

HEALTH PROFESSIONS

UAMS
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

SPRING 2016

CHP Leads the Way

Patient- and Family-Centered Care course one of the few — if not the only — of its kind in the nation

By Jon Parham

Senior respiratory care student Haley Greenwood took the College of Health Professions' Patient- and Family-Centered Care course last summer because it was a requirement — but she feels it gave her a new perspective on health care that will make her a better professional.



Julie Moretz, UAMS associate vice chancellor for patient- and family-centered care, (left) and Erna Boone, chair of the Department of Respiratory Care and Surgical Technology in the College of Health Professions, teamed up to create the university's first course on the patient-centered care philosophy.

Created in 2014, the course is believed to be one of the few — maybe even the only — of its kind in the United States where patient/family advisors partnered with faculty in designing the course and are serving as adjunct faculty. The

interprofessional class teaches the emerging philosophy in health care delivery that seeks to make patients — and families — partners in care rather than subjects of care in order to improve outcomes and the patient experience.

“It’s deeper than just being nice and empathetic to a patient,” said Julie Moretz, a national expert who joined UAMS in 2013 as its first associate vice chancellor for patient- and family-centered care. “It’s engaging with patients to help them make the best decisions about their health.”

The concepts of patient- and family-centered care have been incorporated into the UAMS mission, policies, facilities and clinical practices. Since her arrival, Moretz has visited with faculty and leaders in all corners of UAMS to encourage how to further embrace the practice of patient- and family-centered care.

Erna Boone, Dr.P.H., chair of the college’s Department of Respiratory Care and Surgical Technology, was in the audience when Moretz spoke to one of the college’s committees in 2013.

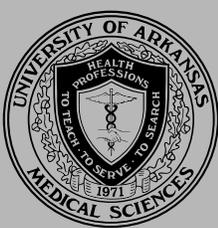
“I wasn’t really familiar with patient- and family-centered care then, but it made so much sense that making changes in our approach

to include information sharing and collaboration with patients and families and providing care with interprofessional teams will result in increased safety and improved quality of care,” Boone said. “It fits together perfectly with the direction that this institution is heading and with our academic mission as well.”

Challenged after attending a conference on the topic, Boone teamed with Moretz and those leading implementation of patient- and family-centered care at UAMS to create a one semester course on the subject. The course leverages online learning with a workshop session that introduces students to the concepts as well as simulation exercises using standardized patients — someone portraying a patient while another portrays a friend — in a clinical scenario. The patient/family advisors, serving as adjunct faculty, also participate in the simulation debriefing sessions with students.

The three UAMS patient advisors who have received adjunct faculty appointments in the college for the course, share their health care experiences with the students. Their stories — whether it’s about losing a child to disease or how they were treated as a patient or family

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**College of Health Professions
Spring 2016 Newsletter**

**The UAMS College of Health
Professions Mission**

The mission of the UAMS College of Health Professions is to improve the health of culturally diverse populations by:

- Offering education, research and service opportunities for students in the allied health professions
- Providing students with a total educational experience that emphasizes life-long learning
- Collaborating with other health care professionals to be an innovator in allied health education

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A Message from the Dean



As this issue of our newsletter was being published, we just were completing the annual College of Health Professions Phonathon.

Sponsored by Verizon, the Phonathon is a student-driven event. This year, a record number of students — about 150 — volunteered to make phone calls to alumni and friends to seek support for scholarships. Through our pre-Phonathon appeal and two nights of calling, students raised more than \$21,000 in gifts and pledges — again a record.

All Phonathon donations benefit CHP scholarships.

But the benefit is not purely financial. It is always thrilling to see our students take such an active role in the future of their programs and college. Many have benefited from scholarships or other types of financial aid themselves and understand the value of our Phonathon donors.

“...the **BENEFIT** is not purely financial. It is always **THRILLING** to see **OUR STUDENTS** take such an **ACTIVE ROLE** in the **FUTURE** of their **PROGRAMS** and **COLLEGE.**”

Just as our friends have supported the scholarships, these students have invested their time toward the future of our college. That’s the kind of commitment that bolsters the culture of our college in a positive way.

Though we include such a diversity of professions, we share the goal of educating future health care professionals. A scholarship can help a student focus on school rather than taking on an extra job to make ends meet. A scholarship can boost the potential of a student who otherwise may not have imagined a health care career possible. And, perhaps just as important, a scholarship lets a student know that we – you and the college faculty and staff – value and support their education and career goals in health care.

To the students who made the calls and those of you who answered — whether during the Phonathon or any other time when our college has asked — thank you for your support and investment in the future.

Douglas L. Murphy, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Health Professions

Science, Technology Create Opportunity for Genetic Counselors

By Jon Parham

The paths taken by faculty members Alexandra Obregon-Tito, Ph.D., and Tiffany Tassin, M.S., to reach genetic counseling sound similar: both were studying science and discovered the profession as a “best of both worlds” that melded the science with the direct application of scientific information to help people.

“I came to the United States from Peru to study biophysics,” said Obregon-Tito, an assistant professor in the college’s Department of Genetic Counseling. “But I wanted to see the other part — the application of the science and when I came across genetic counseling, it was the perfect blend.”



Tiffany Tassin, M.S.

Tassin, also an assistant professor, traced her interest to something that happened when she worked in a social support program while a biology undergraduate. A client had been diagnosed with muscular dystrophy, a degenerative group of diseases traced to a genetic mutation.

“He didn’t know anything about it really — what was happening or why, so I did some research for him,” she said. “It was in this process that I learned about genetic counseling and realized that’s the way I can take medical information and help people.”

Genetic counselors are involved in the assessment of individual or family risk for a variety of inherited conditions, such as genetic disorders and birth defects. They provide information and support to other health care providers, or to individuals and families concerned with the risk of inherited conditions.



Lori Williamson Dean, M.S.

The still-relatively young profession — Sarah Lawrence College in New York graduated the first class of master’s degree genetic counselors in 1971 — is in a fast-growth period. Lori Williamson Dean, M.S., assistant professor and director of the UAMS program, pointed to the speed that knowledge of genetics is expanding as well as improved accessibility to genetic testing for individuals and families.

“There is tremendous opportunity in the profession,” Dean said. “The roles for a counselor are continuing to expand right along with the science and technology.

There are counselors working in the biotechnology industry, in law and in public health.”

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projected employment of genetic counselors to grow 29 percent from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations.

“As our understanding of, for example, the genetics of cardiovascular disease expands then there is increased demand for counselors who can work with patients in that area,” Tassin said.

Obregon-Tito cited another attraction: “The science is still so new that everything is open to further exploration. You can break new ground — translate scientific discoveries into clinical application.”

The two-year, master’s degree program at UAMS is one of only 35 in North America. It is one of the youngest programs in the College of Health Professions,



Genetic counseling instructor Alexandra Obregon-Tito (on monitor) teaches a cancer genetics class at UAMS via interactive video from Belgium.

established in 2004.

“I think there are two things that sets our program apart from others: our extensive use of distance education and our use of technology to expand the reach of clinical placements available to our students,” Dean said. “You want students knowledgeable of current technology and knowledge in the field — especially in such a rapidly changing and expanding field as genetics.”

Distance education allows students to connect with experts, regardless of location. Obregon-Tito, for

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Development of Occupational Therapy Program Moves Forward

UAMS is working with the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville to establish a joint Doctor of Occupational Therapy program, which would be housed in the UAMS College of Health Professions at UAMS Northwest's campus in Fayetteville. If all approvals are received as planned, the first occupational therapy students could arrive as soon as fall 2017.

The program would be operated jointly by both universities similar to how the College of Health Professions' audiology and speech pathology program is operated jointly between UAMS and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

"Building a joint program allows us to leverage the strengths already in existence on each campus," said Stephanie Gardner, Pharm.D., Ed.D., UAMS provost and chief academic officer. "Also, it complements our physical therapy program."

In February, the college received a \$25,000 grant from the Chancellor's Circle group of UAMS supporters to aid with costs associated with development of the doctoral program.

UAMS Begins Dental School Feasibility Study

UAMS recently began a feasibility study into possible creation of a dental school.

The firm Academy for Academic Leadership will initially identify anticipated costs of start-up and operations, facility/faculty/staff needs, possible locations, potential funding sources and the benefits and challenges of operating a dental school. Expected to be complete within three to four months, the report will provide a blueprint for how the university could create a school should it decide to move forward.

The Center for Dental Education, a part of the College of Health Professions, currently is the hub of UAMS oral health programs. The center includes the Delta Dental of Arkansas Foundation Oral Health Clinic, a postgraduate residency program in general dentistry and serves as host for rotations of senior dental students from the University of Tennessee College of Dentistry for two-week clinical externships.

Arkansas is the most populous state without a dental school. Studies in recent years have found that Arkansas has more children with tooth decay than the national average and fewer practicing dentists per capita than almost any other state.

CHP Programs Set Reunions for UAMS Alumni Weekend

Graduates of six College of Health Professions programs — Dietetics and Nutrition, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Nuclear Advanced Associate, Nuclear Medicine Imaging Sciences, Respiratory Care, and Surgical Technology — should mark their calendars for **Aug. 19-21 and the 2016 UAMS Alumni Weekend.**

Program alumni from any year are invited to gather for the reunion. While other UAMS colleges invite graduates of specific years, the College of Health Professions focuses on specific programs for the alumni weekend.

Alumni from those programs should watch for more information, including a formal invitation, to be mailed soon.

The annual UAMS Alumni Weekend presents **SHOWCASE** — a weekend of social and intellectual experiences. Explore UAMS illuminated by education, research, and patients through tours, informational sessions, exhibitions and informational sessions.

Profiles

Meet some College of Health Professions friends and supporters

Lisa McNeir, Ph.D.



The late Frank McGehee was an accomplished cook, a talent that informed his business interests, which include the legendary Little Rock Mexican eatery Juanita's Café and Bar that he opened in 1986. When he died of a heart attack in 2005, wife Lisa McNeir wanted to do something to honor him and make a difference.

"When my husband passed away, I wanted to do something that would both honor his memory and make a difference in the health of future generations," she said. "I believe knowledge and practice of good nutritional habits

are keys to a long and healthy life. The UAMS model of combining research, training, and service delivery make it a natural investment choice."

McNeir, who is a member of the college's advisory board and has served as a past chair of the group, and her family have been long time supporters of the college and of UAMS. Her latest support for the college is a gift to create the Frank Ellis McGehee, Jr. Dietetics and Nutrition Endowment.

The endowment will support education and outreach efforts of the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition, including funding for standardized patient education. Standardized patients are persons who take on the role of a patient in a clinical exercise for students.

Arkansas Hospital Auxiliary Association



The Arkansas Hospital Auxiliary Association — 6,575 members strong, representing 60 hospital auxiliaries across the state — recently reemphasized their strong support of the health professions by committing to endow a \$25,000

scholarship for the College of Health Professions.

The association has been a supporter of the college since 2005, when it began giving \$2,000 annually to the College of Health Profession and also to the UAMS College of Nursing. In 2013, the organization voted to endow a scholarship to be shared between the two colleges.

"We knew of the shortages in the allied health professions and in nursing and felt the scholarship was

the best way to help," said Pat Lavender of Little Rock, who serves as co-chair of the organization's scholarship committee along with Melissa Williamson.

This led to the first endowed Arkansas Hospital Auxiliary Association Scholarship being awarded in 2013 with recipients alternating between the colleges each year.

The group felt strongly that both colleges needed the scholarship support, leading the board to vote for a second endowment. Now each college will have its own scholarship beginning in 2019.

Lavender, who herself has been volunteering at hospitals including UAMS for nearly 30 years, said the association enjoys regular updates on how its gifts are helping prepare students for careers in health care.

GIVING

The faculty, staff and students of the College of Health Professions would like to say “thank you” to these generous donors who made gifts to the college from July 1-Dec. 30, 2015.

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CHP Leads the Way *(continued from page 1)*

member — hit home with students, Boone said.

“Those patient stories really put everything I am learning to do with health care into a new perspective,” said Greenwood, the respiratory care student. “It is great to be able to learn how to appropriately communicate with patients and their caregivers and to really ensure that you are all working towards the common goal of healing for the patient.”

Emphasizing the course’s interprofessional nature, students from several of the college’s programs have enrolled so far. Boone was pleased that in the summer 2015 session, three nursing students also joined — something she hopes is a sign of things to come as course participation continues to expand with its third session this summer.

With UAMS recently adding a university wide requirement that all students complete an interprofessional education curriculum, Boone believes the patient- and family-centered care course fits perfectly. To augment this, a required interprofessional education student project could be adapted from

“Those patient stories really put everything I am **LEARNING...into A NEW PERSPECTIVE**”

patient- and family-centered coursework, she said.

“I think the interprofessional aspect — where these students come to better understand each other’s roles in providing team-based health care — will go a long way toward improving patient care quality and safety,” Boone said.

Moretz considers integration of patient- and family-centered care at UAMS “a journey, not a destination” and one that needs a constant focus to improve the

experience of care. The College of Health Professions course, she said, gives students a safe environment to learn these skills together and work toward changing the culture in health care as they graduate and begin careers.

“To be successful, we have to work together as a team and that’s exactly what we say about patient- and family-centered care,” she said.

Boone and Moretz will showcase the course this July at the 7th International Conference on Patient- and Family-Centered Care. The title of their abstract, “A Cold Splash of Reality,” is a quote from how one recent student described it when the course made her realize that “nobody owns a single task in health care.”

Genetic Counselors *(continued from page 3)*

example, is currently living in Belgium but holds classes weekly on the UAMS campus via interactive video.

The first year of the program is mostly in the classroom, along with clinical observation experiences. In addition to continued course work and research, the student’s second year is spent at a designated clinical center where the student’s role gradually increases from taking a patient’s history to more active participation in testing and counseling patients about test results.

Experience working with interactive video also hones a student’s skills. “Our students graduate knowing how to conduct a telemedicine session with a patient,” Dean said.

The science is just part of the profession. There is the counseling side, which requires different types of skills — from interpersonal communication to the ability to translate complicated test results into plain language that patients or health providers can use to make

informed health or treatment decisions.

“We teach our students skills in building a rapport with patients, conveying empathy, listening and communications,” Dean said. “They must be able to give a patient or physician information in a way they can understand it and use.”

Real patients come to classes to talk to the students about their experiences. Genetic counseling students also participate in simulation exercises with standardized patients, persons playing the role of a patient in a clinic-like situation.

It’s the blend of science and social that also attracted Dean to the profession, she said. All faculty remain active in clinical research and her interest is in public health genetics, where at the community level counselors work to create pathways for people to access genetic services that could help them.



College of
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DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES OFFERED	27
CURRENT FACULTY	89
CURRENT STUDENT ENROLLMENT	608
	<i>(spring 2016)</i>
STUDENTS RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID	85%
2015 GRADUATES	334
	<i>(including those from graduate programs)</i>
ALUMNI	7,500+
STATES WHERE ALUMNI LIVE	All 50, District of Columbia and two foreign countries
	<i>(Canada and Australia)</i>
GRADUATION RATE	82%
BOARD EXAM PASS RATE	89% first-time pass rate; 95% overall pass rate

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