasting and telecommunications.



Jennings Bryant

COLLEGE ADOPTS ELEMENTARY
AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

The College has adopted Tuscaloosa Magnet Elementary and Middle Schools and, as part of that program, Dean E. Eugene Marsh, MD, provided presentations to 5th grade classes last fall that focused on citizenship and health care.

A goal of the Adopt-A-School Program, which is sponsored by The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama and Tuscaloosa City and County School Systems, is to bring professionals from the community into schools to meet with students and to enhance student lessons.

One of the topics studied by the 5th grade classes at Tuscaloosa Magnet Elementary was what it means to be a responsible citizen. During the course of four presentations, Marsh spoke to students about the rights that citizens have to receive medical care and the responsibility they have for their own health care, how citizens receive the information they need to make responsible decisions about their care, career opportunities available to those interested in medical professions, medical technology, and ethics and medicine.

FACULTY PRESENT LECTURES, HOST FAMILY EVENT AT SYMPOSIUM

The College hosted a Family Fun Event and members of its faculty presented lectures at the Alabama Academy of Family Physicians 2009 Annual Meeting and Scientific Symposium held last June in Destin, Florida.

Faculty who presented lectures included: Scott Arnold, MD, an associate professor in the Department of Internal Medicine, whose presentation was titled “Update in General Internal Medicine for 2008-2009;” Alan Blum, MD, Wallace Endowed Chair and professor in the Department of Family Medicine and director of The University of Alabama Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society, whose presentation was titled “Oral Dermatology;” Karen Burgess, MD, an associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics, whose presentation was titled “Update in Pediatrics for 2008-2009;” and E. Eugene Marsh, MD, dean of the College and an associate professor in the Department of Neurology, whose presentation was titled “Abnormalities of Gait.”



John Waits, MD, director of the College's Family Medicine Residency, with his family at the AAFP Annual Meeting.



Lee Armistead, MD, a graduate of the College's Family Medicine Residency, with his family at the AAFP Annual Meeting.



The Family Fun Event hosted by the College.

M E D I C A L S T U D E N T H O N O R S

C O N V O C A T I O N



Charles A. LeMaistre

The 33rd Annual Medical Student Honors Convocation was held May 15, 2009, at Indian Hills Country Club in Tuscaloosa. College Dean E. Eugene Marsh, MD, and Cathy Gresham, MD, assistant to the dean and director of the Office of Medical Student Affairs, welcomed and introduced the graduating class.

The convocation speaker was Charles A. LeMaistre, MD, former president of the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and currently a professor in the center's Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences. LeMaistre, who completed his first two years of medical school at what is now The University of Alabama School of Medicine, Tuscaloosa Campus, was a member of the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health, which produced the landmark 1964 U.S. Surgeon General's report that first linked smoking to cancer and other health problems.

Also during the convocation, College faculty paid tribute to the graduates' efforts and achievements through the presentation of student awards. Graduates also presented awards to faculty.

STUDENT AWARDS

Formal Academic Honors – Phillip Dean (magna cum laude), Joshua Dixon (cum laude) and Bethany Jackson (magna cum laude)

Presented to students graduating in the top 10 percent of the class.

The Glasgow-Rubin Achievement Citation – Bethany Jackson

Presented by the American Medical Women's Association to female class members graduating in the top 10 percent of the class.

The Gold Humanism Honor Society – Phillip Dean, Kimberly Owens, Bethany Jackson, Alexander Whitley and Haley Overstreet

Recognizes students who excel in clinical care, leadership, professionalism, compassion, patient care and dedication to service.

The Merk Manual Award – Bethany Jackson

Presented to an outstanding student in medical education.



The William R. Willard Award (Dean's Award) is presented to a senior medical student for contributions to the goals and mission of the College. The award is presented by E. Eugene Marsh, MD, dean of the College, (left) to Sara Beth Bush.

FACULTY AND STUDENT AWARDS

Faculty Recognition/Junior Year – Vijaya Sundar, MD, chair of the College’s Department of Internal Medicine
For outstanding contributions to undergraduate medical education during the junior year.

Faculty Recognition/Patrick McCue Award/Senior Year – A. Robert Sheppard, MD, director of Hospitalist Service in the College’s Department of Internal Medicine
For outstanding contributions to undergraduate medical education during the senior year.

Resident Recognition Award – Ahmed Moussa, MD
For outstanding contributions to undergraduate medical education.

James H. Akers Memorial Award – Bethany Jackson
For excellence in the practice of art and science in medicine.



The Scholastic Achievement Award is given to the senior(s) with the highest academic performance in the clinical years. The award is presented by E. Eugene Marsh, MD, dean of the College, (center) to Phillip Dean (left) and Bethany Jackson (right).



Medical students recognized at the Honors Convocation.

COLLEGE DEPARTMENT AWARDS PRESENTED TO STUDENTS

William W. Winternitz Award – Phillip Dean
For excellent performance in Internal Medicine.

Pediatric Recognition Award – Megan Hennigan
For excellent performance in Pediatrics.

Finney/Akers Memorial Award – Sarah Aultman and
Bret Henderson
For outstanding ability in Obstetrics and Gynecology.

William R. Shamblin Award – Joshua Dixon
For excellent performance in Surgery.

Peter Bryce Award in Psychiatry – Michael Gower
For demonstrating the highest performance in Psychiatry.

Neurology Award – Phillip Dean and Bethany Jackson
For outstanding performance during the Neurology
Clerkship.

Family Medicine Award – Bethany Jackson
For excellent performance in Family Medicine.

*Robert F. Gloor Award in Community and Rural
Medicine* – Charlton Dennison
For excellent performance in Community and Rural
Medicine.

Family/Rural Medicine Preceptor's Award – Julia
Boothe, MD, Cathy Skinner, MD, and Angela Powell, MD

Research Award – Joshua Bell
In recognition of the pursuit of one or more research
projects leading to a presentation or publication during
the clinical years of medical training.

Scholastic Achievement Award – Phillip Dean and
Bethany Jackson
Presented to the senior medical student(s) with the
highest academic performance in the clinical years.

William R. Willard Award (Dean's Award) –
Sara Beth Bush
Awarded to a senior medical student who has made
outstanding contributions to the goals and mission of
the College.

RURAL MEDICAL SCHOLARS

CONVOCATION

Members of the 2008-2009 Rural Medical Scholars class were honored at the 13th Annual Rural Medical Scholars Convocation held April 24, 2009, at the Hotel Capstone on The University of Alabama campus. The convocation keynote speaker was state Sen. Gerald Dial, who also serves as executive director of the Alabama Rural Action Commission.

The Rural Medical Scholars Program is operated by the College's Department of Community and Rural Medicine and was created for rural students interested in health and medical careers.

The program is a five-year medical education program that leads to a medical degree. Selection for the program is based on a competitive application process exclusively for students from rural Alabama who wish to become rural primary-care physicians.



The 2008-2009 Alabama Rural Medical Scholars: (front row from left) Leslie Smothers of Jasper, Jessica Grayson of Fayette, Katie Gates of Anniston, and Sara Phillips of Sardis City; (back row from left) Scott Williams of Double Springs, Patrick Jones of Andalusia, Ryan Christmas of Clay, Jason Clemons of Florence, Ross Summerford of Falkville and Justin Yancey of Gadsden.

Members of the 2008-2009 Rural Medical Scholars class began their first year of medical school this past summer at The University of Alabama School of Medicine.



From left: John Waits, MD, director of the Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Residency; Jarrod Warren, MD; Lee Carter, MD, chief resident; Linsey Williams, MD; Billy Taunton, MD; Dillon Miller, MD; Clay Campbell, MD; Steve Coppock, MD; Richard Dodd, MD; Terry James, MD; Neil Yeager, MD; Theo Barley, MD; Katrina Chuprasava, MD; Atif Raja, MD; David Schaffer, MD; and Natasha Harder, MD, assistant director of the Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Residency..

TUSCALOOSA FAMILY MEDICINE RESIDENTS GRADUATE

The 2009 graduates of the College's Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Residency were honored during the 34th Annual Graduation Ceremony on June 20.

The event was held at the Bryant Conference Center on The University of Alabama campus. Michael McBrearty, MD, was the commencement speaker. McBrearty was a member of the first graduating class of the Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Residency (1976) and is a practicing physician in Fairhope, Alabama.

Awards also were presented to graduating residents.

William R. Willard Award - Sarah Fulghum

Internal Medicine Award - Eric Law

Internal Medicine (Best Resident) - Lee Carter

Pediatrics Award - Lee Carter

Psychiatry Award - Lee Carter

Psychiatry (R3 Award) - Richard Dodd and Linsey Williams

Obstetrics and Gynecology Award - Linsey Williams

Society of Teachers in Family Medicine Resident Teaching Award - Lee Carter

William F. deShazo, III Award - Lee Carter



From left: John C. Higginbotham, PhD, director of the College's Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science; Jason Parton, MS, MA, epidemiologist and project director for the Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science; Christine Marsh, Sarrell Dental Center; Jeff Haddox, founder and CEO of Sight Savers America; Gov. Bob Riley; Karen Peterlin, CEO of Kid One Transport; Mona Fouad, MD, director of the UAB Division of Preventive Medicine; Joatrice Thompson, leader, UAB Minority Health and Research Center Participant Access Core; and Brandi Mangum, Sarrell Dental Center.

RURAL HEALTH
 INSTITUTE
 RECOGNIZED
 FOR WORK WITH
 CHILDREN'S
 HEALTH INITIATIVE

The College's Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science was recognized for its work with the Governor's KidCheck Health Initiative during a ceremony at the State Capitol last fall. The ceremony was hosted by Gov. Bob Riley and the Alabama Power Company.

The KidCheck Health Initiative was launched in 2008 by Gov. Riley and is designed to increase access

to health care in rural areas of the state. During the last school year, 17,000 children in grades K-12 received free health screenings as well as referrals for follow-up care.

The Rural Health Institute manages and analyzes the data collected at registered KidCheck schools. Institute Director John C. Higginbotham, PhD, and Jason Parton, MS, MA, an epidemiologist and project director for the Institute, received a certificate of recognition at the ceremony for the Institute's work with the KidCheck program. The Institute conducts research to improve health in rural Alabama.

"It is with great pleasure that we recognize your contributions to the success of the KidCheck student health screening program," according to the certificate presented to the Rural Health Institute by Gov. Riley. "We thank you for your ongoing role as a KidCheck partner, and we appreciate your continued advocacy for the health of Alabama's children."

The KidCheck Health Initiative is modeled after a successful program started in Bibb and Blount county schools. Through Gov. Riley's Alabama Rural Action Commission, and with the help of the Alabama Power Foundation and BlueCross and BlueShield of Alabama's

Child Caring Foundation, the KidCheck health screenings were available in 23 school systems across the state during the 2008-2009 school year.

“There’s no question that families in rural areas face special challenges in accessing health care,” Gov. Riley says. “With KidCheck, we’re able to provide children in rural schools with complete head-to-toe health care assessments for free.”

Schools participating in KidCheck set aside a day during the school year for the health screenings, which include height and weight measurements, body mass index measurements, heart and lung checks, and vision and dental screenings. After each student finishes the screenings, the results are checked by a nurse or other trained individual. Parents receive a written report of the results, and serious findings are addressed the same day.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Lea Yerby, PhD, an assistant professor in the College’s Department of Community and Rural Medicine and the Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, was accepted to the State Health Policy Institute as a member of the Health Promotion Policy Experts. In this capacity, Yerby will be trained to become a specialist in educating Alabama legislators and other professionals about the latest policy and research in chronic disease prevention and control.

Carrollton Primary Care, led by *Catherine Skinner, MD*, and *Julia Boothe, MD*, graduates of the College’s Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Residency, received a Certificate of Achievement from the Alabama Department of Public Health for reaching the Healthy People 2010 objective of having 90 percent of its 2-year-old patients completely immunized in 2008. Carrollton Primary Care in Carrollton, Alabama, was one of only a few clinics in the state to meet the objective.

Catherine Skinner, MD, a graduate of the College’s Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Residency and a physician at Carrollton Primary Care in Carrollton, Alabama, is the state’s first board-certified Family Medicine Obstetric physician as recognized by the American Board of Family Medicine Obstetrics.

The following affiliate faculty members of the College were recognized as *Outstanding Affiliate Faculty for 2009*:

- Albert White, MD, Internal Medicine
- Guillermo Godoy, MD, Pediatrics
- John Brandon, MD, Family Medicine
- Warren Holley, MD, Family Medicine
- David B. Partlow, Jr., MD, Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Patricia Pilkinton, MD, Psychiatry
- Joseph Battaile, MD, Psychiatry
- Mark Woods, MD, Neurology
- Lee Thomas, MD, Surgery
- Larry O. Skelton, MD, Community and Rural Medicine

AWARDED

Daniel Avery, MD, FACOG, FACS, chair of the College’s Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, received the 2009 Thomas Ebner Leadership Award from the American Association of Physician Specialists. The award recognizes a member physician who has demonstrated commitment to the enhancement and continued growth, on a national basis, of the AAPS and its certifying affiliate, the American Board of Physician Specialists. Avery was chosen by the executive committee of the AAPS board of directors and from Academy of Medicine nominations. The Thomas Ebner Leadership Award is named after Thomas J. Ebner, MD, who served as president of AAPS from 2002 to 2003. In addition, Avery was selected as a Distinguished Physician by the American Board of Physician Specialties. And, Avery received the 2009 Association of Professors of Gynecology and Obstetrics Excellence in Teaching Award, which is given in recognition of outstanding contributions to the field of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Cynthia Moore, director of the College's Rural Health Scholars Program, is the 2008-09 recipient of The University of Alabama's Academic Advising Excellence Award. The award is presented annually to an advisor who has made significant contributions to the field of academic advising. Moore has been employed at the University for more than 20 years and co-founded the Rural Health Scholars Program in 1993. Since then she has visited rural high schools in Alabama, recruiting students to the program as well as to the University. She provides advice and counseling on topics from class schedules to test-taking, scholarship applications and career goals. Moore is active in several student organizations on campus and in professional development organizations, including the National Association of Minority Educators, which honored her with a national service award. Moore has continued to develop new outreach programs, such as the Black Belt Scholars Program, which was initiated in 2007.

John Waits, MD, director of the College's Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Residency and an assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine, received the Society of Teachers in Family Medicine (STFM) President's Award. Waits served as co-chair of the STFM's Family Medicine Cases Project Development Group, which was tasked to merge, organize and clarify available curricular guides into a grid of topics, goals and objectives. Last year, each member of the group authored an online case and edited four to five more cases. The group's 29 cases are now in the final stages of editing, and pilot testing will take place during the current academic year. The four cases created by Waits include: How to Integrate fmCASES into your Clerkship; Wikis and Blogs and Tweets! Oh My! Web 2.0 in Medical Education; Web-based Virtual Patient Cases for the Family Medicine Clerkship; and A Pilot Year for fmCASES, Virtual Patient Cases for the Family Medicine Clerkship.

College Faculty, Residents Receive Argus Awards

Faculty and residents of the College received 2009 Argus Society Awards, which are given by The University of Alabama School of Medicine to recognize outstanding service to medical education. The College is the Tuscaloosa branch campus of the University's School of Medicine, which is headquartered in Birmingham. Those recognized from the College include:

Best Clinical Instructor – A. Robert Sheppard, MD, Department of Internal Medicine. Also nominated were Scott Arnold, MD, Department of Internal Medicine; Heather Taylor, MD, Department of Pediatrics; Mike Taylor, MD, Department of Pediatrics; and Joseph Wallace, MD, Department of Surgery.

Best Attending – Joseph Wallace, MD, Department of Surgery. Also nominated were: Ashley Evans, MD, Department of Pediatrics; Marion Reed, MD, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology; and Robert Slaughter, MD, Department of Neurology.

Best Rural Medicine Attending – John Wheat, MD, Department of Community and Rural Medicine.

Best Resident/Intern – Eric Law, MD. Also nominated were Lacy Smith, MD, and Linsey Steadman, MD.

Best Clerkship – Obstetrics and Gynecology. Also nominated were Pediatrics and Surgery.

APPOINTED

Chelley Alexander, MD

assistant dean of Graduate Medical Education for the College and chair of the Department of Family Medicine, was elected to serve as chair of the Alabama Academic Family Medicine Council for the 2009-2011 term.

Natasha Harder, MD

an assistant professor in the College's Department of Family Medicine, was named interim assistant residency director for the Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Residency.

Heather Taylor, MD

an assistant professor in the College's Department of Pediatrics, was named the Alabama Chapter Champion for the American Academy of Pediatrics Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program. The program is funded by a cooperative agreement of the

Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. Taylor's primary responsibility as Chapter Champion will be to collaborate with Alabama's Departments of Human Services and Public Health on EHDI initiatives and to provide leadership, guidance and education to other health-care providers in the state.

PRESENTED

Melissa Cox, BS,

the College's Rural Programs outreach coordinator, and Cedric Ruffin, a graduate research assistant in the Department of Community and Rural Medicine, presented an overview of some of the College's rural health outreach efforts at the 35th Annual Conference of the National Association for Rural Mental Health in June 2009 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Cox and Ruffin provided information about the health screening and prescription assistance services provided from a mobile unit that travels to various sites in Hale County, Alabama. Rural Medical Scholars and graduate assistants from the College, as well as University of Alabama psychology students, staff the van. The outreach program was initiated in 2008 by the West Alabama Mental Health Center in partnership with the Alabama Rural Action Commission, The University of Alabama and local agencies. The center is a primary partner in the Bristol Myers-Squibb Foundation's "Coalition for a Healthier Black Belt" project. The Rural Medical Scholars Program is part of the Rural Health Leaders Pipeline, a sequence of programs operated by the Department of Community and Rural Medicine that seeks to prepare students for rural health service.

Pamela Foster, MD, MPH,

deputy director of the College's Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science and an assistant professor in the Department of Community and Rural Medicine, led a discussion titled "Ten Things African-Americans Should Know about HIV/AIDS" as part of a community conversation series sponsored by

The University of Alabama Black Faculty and Staff Association. Foster, who is also vice president of the association, started the discussion series to educate students about vital social issues. According to Foster, whose research efforts focus on HIV/AIDS, the Deep South has the fastest growing number of HIV/AIDS cases in the United States and many of those new cases are in the African-American population.

PUBLISHED

Daniel Avery, MD, FACOG, FACS,

chair of the College's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, co-authored with Gabriel H. Hester, Rane McLaughlin and Gregory E. Skipper "Medical Student Substance Abuse Intervention: A Case Report and Literature Review," accepted for publication in the *Journal of Medical Licensure and Discipline*; and co-authored with Daniel M. Avery III, Marion D. Reed, Jason M. Parton and E. Eugene Marsh "Back and Neck Pain in Gynecologists," accepted for publication in the *American Journal of Clinical Medicine*.

Pamela Foster, MD, MPH,

deputy director of the College's Rural Health Institute for Clinical and Translational Science and an assistant professor in the Department of Community and Rural Medicine, co-authored with L. Ayanwale, E. Moorer, H. Shaw, T. Habtemariam, V. Blackwell, H. Findlay, B. Tameru, D. Nganwa, A. Ahmad, G. Beyene, and V. Robnett "Perceptions of HIV and Prevention Education Among Inmates of Alabama Prisons," published in the *American Journal of Health Studies*.

Heather Taylor, MD,

an assistant professor in the College's Department of Pediatrics, authored a case study on Neurocutaneous Melanosis accepted for publication in March 2010 in the "Index of Suspicion" section of *Pediatrics in Review*.

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		15-19	Safe Spring Break & The Big Bed Project
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