lifelines

BiENVENiDOS

Hispanic Health Initiative
Opening Doors to Health Care

Volume 2 • Issue 2 • Spring 2006
Each day nurses open doors to healthcare. Nurses are directly linked to important quality of life issues such as access to care, preventive health services, humanistic treatments, palliative care, rehabilitation, and recovery. Nurses truly serve as the eyes, the ears and the arms of healthcare for patients, families and communities.

Our MUSC College of Nursing excels in reaching out to the community and helping people promote their health and realize their dreams. If you look at our grants portfolio you will see that most of our clinical grants, teaching grants, and research grants are community based and involve establishing partnerships, learning collaboratively, and working to improve the quality of life of our communities.

In this issue of *Lifelines* we highlight one of our programs focused on the Hispanic community, and the ways in which we are helping to both improve access to quality healthcare for rural Hispanic women and their families, and develop the cultural competence of our nursing workforce. We also focus on some of our students, faculty and graduates who are serving another community through their engagement with various branches of the US Armed Services.

It is my belief that nurses bring unique insights and skills to community work, largely because this work embodies the essential elements of nursing practice. Such practice is not related to a nurse’s gender, ethnicity or religion. Rather it derives from a nursing model of holistic care. While this “nursing” work is often not as visibly dramatic as life-saving surgery or as mesmerizing as cutting-edge technology, our patients tell us that it is one of the most important aspects of their health and healing. Thus, it is critical that nurses continue to combine the high tech of healthcare with the high touch of community engagement, education, and empowerment.

I am proud of the contributions our faculty and students make to this effort. In each interaction with patients, families and communities, we gain insights into their world, their experiences, their needs and their dreams. Listening, advocating and acting are the interventions we teach our students, as we believe that these are the true active ingredients of health, healing and community resilience.

Gail W. Stuart, PhD, APRN, BC, FAAN
Dean and Professor
MUSC College of Nursing
featured article

**Hispanic Health Initiative**

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**lifelines** is published by the
Medical University of South Carolina
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A Growing Concern
According to the US Census Bureau, between 1990 and 2000, the number of Hispanic residents in South Carolina tripled to 95,076, or 2.4% of the population. Nationwide, South Carolina has the fourth fastest growing Hispanic population, currently estimated to be over 109,000. However, because of the fear of deportation, illegal immigrants are missing from the reported number of Hispanic residents in the state, making the actual number even greater, potentially up to 10% of the state’s population.

In South Carolina, high concentrations of Hispanic residents are found in coastal communities. The number of Hispanics seen for services at MUSC doubled in just two years (from 2001 to 2003), and reportedly about half of the population speaks little or no English. The increase in the number of Hispanic residents has been recent enough that the cultural norms and health beliefs of the Hispanic population are not well understood by health care providers. Language barriers, poverty, and cultural differences are associated with utilization of fewer preventive services, increased use of hospital emergency rooms, and less satisfaction with care among Hispanics.

“The growing Hispanic community in the Low Country mandates creative approaches that address issues of access, quality, and satisfaction with health services,” said Dr. Deborah Williamson, Associate Dean for Practice at the MUSC College of Nursing (CON) and Principal Investigator of the Hispanic Health Initiative (HHI). “We are dedicated to planning and implementing educational programs to reduce health disparities in the growing Hispanic community,” adds Dr. Charlene Pope, CON Assistant Professor and Co-Principal Investigator.

Effective Solutions
With grant funding from the Duke Endowment and the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, the Hispanic Health Initiative (HHI) is taking big steps through research and service activities to...
enable health care providers to deliver culturally sensitive and competent care to the Hispanic community in South Carolina. These projects have included maternity and infant care, domestic violence programs, breast cancer screening, school-based clinics, chronic disease management programs, and family and mental health initiatives. All of these activities respond to the mission of the CON to reduce health disparities and have resulted in a network of contacts in the Hispanic community.

“Health outreach is a primary component of the HHI,” says Jason Roberson, Program Coordinator. “We are helping the Hispanic community navigate the US health care system and learn about the primary care services that are available in the area. Also, through health fairs and educational classes, we are promoting healthy lifestyles and the importance of routine medical care.”

With the goal of achieving effective health outreach among the coastal Hispanic population, the HHI initiated and maintains a growing list of activities through health practice, contractual arrangements, health policy task forces, and research. In just a year since its inception, the program has made remarkable strides.

“We’re doing such an important job,” says Williamson. “The Hispanic community is growing very quickly, and we are striving to provide equal access to health care services for every patient in the community, as well as those who come to MUSC.”
NOTABLE HHI ACHIEVEMENTS

PATIENT OUTREACH
§ Clinic sessions established at Sea Island Medical Center providing maternity care, reproductive health services, and pediatric care to Hispanic and African American families
§ Teen Girls Group initiated at Johns Island High School to provide teens with information on sexually transmitted infections (STI) and contraceptive options
§ Relationships built between the MUSC CON and all 3 Federally Qualified Health Centers in Charleston County, which are safety net providers for residents without insurance

CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH
§ Communities in Schools, a nationwide program which promotes staying in school
§ Planned Parenthood, to teach contraceptive options and STI prevention
§ Fetter Community Health Center, to provide home visits by a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner to families in the First Steps Program
§ Medical University Hospital to provide cultural competency training for all new employees

OTHER COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES
§ Health Outreach for Language Access (HOLA), a collaborative of community organizations addressing health issues of those with limited proficiency in English
§ Migrant Task Force
§ Hollings Cancer Center Health Disparities Advisory Board

§ Needs assessment of English as a Second Language classes
§ Postpartum Focus Groups

Rural Mission Health Fair on Johns Island
This course has been specially designed for students, nurses, faculty, and staff who want to learn basic phrases, grammar, and vocabulary in Spanish related to health care. The areas of focus for the course are the following: (1) beginning conversational Spanish focusing on health, (2) pronunciation and basic grammar, (3) basic vocabulary related to healthcare, and (4) culturally competent care for Hispanic patients.

The teaching methods used in the course are based on the communicative approach to language learning; therefore students are expected to speak in Spanish during each class meeting. Class time consists of one-on-one conversations, role playing, dialogues related to the clinical setting, as well as some grammar and pronunciation exercises.

Topics of instruction include the following: assessing medical history and health risks, physical examinations and parts of the body, illnesses and diseases, equipment, and locations within the hospital. Also, students are expected to practice on a weekly basis with a classmate outside of class; this practice is essential for strengthening speaking and listening skills as the course progresses. Basic Spanish for Health Care Professionals is designed for students with little or no knowledge of Spanish, however anyone is welcome to participate.

Instructor: Jason Roberson

Jason Roberson is a Spanish interpreter and Cultural Competency Coordinator at MUSC Hospital, and he is the program coordinator for the Hispanic Health Initiative in the College of Nursing. Mr. Roberson received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish from Mercer University in 1993 and a Master’s degree in Hispanic Civilization from New York University in 1995. He is currently a doctoral candidate in Spanish Linguistics at Penn State University. Mr. Roberson has over 10 years of experience teaching Spanish at Penn State, the University of Georgia, and the College of Charleston.
In December, 2005, the MUSC Board of Trustees approved the creation of the Clinical Simulation Laboratory on the first floor of the College of Nursing. During the same month, the Comptroller General of South Carolina released $1.5 million that was appropriated in the state budget to help finance the construction of the lab. In addition to these state funds, various corporations and organizations have donated equipment and supplies.

College of Nursing classes normally held in the first floor classrooms have been relocated to other classrooms on campus in order to allow construction to begin in Spring, 2006.
In 2005, the pass rate for our 115 first-time candidates was an overwhelming 95.65%. The overall South Carolina pass rate was 88.5%, and the national pass rate was 87.29%. This rate is the highest achieved by our graduates in the past ten years. We can be proud of our programs and the quality of our faculty and students. Congratulations to all!

The Heritage Classic Foundation contributed $20,000 to the MUSC College of Nursing to fund a Simulation Manikin for the Clinical Simulation Laboratory. From left: Shelton Bosely, Chair of the Hilton Head Dean’s Advisory Board; Paula Harper Bethea, Heritage Classic Foundation Board Member; and Denise Ciccarelli, MUSC College of Nursing Director of Development.
SAVE the date!

2006 Calendar of Events

January 4    Spring Semester Begins
January 5    Stethoscope Ceremony
March 4-6    Alumni Homecoming
March 11-19  Spring Break
May 8        Summer Semester Begins
May 18       CON Convocation
May 19       MUSC Commencement
August 15    Summer Semester Ends
August 24    Stethoscope Ceremony
August 28    Fall Semester Begins
November 3   Research Day
December 8   Fall Semester Ends
December 9   Convocation

Nurses Top Gallup Poll on Honesty and Ethics

Once again, nurses got top marks when it comes to honesty and ethics, according to Gallup’s annual U.S. survey of professions released on December 5, 2005. Seventy-nine percent of Americans said nurses have “very high” or “high” ethical standards. Other health professionals, including pharmacists, physicians, and dentists, also made the list this year.
This continuing education course, offered on DVD, is designed to provide up-to-date information about basic and intermediate foot and nail care for registered nurses. It also serves as a review for the foot and nail care certification examination offered by the Wound, Ostomy, Continence Nurses Credentialing Board. Those viewing the four-part DVD will learn foot care skills that reduce complications associated with arthritis, structural deformities, diabetes, and vascular disorders. The materials covered include in-depth assessment of lower extremity arterial disease, chronic venous insufficiency, and neuropathy. A demonstration of an ankle-brachial index, as well as how to conduct an assessment and provide foot care, is offered. Information about infection control, patient education, and reducing risk factors is also discussed.

This CE opportunity was designed and produced by MUSC College of Nursing faculty who are experts in foot and wound care:
Teresa J. Kelechi, PhD, APRN-BC, CWOCN
Sally D. Stroud, EdD, APRN-BC
Phyllis A. Bonham, PhD, RN, CWOCN

For more information about the DVD course, please visit our website at www.musc.edu/nursing/departments/continuingeducation/courses.htm.

Prepare for the New Foot Care Certification Exam from your own home, and earn 5.0 nursing contact hours!
Wherever you roam...

earn your PhD in

www.musc.edu/nursing
nursing online.

“By converting to an online format, we are joining the ranks of some of the most research-intensive universities in the country.”
Dr. Elaine Amella
Director of CON Doctoral Program

In order to reach out to nurses across the state of South Carolina and beyond who are interested in a career as a research scientist or educator, the MUSC College of Nursing is moving its PhD program online.

According to Dr. Elaine Amella, Director of the CON Doctoral Program and Associate Dean for Research and Evaluation, the response to launching the online program has been enthusiastic. In fact, after two months of advertising the program, the CON has received over 120 inquiries. Currently, there are no online PhD programs in nursing in the South.

(continued on p. 14)
The existing online PhD programs all require that students spend at least one to two weeks yearly on their campus. The closest of these programs geographically is over 500 miles away, which creates a hardship for most South Carolina students and those living in the Southeast. An online doctoral program at the MUSC CON removes this barrier. Students from South Carolina and parts of Georgia, North Carolina and northern Florida can reach Charleston in less than a half-day’s car ride, thus reducing the burden of attending these on-campus residency requirements.

Nationally, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing reports that 32,617 qualified applicants for schools of nursing were not admitted in 2005 due primarily to a shortage of nurse educators. This continues a nationwide trend of students being refused admission that has almost grown exponentially: 3,600 in 2002, 15,944 in 2003, and 29,425 in 2004. Of the 32,319 RNs working in the state of South Carolina in 2003, only 563 (1.7%) were employed in schools of nursing and not all were doctorally prepared; state-wide, only 0.4% of all nurses hold a doctoral degree.

In 2003, the CON established the South Carolina MUSC Nursing Collaborative, which links six major healthcare agencies across the state, as well as several community colleges, with the goal of graduating more nurses. Implicit in this collaborative is the presence of faculty to teach future nurses; in fact, the collaborative supports salaries for new faculty lines. Yet, these faculty members must be available from the small pool of new PhD graduates.

In a survey of schools of nursing in the Southern Region (16 states and the District of Columbia), there were 306 full-time and 126 part-time faculty positions listed as unfilled, with 72 planned resignations by doctorally-prepared educators. In South Carolina alone, there are currently 32 nursing faculty vacancies. Therefore, assuring adequate numbers of doctorally-prepared nurses is the linchpin of all future nursing education efforts.

The CON has already established a leadership role in online learning and it and expects the same success in moving the doctoral program online. “The method that has worked best for our College is to take already successful programs and adapt the learning methodologies to fit this new pedagogy,” said Dr. Tara Hulsey, Associate Dean for Faculty. Dr. Hulsey, herself a pioneer in adopting online learning, promotes faculty development in the use of this learning technology. “In our experience, students are more satisfied, have greater flexibility, and are equally successful in achieving learning outcomes in web courses as in face-to-face courses,” Hulsey said. “Students are motivated to work collaboratively in outcomes-oriented coursework that builds critical thinking, the core of doctoral work.”

The teaching methodology of doctoral learning demands an interactive, seminar-style discourse. Thus, the CON plans to utilize not only the usual interactive measures afforded by online learning – chat rooms and asynchronous response – but will also integrate real-time video-conferencing that occurs over broadband lines to support the “virtual classroom” experience for the faculty and students.
simultaneously. “We believe this video-conferencing ‘virtual classroom’ will make our program unique among online doctoral programs and more accessible to learners and faculty,” stated Dr. Amella. “It was because of the continuation of the vital doctoral-level dialogue and spontaneous exchange, that the doctoral faculty supported this transition.”

Another great strength of the online doctoral program will be the linkage of students to “distance mentors,” who will be experts in the students’ geographical areas with faculty appointments through the MUSC College of Graduate Studies. These distance mentors will be a local resource for the online students and will offer research expertise in their specialty area.

New doctoral students will complete a one-week summer residency in Charleston, where they will meet the faculty, socialize, and learn the tools needed for online learning, including WebCT, EndNote, and methods of systematic review. Subsequent summer residencies will allow time for presentations, meeting with faculty mentors, and abbreviated coursework.

“In our experience, students are more satisfied, have greater flexibility, and are equally successful in achieving learning outcomes in web courses as in face-to-face courses.”

Dr. Tara Hulsey
Associate Dean for Faculty

“By converting to an online format,” Dr. Amella said, “we are joining the ranks of some of the most research-intense universities in the country.”

If you are interested in learning more about the online doctoral program, please contact the College of Nursing PhD Program at 843-792-4620 or visit online at www.musc.edu/nursing.
Biennial Convention:
The 38th Biennial Convention of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing was held November 12-16, 2005 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Marilyn Schaffner (President) and Laurie Zone-Smith (President-elect) attended the convention as delegates from the Gamma Omicron At-Large chapter. The elected honor society officers for the 2005-2007 biennium include:

President Elect - Carol Huston, RN, MSN, MPA, DPA
Vice President - Alyce Schultz, RN, PhD, FAAN
Secretary - Suzanne Prevost, RN, PhD
Treasurer - Nancy Sharts-Hopko, RN, PhD, FAAN
Director - Anna Alt-White, RN, PhD
Director - Karen Grigsby, RN, PhD

A complete list of elected officers, including those for the Regional Chapter Coordinating, Leadership Succession, and Governance Committees can be found on the website at www.gammaomicron.org. Dr. Tara Hulsey, past president of Gamma Omicron Chapter, was re-elected as Region 7 Coordinator, and Sue Haddock was elected Chair of the Regional Chapters Coordinating Committee. Linda Picard was inaugurated President of Sigma International. Her Presidential Call to Action, which emphasizes knowledge, leadership, service, and sustainability, is printed in the Sigma magazine, **Reflections on Nursing Leadership**.

Planning is already underway for the 17th International Nursing Research Congress, which will focus on evidence-based practice. The meeting will take place July 19-22, 2006, in Montréal, Canada at Le Centre Sheraton Montréal.

Induction Ceremony
The 2005 Induction Ceremony for our newest Sigma members occurred on November 17, 2005, at St. Luke’s Chapel on the MUSC Campus. Forty-six students from MUSC College of Nursing, Francis Marion University, and Charleston Southern University, as well as community leaders were inducted. The Dean of Charleston Southern University School of Nursing, Dr. Marian Larisey, delivered the keynote address. A well attended social reception followed the event at the Basic Science Building Lobby with family and friends of new inductees.

New inductees are encouraged to become leadership interns for the local chapter by contacting Laurie Zone-Smith (zonel@musc.edu). Please visit the website for resources to build and manage your career in nursing: www.nursingsociety.org/career/cmap.html.

Sigma’s Spring Conference:
The Gamma Omicron chapter hosted a conference entitled, “Come nourish your mind.... come nourish your body” at The Sanctuary in Kiawah Island, February 24 - 26, 2006. Personal well being, nutrition, permanent weight loss and lifelong vitality were topics presented by nationally recognized experts in the field, including Dr. Ann Kulze (physician, nutrient specialist, and author of *Dr. Ann’s 10 Step Diet*), Liz Mazurski (editor-in-chief of *Spa Magazine*) and Barbara Close (herbalist, aroma therapist and natural healer).

For additional information, please visit our chapter website at www.gammaomicron.org.
Hulsey Begins Second Term as Region 7 Coordinator

Dr. Tara Hulsey was elected to a second, 2-year term as Region 7 Coordinator for Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society for Nursing. Region 7 is comprised of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Puerto Rico and includes 33 chapters. Regional Coordinators were elected by regional House of Delegate members at the biennial Sigma Theta Tau International convention in Indianapolis, Indiana this past November.

Dr. Hulsey’s vision for the region is healthy, active chapters with a strong sense of connection to the other chapters in Region 7. Last term, she began work toward this goal with activities including the Chapter Leader Academy, assisting chapters with leader intern programs, encouraging collaborative conferences, and assuring the development and regular update of a Region 7 electronic newsletter.

Dr. Hulsey has held previous leadership roles in Sigma Theta Tau. She served 2 terms as President of Gamma Omicron At-Large chapter and was a member of the Biennial Convention Planning Committee. Currently, she also is serving as a Collateral Reviewer, reviewing abstracts for the Fourth International Evidence-Based Nursing Preconference and the 17th International Nursing Research Congress.

REACH 2010 in the News

Bringing Area Residents to Diabetes Conference

In November, 2005, the REACH 2010 program at the CON provided transportation for local residents to the 2005 African-American Conference on Diabetes in Columbia, SC. The conference was sponsored by the Diabetes Today Advisory Council (DTAC) and the SC DHEC Diabetes Prevention and Control Program. DTAC is a group of volunteer lay leaders and health care professionals dedicated to educating African Americans about the seriousness of diabetes and ways to control the disease. The group uses community intervention to address risk factors and offer techniques for preventing complications from diabetes.

Winner of SC 2006 Health Awards for Libraries

The CON REACH 2010 program was selected as the South Carolina winner of the 2006 Health Awards for Libraries. Congratulations to Bobbie Carlson, REACH Librarian, the entire REACH team, and community librarians. All have worked long hours on this community-based participatory research project teaching community members how to use the library and computer to access quality health information. The group will now compete with the winner from each of the 50 states for the national award given by the National Library of Medicine and National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, which will be announced in May. The group has received tremendous support from Dr. Thomas G. Basler, MUSC Library Director.
LCDR Anita E. Pollard

A former Navy nurse, Anita Pollard received her BSN from the MUSC College of Nursing in 1994 and her MSN from the University of Maryland Graduate School of Nursing in 1998. Ms. Pollard has been in the United States Public Health Service since 1999 and has spent the past five years working as a Nurse Consultant for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in Boston.

During the tumultuous hurricane season in the Gulf Coast in 2005, Pollard was deployed with the Hurricane Rita Medical Team to College Station, TX, where the Large Veterinary Animal Hospital of Texas A&M University was converted into a temporary hospital for nearly 400 evacuees from coastal Texas nursing homes. For four days she performed physical assessments and provided nutrition and comfort for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease. Pollard was later transferred to the VA Medical Center in Waco to care for 170 infant, adult, and geriatric patients.

Lieutenant Commander Pollard has also participated in medical mission trips to the Dominican Republic, with Mercy Ships International and the Massachusetts Nurses Association (2005), Hurricane Frances Medical Relief (2004), and the World Trade Center Disaster Relief (2001).

Nancee S. Sneed, PhD, APRN, BC, ANP

Like many young women, Dr. Nancee Sneed, Professor Emeritus at the MUSC College of Nursing, was unsure of her future. As a young student nurse, she was overwhelmed with schoolwork, struggled with money, and felt insecure over not knowing what lay ahead. Lured by the prospect of a guaranteed job after school, and more importantly a paycheck while in school, Dr. Sneed decided to join the Army Student Nurse Program in 1965. The program paid her a salary during her last year of school, while also guaranteeing her a job for two years afterwards.

Upon graduation, Dr. Sneed was stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where she served as a staff nurse. While she had hoped for a position in pediatrics, she was instead placed on a medical-surgical unit. There she saw many patients returning from Vietnam who were stricken with tropical diseases, and new recruits ill with the flu and meningitis.

Towards the end of her two years, Dr. Sneed was working in the hospital one day when a man had a heart attack. At the time, CPR was not traditionally taught to nurses, and she was unsure of what to do. This incident made her realize that she wanted to learn more, and led her to a future career in cardiovascular nursing.
Mary Martin, DNS, ARNP
Dr. Mary Martin is currently an Assistant Professor and Director of the Graduate Program at the MUSC College of Nursing. She joined the Army Reserve when she was 35, after she earned her PhD in Nursing. Commissioned as a major, she was stationed with the 337th General Hospital unit at Fort Benjamin in Harrison, Indiana. Years later, Dr. Martin found herself intrigued by the idea of being a flight nurse, and she made an inter-service transfer, leaving the Army and joining the Air Force. In January, 1986, she attended flight nurse school at Brooke Air Force Base in Texas.

Dr. Martin’s Air Force Reserve career took her to Spain, where she served as the Chief of Aeromedical Nursing Operations during Desert Storm. In 1996, Dr. Martin began serving in the Air Force full-time, working at the Pentagon as the Director of the Medical Liaison Office for the Air Force Reserve. As the first nurse to hold this position, she drew from her patient advocate role to solve health problems and health policy issues for Air Force Reservists throughout the country. Dr. Martin also continued her nursing practice by helping patients with stress related issues in two military clinics in the Pentagon.

Throughout her impressive military career, Dr. Martin also built a successful academic career, teaching at Georgetown University and the University of Tampa, and serving as the Dean of the Mary Black School of Nursing in Spartanburg, SC.

Cpt. Kevin Gormley
Kevin Gormley, a Master’s in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing student, began his military career after seeing an Army commercial depicting soldiers in Hawaii and other exotic places around the world. After signing on as an Infantry Private, he moved to Hawaii, just like the commercial promised him. After volunteering at the base clinic and seeing what the nurses did, he knew his college career would focus on nursing. By chance, Kevin met Major General Clara Adams-Ender, administrator for the Army Enlisted Commissioning Program. After a lot of hard work and persistence, Kevin became the first person to be accepted into the program after only one year of service.

Specialist Gormley later earned his BSN at Columbus State University and became the Medical/Surgical Pediatric Charge Nurse at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. However, having an interest in the mind-body connection his whole life, he really wanted to try his hand at psychiatric nursing. He was accepted into the Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Course for the Army, after which he was transferred to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC as a psychiatric nurse.

It was this time that really helped Kevin to focus on psychiatric nursing. During his time at Walter Reed, he treated many of those injured during the September 11th attacks. His pride and dedication to his job were evident throughout the hospital, because in 2003, Captain Gormley received one of the most prestigious jobs in the Army Nurse Corps. He became the Presidential Nurse, treating the President of the United States, Heads of States, Congressmen, Diplomats, and other high ranking officials. Captain Gormley continues to serve his country in the Army Nurse Corps while he is attending the MUSC College of Nursing, and is anticipating graduation in May 2006.
Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee and South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford visited an AME community health fair at Mother Emmanuel AME Church held as part of a four-year-old partnership between the Medical University of South Carolina and the AME church. The governors were welcomed by the Rt. Reverend Preston W. Williams II, Presiding Prelate, and MUSC President Dr. Ray Greenberg. Both Huckabee and Sanford are champions for health improvement efforts. Governor Huckabee created the Healthy Arkansas initiative to encourage Arkansans to stop smoking, exercise more, and eat healthier. He now has expanded that effort to the Healthy America program, which is his initiative as chairman of the National Governor’s Association (NGA). The health fair was the first in a series of visits Huckabee is making to various states to learn about efforts that could be duplicated across the country. Huckabee said he visited South Carolina first because the Healthy South Carolina initiative fits that profile.

The Health-e-AME Faith-Based Physical Activity Program aims to promote positive attitudes toward exercise and increase the number of AME members who participate in organized physical activities. The AME church represents almost 23% of African Americans in South Carolina. A recent survey revealed that 87% of adult members have at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Overweight/obesity and lack of moderate exercise are the most prevalent problems. This CDC-funded program is a joint effort with the Department of Exercise Science at the Arnold School of Public Health at USC.

The award from the National Governors’ Association was presented to Rosetta Swinton, RN, BSN, President Elect for the South Carolina Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity and Director of Health for the Seventh Episcopal District of the AME Church in SC (609 churches). Marilyn Laken, PhD, RN, is the Principal Investigator of the project. More information about the Health-e-AME project is available at www.health-e-ame.com.


**Dr. Elaine Amella** was elected Governing Board Member of the Southern Nursing Research Society (SNRS) and received the prestigious SNRS 2006 Hartford Institute Geriatric Nursing Award.

The *American Journal of Maternal Child Nursing* awarded its 2005 Research Paper of the Year Award to Drs. Maureen R. Keefe, Gail A. Barbosa, Ann Froese-Fretz, and Marie Lobo for “An Intervention Program for Families with Irritable Infants.”

**Dr. Janet Grossman** was one of nine national trainers in suicide prevention selected by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

**Dr. Barbara Haight**, Professor Emeritus, received the *American Journal of Nursing* Book of the Year award for *Burnside’s Working with Older Adults: Group Process and Techniques, 4th Ed.*, which she co-edited with Faith Gibson.

**Ms. Dianna Inman** will represent the College as Nurse of the Year for the Charleston Organization of Nurse Executives.

**Dr. Carolyn Jenkins** was recognized for her community service by being inducted into the Delta Omega Society, an honorary public health society, and is also Chair-Elect of the American Association of Diabetes Educators Public Health Practice.

**Ms. Georgette Smith, Dr. Marilyn Laken, and Dr. Lynne Nemeth** have been selected to receive the 2006 Palmetto Gold Award for Excellence in Nursing. The awards will be presented at the Palmetto Gold Gala on April 22, 2006, in Columbia.

**Ms. Georgette Smith** was awarded the South Carolina Nurses Association Excellence in Clinical Practice Award.

**Ms. Janet Stevens** was elected Chair of the Charleston County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Council.

**Dr. Gail Stuart** gave the keynote presentation and a workshop in a national conference on Promoting Choice and Nurse Prescribing in Staffordshire, England on November 21, 2005.

The *American Journal of Nursing* selected **Dr. Gail Stuart**’s *Principles and Practice of Psychiatric Nursing, 8th Ed.*, as its Book of the Year for Psychiatric Nursing. This is the fourth time that her book has received this prestigious honor.
For 25 years, Dr. Elaine Amella has worked with the elderly. “I really love history, and as a nurse, I love talking to older people,” she said. “My early nursing career was in the New York City area, and I heard stories from immigrants. I felt as though I was hearing history coming alive before me.”

As the Associate Dean for Research and Evaluation at the MUSC College of Nursing, Amella continues to work with the elderly, focusing on patients with dementia and their caregivers. In particular, Amella is studying mealtimes and the interaction between caregivers and the dementia patient.

“Mealtime is the most social of all care (types) people perform,” Amella said. “Eating with someone is a social event people usually look forward to. It’s the one time someone will sit, talk with you, and provide social interaction.”

Amella’s research is geared toward helping family members preserve or alter the context of mealtimes. People with dementia have cognitive and function impairments and can be easily distracted while eating. She helps the family construct a mealtimes environment that includes the appropriate equipment, such as special utensils, and eliminate added stimulation.

She teaches the caregiver to be flexible, paying attention to the patients and their needs. “Because the person can’t speak, they are often treated like an object rather than a person,” Amella said. “That’s why mealtimes is good for interaction.”

Amella will be finishing her current NINR funded research on mealtimes interaction in about six months. She plans to turn her work into training for home health and hospice nurses through a brochure and video. The Geriatric Education Center at MUSC plans to include the video on its web site.

“It’s the best kind of research because we can bring it to where people’s needs are,” she said.

Amella, with help from an undergraduate research assistant, continues to look for innovative ways to recruit research subjects. Her next phase of research, obesity and aging, has grown out of living in South Carolina for seven years, where obesity and the health problems it causes are significant issues.

“It’s not that people who are obese don’t live long lives,” she explained. “If someone is disabled but very heavy, it’s a major issue for the caregivers.”

Often people who are obese age prematurely and are more prone to arthritis and heart disease. Amella’s research will address ways caregivers can deal with this situation.

“In a way, it’s not research that’s going to change the world,” Amella said of her work, “but it’s about quality of life for the person and the caregiver.”

Elaine Amella received the Health Care Hero: Health Care Researcher award from the Charleston Regional Business Journal.
When Georgette “Gigi” Smith’s sister was diagnosed with cancer as a child, the nurses were the ones who helped her survive the surgeries and chemotherapy. Seeing how they helped her sister and supported her parents prompted Smith to pursue a career in pediatric nursing.

“I’ve tried to be that kind of role model,” she said. “It made such a difference to my family.” Years later, Smith is helping families whose children have epilepsy.

Smith started her career as a nurse practitioner working with children but decided she needed more education to better understand the mental health and psychology of children with diseases. Therefore, she earned a Master’s of Science in Nursing degree in Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing from Columbia University in New York.

About 15 years ago, Smith developed an interest in children with epilepsy, and about 12 years ago, she was recruited to join the Medical University of South Carolina Children’s Hospital epilepsy program.

“I try to help families realize what they can do and that this illness is not their life, but just a part of their life,” Smith said.

Dr. David Griesemer, professor of neurosciences and pediatrics, praised Smith’s work: “Because of her skill in dealing with the personal, emotional, and social aspects of the (epileptic) condition, as well as the medical and pharmacological aspects, Gigi has often been favored by parents as the member of our medical team best suited to care for their child. Her dedication to patients results in the highest possible quality of care for the children and adolescents that we see.”

Smith and others in the neurosciences division, with help from the Epilepsy Foundation, have been planning bi-annual conferences for people with epilepsy and their families since 1995. The conferences usually rotate between Charleston and Columbia.

Smith started teaching at MUSC’s College of Nursing two years ago and said she feels privileged to influence the next generation of nurses and nurse practitioners.

Smith is also working on research related to epilepsy in South Carolina. She is co-investigator on two Centers for Disease Control research projects. The first, South Carolina Epidemiological Study on Epilepsy and Seizure Disorders, is assessing the incidence and prevalence of epilepsy in South Carolina.

The second project, South Carolina Health Outcomes Project on Epilepsy, or SC HOPE, will address the health outcomes of people with epilepsy in South Carolina. “We hope to affect change in the state,” Smith said.

“People with neurological diseases are underserved in South Carolina,” she explained. “There are also issues of public transportation because people who have seizures can’t drive.”

Part of this research will also determine how children with epilepsy are being treated; specifically, are older medications and less advanced treatments being used? “Definitely there is a lot to figure out in order to determine the next step for families and children,” she said.

Gigi Smith received the Health Care Hero: Nursing award from the Charleston Regional Business Journal.
For the past 10 years, Dr. Teresa Kelechi has been studying ways to use skin temperature to prevent venous ulcers, which are caused by poor vein circulation.

The ulcers are associated with aging, having two or more babies, prolonged standing, obesity, or blood clots in the legs.

“Veins are like a garden hose,” Kelechi said. “If you don’t relieve pressure, the hose will develop holes and leak. The same concept applies to veins; when pressure is applied, blood can leak into the skin. The skin becomes damaged, and ulcers form.”

By taking the skin’s temperature, normally around the ankles, a person can look for changes outside the normal temperature range that would indicate the potential for skin ulcers.

Depending on the causes—maybe blood clots or poor valves in the veins—the ulcers could be prevented. Special stockings, elevating the legs, good skin care and exercises that pump blood through the calves are ways to help prevent skin ulcers, Kelechi explained.

“Those four things together can prevent ulcers,” she said, “but, like anything, they have limitations.”

So Kelechi wants to give people a way to monitor their own skin using an infrared thermometer. Such thermometers are in use by people with diabetic foot problems, but Kelechi wants to apply the technology to the mass market.

But Kelechi has more research to complete. She is still studying whether skin temperature will indeed predict the likelihood of skin ulcers as she suspects. The thermometers are FDA approved but not readily available.

“I hope in five years this will be well studied and mass marketed,” she said.

In addition to her research in wound care, Kelechi teaches undergraduate and graduate students. She works to link her research and experience with patient care to her teaching to make learning exciting for the students.

Her graduate students often assist Kelechi with her research; other students work with her at the foot clinic at MUSC’s Diagnostic Center.

Teresa Kelechi was a finalist for the Health Care Hero: Health Care Researcher award, presented by the Charleston Regional Business Journal.
The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Bureau of Primary Health Care supports community health centers across the United States to provide comprehensive health care to over 13 million Americans, primarily those with low incomes. The agency began a program of quality improvement a few years ago that utilizes the Breakthrough Series led by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. A series of collaboratives was organized, focused on improving clinical care for chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma, and depression. Each collaborative team is composed of professionals from several disciplines and led by a physician with expertise in the area of interest. Evidence-based practice guidelines are proposed and tested by a few select community health centers in states with high prevalence of that condition. The aim is to test approaches to integrating evidence-based practice into the ongoing care of the community health centers.

In 2004, a new collaborative was proposed that did not fit the chronic care model. The Perinatal and Patient Safety Pilot Collaborative aims to improve access to quality perinatal care and patient outcomes. In light of the fact that nurses are key to perinatal outcomes and that systems of care, such as the hospital, are critical to patient safety, two Chairs were appointed to this collaborative, one nurse and one physician. Dr. Marilyn Laken from the MUSC College of Nursing was selected as the nurse co-chair in light of her expertise in improving access to perinatal care and her knowledge of community outreach and health systems. Dr. Haywood Brown, chair of Ob/Gyn at Duke University, is the physician co-chair. The Collaborative completed its preliminary work in February, 2006, and a meeting was held in March, 2006 to review the lessons learned from all of the collaboratives and to make recommendations to the Bureau for further work and adoption of new practice guidelines.
Stacey Seipel: Accelerated Student, Accelerated Career

Stacey Seipel is finishing her second semester of coursework in the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program. Early in her curriculum, she distinguished herself as an outstanding student and leader.

Stacey is an articulate person filled with energy and enthusiasm, and she is clearly passionate about becoming a nurse. Probably the most impressive aspect of this young woman is the rich background she brings to her future career in nursing. Having previously earned a bachelor’s degree in Visual Arts Education from Ball State University in 2001, this is Stacey’s second career. Or third, or maybe fourth. It’s easy to lose count with this accomplished student.

After college, Stacey moved to Monteverde, Costa Rica, where she taught English and art to children at the Centro de Educación Creativa. Fluent in Spanish, she also taught English as a Second Language (ESL) to her students’ parents, teachers, and other adults. Because teachers in Costa Rica made only $300 per month on average, Stacey also worked as a waitress at a local restaurant to make ends meet.

Right after the national tragedy on September 11, 2001, a close family member was diagnosed with cancer. Unsure of the future of international travel and wanting to spend more time with her relative, Stacey returned to Ohio, where she began working as an ESL teacher at International Language Plus in Cincinnati. In addition, she also became the Income Development Manager for the American Cancer Society, where she managed large-scale fundraising events.

“Working with doctors and nurses in the hospital environment was a pivotal point for me,” Stacey explains. “Of all the medical professionals, I realized that the nurses were the most involved in volunteer activities through the American Cancer Society, and they were the closest to their patients.”

Coincidentally, her twin sister was a student in the Accelerated BSN program at the University of Cincinnati. Her work experience and her sister’s enthusiasm for nursing school set the wheels turning in Stacey’s mind, and she decided to leave Ohio for the sunny beaches of Charleston.

Shortly after getting settled in Charleston and teaching art at an elementary school in Hollywood, SC, Stacey enrolled at the MUSC College of Nursing in the Spring of 2005. Originally interested in oncology nursing, she now wants to pursue a master’s degree and work as a nurse practitioner in community health.

“In Monteverde, Costa Rica, there were no paved roads and very few cars. Patients had a 3-4 hour bus ride to the nearest clinic to...
get health care. I wished I knew how to do something to improve access for them.”

Very soon she will. While she’s in school now, Stacey is working with the College of Nursing Hispanic Health Initiative to research how Spanish speaking people view their access to health care in South Carolina. When she finishes her education, she’d like to go abroad again, perhaps back to Costa Rica, to help set up clinics and deliver health care to those who need it most.

Doctoral Student Receives Sharon Davies Memorial Award

Doctoral student Berry Anderson was awarded $9,608 from the Freedom From Fear organization to compare quality of life measurements with qualitative interviews from patients about their perceptions of living, adapting, and coping with a new treatment for depression, vagus nerve stimulation (VNS). VNS therapy is delivered by a pulse generator and thin, flexible wires that send mild pulses to the vagus nerve in the left side of the neck. The vagus nerve delivers these pulses to the areas of the brain involved in the regulation of mood. VNS has only been studied for a relatively short period of time, and little is known about its effectiveness in a clinical setting and patients’ perceptions of its effects on their depression.

Depression is a serious illness associated with symptoms that are often severe and disabling. In any year, 9.5 percent of the population, or about 18.8 million American adults, suffer from a depressive illness. VNS is a long-term therapy that can deliver stimulation for 5-6 years and is likely a cost-efficient treatment for treatment resistant depression.

The Sharon Davies Memorial Awards Grant was established in 2003 in memory of Sharon Davies, a psychiatric nurse, researcher, and staunch advocate for those who suffer from mental illnesses.
I received my BSN from MUSC in May of 1995 and readily accepted a position in Roper Rehabilitation Hospital as a staff nurse. I was eager to take this position for several reasons. The first was that I knew my preceptor would be Sallie O’Brien, also an MUSC graduate (BSN ’74, MSN ’90), who had hired and mentored me as a student nurse extern on Roper’s orthopedic unit. The second reason was my naïve view that rehabilitation was not quite as “medically complicated” (read as “scary” for a new grad) as the big med/surg floors (I have since revised that perception!).

I grew to love the specialty of physical rehabilitation and developed a particular fondness for working with spinal cord injured patients. Not only was I responsible for teaching these patients the various skills and techniques required to live with a spinal cord injury (SCI), but I also felt a sincere duty to help these individuals find the spark that would give them the drive and determination to continue to live a full, productive and satisfying life. I rarely saw this spark fully ignite in the rehabilitation hospital. The patients were generally so overwhelmed by the new injury and the things we were asking them to do in rehab, I don’t think they had a lot of time to really think about life outside the rehab hospital. Unfortunately, at that time, I limited myself to the confines of the world of inpatient rehabilitation and never saw how these patients fared once we discharged them and they ventured out into the community.

After about eight years in the rehab hospital, I needed to find a new challenge. I was exploring the MUSC website one day and found information on the new BSN to PhD program. I knew immediately that this was the path for me. I initially entered this program with the ultimate goal of becoming a nursing faculty member somewhere, as I had always enjoyed the role of teacher and mentor to new nurses in the rehab hospital. I had no idea how much this program would peak my interest in the blossoming field of nursing research.

When I entered the program, many wise people advised me to choose an area of research interest, stick with it, and build upon it as I moved through the program. Naturally, I chose spinal cord injury rehabilitation. For the first several semesters, I explored different areas related to SCI rehab, such as preventing the secondary complications that can occur after SCI and injury prevention in the adolescent driver population. I have finally settled on exploring the issue of community integration of persons surviving SCI. Community
integration addresses returning to the mainstream of community life and being able to carry out the roles and responsibilities that are considered the “norm” for a person of a specific age, gender or culture, with the added challenge of a new permanent physical disability. Research implemented with the goal of improving the lives of persons with SCI must reflect the demands of living in their environment of choice and engaging in activities that are of importance to them.

Approximately four years ago, I attended an Equine Expo in Georgia and had the pleasure of seeing Michael Richardson lead one of the training seminars. This cowboy was riding his horse without bit, bridle or reins. He galloped his horse from one end of the arena to the other, sliding to a stop, spinning his horse around and taking off in the other direction. He carried a stick in each hand that he used to touch his horse lightly to cue him what to do. This performance became even more incredible to me when I learned that this cowboy was paraplegic (paralyzed from the waist down). In 1986, he was in a Jeep rollover accident that almost ended his life and left him with a spinal cord injury.

Michael seemed to be doing the impossible. Anyone who has ever ridden a horse knows how essential your legs are to riding, and yet here he was, with flaccid and lifeless legs, doing things on horseback that are challenging for able-bodied riders. Michael had found a way to continue doing something he loves and leads a fulfilling life, even with physical limitations.

Watching Michael ride struck a chord with me because he embodied the spark that I hoped to ignite in the patients with whom I have worked as a rehab nurse. Be creative. If there is something you really want to do, it may be possible, and you just have to be willing to be resourceful and innovative. An essential element of rehabilitation nursing is the maintenance of hope. I never tell my paralyzed patients that they will never walk again; one never knows what the future holds and when the seemingly impossible will become possible. Michael Richardson loved horses, wanted to ride again and found a way to make that happen.

Many scientists are working diligently, trying to discover a “cure” for spinal cord injury. Until that cure is discovered, we are compelled to consider the environment in which the disabled person lives and how this environment affects his or her quality of life. The key questions to ask are, “What are you not able to do that you would like to be doing?” and “What keeps you from doing it?” My job as a rehabilitation nurse and future spinal cord injury rehabilitation researcher is to help survivors of SCI answer these questions and find the means that allow them to live their lives as they desire.

The occurrence of a spinal cord injury is always a tragedy, and individuals who find inventive ways to live with their disability will always amaze me. Christopher Reeve was an inspiration to many and greatly heightened public awareness of spinal cord injury. Michael Richardson rides his horses. Both men had a spirit of determination and the availability of necessary resources.

It seems safe to say that most survivors of SCI do not want to be public figures or ride horses. Most just want to regain a sense of normalcy in their lives, return to school or work. While there have been continuing advancements in the acute medical management and rehabilitation of SCI, the success rate of returning newly disabled individuals to pre-injury activities has been much less impressive. I want to find ways to improve that record and make sure that the spark of determination that I hope to ignite in SCI patients in the rehab hospital becomes a wildfire.
College of Nursing alumni are living and working around the world. The Alumni Association is interested in hearing from you and making you a part of our organization. Regular alumni dues and life membership dues help finance activities for alumni and students. Activities include alumni gatherings and publications, career mentoring, student “lunch and learns,” and alumni and student recognition awards.

One priority activity for the College of Nursing Alumni Association is presenting five $1500 scholarships to selected students enrolled in the baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral programs. These scholarships are named for former deans Ruth Chamberlin and Elizabeth Mills, current dean Gail Stuart, Vietnam War heroine Elizabeth Ann Jones, and nursing leader Irene Dixon. Alumni dues help support this important scholarship program.

In addition, membership in the Alumni Association gives graduates access to the Find-A-Friend Program and other benefits such as Charleston area lodging discounts, off-season/short-notice travel discounts, alumni gift shop discounts, and some check-out privileges at the MUSC Library. To learn more about these programs, request your copy of the “For Members Only” booklet from the MUSC Office of Alumni Affairs by calling toll free 1-888-202-9306.

The College of Nursing Alumni Association invites all graduates of the MUSC College of Nursing Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Nursing, and PhD degree programs to become dues-paying members. Dues for the College of Nursing Alumni Association are $20 annually and are assessed on a fiscal year basis (July 1-June 30). Dues are billed by mail. Life memberships are available at $300. Dues for an alumnus over 60 years of age who has retired from active nursing are $10. Members of each newly graduated class are afforded one year’s free membership in the association. Questions about dues should be directed to Anna Skipper at (843) 792-4276 or via e-mail at skippera@musc.edu.

The members of the Alumni Board have been very busy. In December 2005, members attended the MUSC Joint Board meeting, which provided a networking opportunity and a chance to share our activities and plans with Alumni Board members from other colleges.

I was proud to present Jennifer Fox, the 2005-2006 student representative for the Board, with the Alumni Award at the December Convocation. Jennifer is an outstanding student and most worthy candidate for this prestigious award.

The Outstanding Alumnus Award committee had the challenging task of selecting a worthy recipient for the 2006 award. This year, the committee received multiple nominations and decided to honor 3 candidates: Mary Wilbur for achievements in clinical nursing; Ginger Breedlove for her contributions to nursing education; and Suzanne Prevost for her outstanding work in nursing research. Thanks to committee co-chairs, Waverly Rogers and Vicki Hoover-Daniel, for their hard work.

Homecoming 2006 was a great success. The oyster roast was enjoyed by 130 alumni, spouses, and friends, and we raised $4,689 through ticket sales and the Silent Auction. Auction donations included a wedding cake, jewelry, paintings, gift certificates, and a wide variety of other gifts. The reunion class gift was over $6,300. We sincerely appreciate all of the donors who support our College.

My term of office as President is quickly coming to an end, and I would like to thank the Board for all of their contributions this year. Congratulations to Linda Lewis, the President-Elect, and the new officers, and best wishes for next year!

Sincerely,

Florence Simmons
CON Alumni Association President
Alumni Homecoming Open House and Silent Auction
**College of Nursing Alumni Association**

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Please make check payable to the MUSC Alumni Association and return to:
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**What’s New with You?**

We’d love to hear from you and share your news with other MUSC College of Nursing alumni. You can send your information to the College of Nursing via e-mail at Longm@musc.edu or complete the form below and return it to:

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Alumni Association
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