Welcome to the Center on Aging Newsletter!

The Center on Aging is a research, service, and education center at the Medical University of South Carolina. On December 3, 1987 we were approved by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education as the oldest research center at the University. The Healthy Aging work group, which also functions as the Internal Advisory Board for the Center on Aging, was instituted by the president of MUSC, Dr. Greenberg, and began its work on a new strategic plan in the beginning of 2002. The hard work of this committee resulted in a revised strategic plan for MUSC. The overall vision of the Healthy Aging work group was to “establish a plan that addresses MUSC’s role in promoting the health, increasing longevity, and improving the quality of life of senior South Carolinians.”

The Center on Aging is engaged in both educational and research activities related to healthy aging and age-related disease. We have been engaged in many interesting activities, from teaching children about our brain during "Brain Awareness Week" to participating as delegates to the South Carolina Summit on Aging and the White House Conference on Aging. The hard work and dedication it took to amend the code of laws of South Carolina by establishing a loan repayment program for geriatric medicine fellows is the most impressive accomplishment of South Carolina Aging Researchers. We are the first state to accomplish this, and hope that this will attract excellent researchers and clinicians to our state. In the summer of 2006, the South Carolina Aging Research Network (SCARN) was formed to address state-wide research projects.

Aging Research is still increasing at MUSC, and we are recruiting more faculty than ever in our field. This is definitely needed, since the "baby boomer" generation has started to turn 60 last year! The success of the Center on Aging as a University entity has been made possible by a group of dedicated, focused, and interested people with the aging population of South Carolina at heart. This is especially true of the staff at Center on Aging and the Executive Committee members, who have all worked very hard and who have certainly made a difference for our aging population.

In the summer of 2007 our office will move to the 8th floor of Harborview Tower where we hope to be joined by the Alzheimer’s and Movement Disorders Programs. Please visit our website for more information. (www.musc.edu/aging)

Lotta Granholm-Bentley, PhD., D.D.S
From the Director David Bachman, MD

We are an aging population. In 2011, the “baby boom” generation will begin to turn 65. By the year 2030, it is estimated that one in every five people in the US will be 65 or older. This anticipated increase in the number of older individuals is in addition to the challenges faced by our current generation of older Americans. Just to offer a few examples:

- Americans over the age of 65 account for at least one third of the $1.3 trillion dollars spent on health care
- Of those who die of coronary artery disease, 85% are age 65 or older
- Parkinson’s disease affects one of every 100 people over age 60
- Alzheimer’s disease affects one of every 3 individuals 85 or older
- The average 75 year old has three chronic medical conditions, uses five prescription drugs, as well as multiple over the counter remedies

These statistics speak eloquently to our need to improve the education of our future physicians and clinicians in caring for older individuals. In deed, for many doctors in training today, the patients they will serve will largely be elderly. (This is not true, of course, for pediatrics and obstetrics ... but I’m not so sure about obstetrics any more!)

The goal of the Senior Mentor program is to enhance the education of our medical students in order to improve the quality of care they will provide and to maximize quality of life for their elderly patients. Although necessary, knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes alone are insufficient to improve the quality of care for elders. Effectively integrating professional knowledge and skills into practice in the clinic, hospital and nursing facility also requires a supportive environment. The Senior Mentor program offers a practical, hands-on opportunity for our students to learn about the medical, social, and psychological needs of older individuals. Our students are not providing medical care, rather they are learning health care in a “real-life laboratory”, the homes of our Senior Mentor volunteers.

We have high expectation for our medical students who participate in this program. In return for the opportunity to learn from their Senior Mentors, students are expected to be polite, punctual, respectful, and professional in all of their interactions with the Senior Mentors. In return, we ask that our Senior Mentors make themselves available as best they can for interviews, that they are candid and open in responding to students’ questions, and that they understand that the students are not authorized or qualified to offer medical advice. Students and Senior Mentors are free to develop social contacts outside of the assigned visits, but this is not required for either the students or the Senior Mentors.

We are tremendously appreciative of the wonderful cooperation of our Senior Mentors. On behalf of myself, the Center on Aging at MUSC, and all of our medical students, let me thank all of you for your generous contribution of time, energy, and enthusiasm.
Senior Mentor Spotlight

Early on Bette Fogle was asked to be a participant in the Senior Mentor Program at Bishop Gadsden by Margaret Johnson, Social Services Coordinator. In 2006 MUSC first presented the idea to Margaret and others at Bishop Gadsden and Mrs. Fogle's name immediately came up. "Bette Fogle is a very positive person and would be a great asset for the program," Margaret said. Bette Fogle is a proud and energetic participant in the Senior Mentor Program for MUSC. She is a resident of Bishop Gadsden and has lived there for eight years. She was born in Baltimore, MD but has spent most of her life in Georgetown, SC where her late husband raised two sons. After her husband's death she realized she had a great life but she was lonely. She made the decision to move to Bishop Gadsden and has flourished there.

Mrs. Fogle loves having people around her and lives life to the fullest. She has a long history of volunteering with many organizations including Hospice and the Humane Society. She still volunteers today serving on numerous committees at Bishop Gadsden attending as many events as she can. She attends exercise classes at the gym at least three times a week. Mrs. Fogle just finished doing her taxes and when I say doing her taxes...yes she does them herself. She was happy to get that behind her. Sitting right outside her back door is a golf cart that will take her all over the Bishop Gadsden campus. She enjoys gardening and is very proud of her cottage. Beautiful azaleas surround her front door along with a few chairs for relaxing.

Mrs. Fogle is a lovely person, poised and very articulate. She has six grandchildren and four great grandchildren. She is an animal lover. She recently lost her beloved poodle, Jule. Jule passed away before Christmas. Mrs. Fogle said she is very relaxed around her medical students. She looks forward to the relationship developing and very much enjoys being a part of the Senior Mentor program. Mrs. Fogle said, "I feel they will learn a lot from me. Medically speaking...I have had an interesting life. I also believe that you need to do for others and have a positive attitude."

Student Spotlight

John Bingham is a first year medical student from Anderson, SC. He attended Southern Wesleyan University as an undergraduate. Prior to attending MUSC, a wise fourth year medical student eloquently described life as a medical student to John. He said it is equivalent to "drinking water from a fire hose." There is a wealth of information and as students we are attempting to understand as much as we possibly can, though this often proves to be an overwhelming task. We are given many responsibilities and are encouraged to achieve our best. He enjoys the challenge as a student here. John is continually impressed with the level of excellence his class exhibits, not just academically, but in the efforts made towards helping the community and each other. We owe a great deal to our professors and upperclassmen, who have been instrumental in helping us adjust to the challenging curriculum and rigors of med school.

John has an excellent relationship with his grandparents, but was not certain what to expect when beginning this program. John was a bit anxious about meeting his senior mentor, Mrs. Bette Fogle, but his concerns were quickly laid to rest once they first met. John said, "Mrs. Fogle is terrific! She has such enthusiasm every time my partner, Callie Cook, and I see her. The more we learn about her, the more we discover how little we knew before. Mrs. Fogle makes it clear she sees the importance of helping medical students gain experience in the field and she certainly is one of this programs biggest advocates. I am learning a lot from her and truly appreciate her openness and honesty. She is very active in the community and always treats us as her honored guests. It will be a great day when she is our honored guest on graduation day."

In the amount of time he has been involved in the Senior Mentor Program, his perspective has absolutely changed concerning the elderly. Interacting with Mrs. Fogle and others at Bishop Gadsden has all but required John to reflect upon his own life and attitudes in ways he did not expect. This experience will enable us to have a more full perspective, which will hopefully encompass the entire patient population facing us in the near future.
Upcoming Dates to Remember:

July-December 2007: Senior Mentor Recruitment
January 2008: Student-Mentor Introductory Luncheon for Year 1 Students

Tentative Due Dates for Assignments

Year 1 Students:
- January 2008: Physiology of Aging
- April 2008: Medical History and Mental Status Exam

Year 2 Students:
- October 5, 2007: Nutrition and Exercise
- November 30, 2008: Nutrition and Exercise Follow-Up
- Spring 2008: Medication /Pharmacology

Year 3 and 4 Students:
- September 2007: Life Review
- November 2007: Fall Risk Assessment
- January 2008: Review of Senior Mentor Program

Do you know someone that would be a good Senior Mentor?
If so, nominate them for the program!
Simply call Deronda Corbin, Education Coordinator 792-3699 or email corbin@musc.edu