

The nursing and dental hygiene programs in the School of Nursing and Health Professions have teamed up this semester to care for the oral health needs of critically ill patients at Deaconess Hospital in Evansville.

The collaboration allows nursing and dental hygiene students to share their expertise. Nursing students learn more in-depth knowledge of oral care; dental hygiene students learn about patient needs and hospital protocol.

Deborah L. Carl, program director of dental hygiene; Gale Hoehn, instructor in nursing; and Phyllis Maddox, assistant professor of dental hygiene, developed this semester's pilot program. They plan to expand the project next semester, giving nursing and dental hygiene students more time together in the hospital setting.

Most of the persons receiving the oral care are oncology/respiratory patients who are immuno-suppressed, making them more susceptible to infections.

"This can be due to their chemotherapy or illness or both," Carl said. "Because they have a lot of pain in the mouth, they are often not practicing good oral care. Any infection can compromise the treatment outcome."

Hoehn supervises the nursing and dental hygiene students each Friday at the hospital. The dental hygiene students participate in a pre-conference with nursing students to learn about the patients before making their

rounds. Participation is optional for the patients.

The experience has made Aimee Ogle, a dental hygiene student, more aware of the needs of people in the hospital. "We do an oral exam to see what kinds of problems they're having. We go through with them how to brush and floss. For those who have dry mouth, there are special rinses and toothpastes that we recommend," she said.

The Welborn Foundation of Evansville has awarded two grants totalling more than \$200,000 to the School of Nursing and Health Professions. One grant program involves assessing the need and interest that area businesses have in implementing worksite wellness programs; the other is a program to promote screening awareness for breast and cervical cancer for African-American women.

Katie Valadares joined the School of Nursing and Health Professions in December as coordinator of the Worksite Link to Wellness program, which received a \$65,000 grant for a six-month pilot program. She earned a master's degree in social work from St. Louis University and an M.B.A. from Webster University. Prior to joining USI, she had practice administration in the St. Louis area.

Pilot worksite wellness programs are now in progress at five area businesses or non-profit organizations following focus group research with 30 business leaders.

Valadares said the focus groups included representatives from businesses that had a wide range of experience with worksite wellness. Some already had implemented or were developing a program; others simply had an interest in learning how to begin. The focus groups included both profit-making businesses and non-profit organizations.

Businesses or organizations chosen for the pilot program have an

Dean's Notes

Measuring and improving community health

Recently, in a national publication, the Evansville-Vanderburgh County community received an unfavorable ranking as a community with unhealthy women's lifestyles. This report purported to use 30 factors in its assessment of women's health. Included in their measurements were diet, exercise, smoking, obesity, depression, teen pregnancies, cancer, and average life expectancy. While the scientific merit and basis for the ranking in this report is suspect at best, it does call attention to the need for valid community health indicators and the impact of healthy lifestyles on health.

Efforts to measure the health status of the Evansville community began in the mid '90s when local hospitals funded a community health audit. The report indicated that major health care savings could be accomplished in the Evansville community if more healthy lifestyles were adopted by residents. The Partnership for Health Care Information, composed of Deaconess Hospital, St. Mary's Medical Center, Tri-State Business Group on Health and the University of Southern Indiana has continued the reporting of area health-care data. The United Way, St. Mary's Medical Center, Deaconess Hospital,

Program Notes

Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene

Dental sealant clinic

Dental hygiene students held the annual dental sealant clinic for fifth grade students from Cedar Hall and Howard Roosa Elementary Schools in April. This is the 10th year for this event which serves almost 75 children each year. The program began in 1993 with Cedar Hall children and was expanded in 1999 to include Howard Roosa. Since 1993, 361 children have been treated and more than 2,500 sealants have been placed.

Clinics and reviews

Junior dental hygiene students provided continuing education opportunities for community dental hygienists when they presented scientific table clinics and periodontal case reviews at the April 10 meeting of the Ohio Valley Dental Hygienists' Association. The clinics and reviews were developed as a part of clinical and classroom experiences.

Health Services

Graduate program

Members of the first class in the graduate program for health administration were on campus February 22-23 for presentations and classes.

Most of the instruction in this program is delivered on the Internet. Students convene on campus several

times during the semester on Friday evenings and Saturdays, a schedule that allows them to fit the master's program into their professional lives.

The speaker for the Friday evening session in February was Sister Ann Bremmer, chief operating officer for St.

Francis Medical Center in Pittsburgh. Her topic was the future of faith-based health care. She also was involved in student activities on Saturday.

Kevin Valadares, assistant professor of health services and health administration, said the combination of Internet and on-campus instruction has proven effective. When the students are on campus, they are involved in presentations, debates, and group activities.

Applications for the fall class are now being accepted. See the Master of Health Administration Web site at www.usi.edu/gradstud/healthadministration.asp, or contact Carol Hermes, program director of health services, at 812/465-1183 or hermes@usi.edu.

Minor in public health

A minor in public health is now available. Four of the courses in the 21-hour program were developed for Internet delivery by Dr. Otis Stanley, an adjunct faculty member in the School of Nursing and Health Professions. He became associated with USI in 1997 after retiring from the U.S. Army as a colonel and chief of medical training for the Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Stanley holds doctoral degrees in public health and veterinary science.



Sister Ann Bremmer, right, discusses faith-based health-care issues with Carol Hermes, USI program director of health services.

Nursing

Completion Ceremony

The Nursing Completion Ceremony for graduate students will be Sunday, May 5, at noon, in the auditorium of Harrison High School with a reception following.

Occupational Therapy

Conference presentation

Aimee Luebben, program director for occupational therapy, made a presentation in October on "Improving Documentation Skills" at the Sixth Annual Nursing and Health Professions Educator Conference sponsored by the School of Nursing and Health Professions. Janet Kilbane, assistant professor of occupational therapy, presented on "The Other Shoe: A Disability Du Jour Learning Strategy."

Radiologic Technology

Seminar host

The annual Indiana Society of Radiologic Technologists' One Day Seminar was held March 9 at USI. The University's radiologic technology program sponsored the meeting. Dr. Nadine Coudret, dean of the School of Nursing and Health Professions, presented a seminar entitled "Community Health Report Card."

Respiratory Therapy

Annual meeting

Respiratory therapy students will attend the 29th annual meeting of Region II Respiratory Care in Covington, Kentucky, April 24-26. For the third straight year they will enter the annual "college bowl" competition known as the Sputum Bowl. Last year the USI team placed second. The 2002

Correction

The name of one of the graduates who presented on the subject of "Radiation Induced Xerostomia" at the annual session of the American Dental Hygienists' Association in 2001 was incorrect in the last issue of *Synapse*. The presentation was made by Kimberly Fuller and Kimberly Hite.

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Faculty Notes

Deborah L. Carl, program director of dental hygiene, attended the Annual Session of the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) in March in San Diego. She serves as chair of the organization's standing committee of dental hygiene directors and will chair the ADEA National Allied Directors' Conference in June in Key West.

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Phyllis Maddox, assistant professor of dental hygiene, presented the course, "Spit Tobacco," to members of the Ohio Valley Dental Hygienists' Association in March.

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Deborah Carl, Phyllis Maddox, and **Mara Beth Womack**, instructor of dental assisting/hygiene, will attend the Indiana Dental Hygiene Educators Conference in May in Indianapolis.

■
Dr. Sheila Melander, associate professor of nursing, made a presentation in February at the Society of Critical Care Medicine Conference in San Diego. She participated on a panel for a session entitled "Nursing, Year in Review" and spoke on technological advancements.

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Dr. Sheila Melander and **Colleen Walsh**, instructor in nursing, made an oral presentation in April at the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Conference at the University of Virginia.

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Colleen Walsh recently had six chapters published in the new textbook *Protocols for Acute Care Nurse Practitioners* edited by T. Barkley and

C. Myers. The book recently won the American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year award in two categories:

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Program Notes

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Grants

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employee base ranging from 20 to 170 employees. The pilot group includes Bridges of Southern Indiana, Westpark Rehabilitation Center, Corpus Christi School, Schnucks (West Side), and High Point Child Care.

Each company or organization has chosen one employee to serve as peer health advocate, a liaison between the company and the School of Nursing and Health Professions.

The grant program will provide training for the peer health advocate. In addition, it includes an employee interest survey, a health screening, and an individualized program or event based on the particular needs of each company. Worksite wellness programs may include exercise classes, weight reduction, nutrition education, stress management, and smoking cessation.

Health information also will be made available to the employees of each company through on-site bulletin boards, Internet, and other types of communications.

Valadares said worksite wellness programs have the potential to improve the well-being of employees while positively impacting businesses. Tangible benefits of worksite wellness programs include improved morale, reduced turnover, increased recruitment potential, reduced absenteeism, health-care

cost containment, and an improved employee health status.

For more information about the grant, contact Valadares at mvaladar@usi.edu.

Debbie Kinney, a registered nurse and a student in the master's program in the School of Nursing and Health Professions, directs the grant program to promote awareness and provide cancer screening to African-American women in Vanderburgh County. The program, conceived as a three-year project, received first-year funding of \$139,500.

Kinney said that national research indicates African-American women have a lower incidence rate for breast cancer than Caucasian women, but their five-year survival rate for all stages of breast cancer is half the rate of Caucasians. African-American women are twice as likely to develop cervical cancer and nearly three times as likely to die from it.

Called The Witness Project® because it involves women witnessing to other women, the grant program will utilize volunteers in two different roles. First, witness role models, women who have had breast or cervical cancer, will make presentations to community or church groups about their experience with cancer. Second, lay health advisors will teach other



Valadares



Kinney

women about self-breast exams and the importance of Pap smears and mammograms to screen for cervical and breast cancer.

Kinney also is looking for groups of women — sororities, church groups, other organizations — interested in having presentations about these topics. Kinney can be reached at 465-1168 or dkinney@usi.edu.

The mammography unit of St. Mary's Health Care Services will provide the mammograms for African-American women reached through the grant program. Family nurse practitioner students in the School of Nursing and Health Professions will perform the Pap tests and breast exams. The Indiana State Department of Health's Regional Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program, the Greater Evansville Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Cancer Institute also are collaborators.

The Welborn Foundation grants were announced in November. The School of Nursing and Health Professions plans to re-apply for continued funding of both programs.

Calling all Alumni

We welcome comments from our alumni and friends regarding accomplishments, career activities, and special events in your personal life (marriage and births).

Return form to:
School of Nursing and Health Professions
University of Southern Indiana
8600 University Boulevard
Evansville, IN 47712-3593

Name _____ Your student record name _____

Degree/Year of graduation _____ Major _____ Phone _____

Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Current Position _____ Employer _____

Your news _____

News

Jerrilee LaMar receives Distinguished Nursing Alumna Award

Jerrilee LaMar, manager of the Employee Education and Development Department at Deaconess Hospital in Evansville, has been named the first recipient of the University of Southern Indiana Distinguished Nursing Alumna Award.

Nursing and Health Professions Continuing Education

Workshops and Conferences

**Eighth Annual Case Management Conference, University
Center, Carter Hall, May 9**

**Fourth Annual Advanced Practice Nursing Symposium,
University Center, Carter Hall, May 17**

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