

The NEWSBRIEF

**Midwest Center for Health Services & Policy Research
VA HSR&D Center of Excellence**

*MCHSPR (151H)
Hines VA Hospital
5th and Roosevelt Roads
Hines, IL 60141*

On page 2

*New Associate Director of
MCHSPR at Jesse Brown VAMC
and new staff are part of growing
center*

On page 3

*Saul Weiner, MD published article on
Effective Communication Processes
in Annals of Internal Medicine*

On page 4

*SCI QUERI tackles
Smoking Cessation*

Patriot Award



Page 1

MCHSPR is Growing - Opening offices at Jesse Brown VAMC and UIC

The Midwest Center for Health Services and Policy Research (MCHSPR) is pleased to announce the official opening of our offices at the Jesse Brown VAMC (JBVA), formerly West Side VA. This expansion of our center is a result of the strong interest in health services research from our colleagues in the School of Medicine, University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC) and the desire of MCHSPR to partner with colleagues at UIC. Drs. Tom Layden, Head of Department of Medicine, Jay Goldstein, Vice Head of Department of Medicine at UIC, Subhash Kukreja, Acting Chief of Staff and Joseph De Simone, Acting ACOS for Research at JBVA have worked closely with Dr. Kevin Weiss at MCHSPR to bring this to fruition. This formal partnering with UIC also strengthens our ties with the Schools of Public Health, Pharmacy, and Nursing within the University.

Dr. Marian Fitzgibbon has accepted the position of Associate Director of MCHSPR at JBVA. Dr. Fitzgibbon's role will be to facilitate and strengthen the health services research programs at UIC and JBVA. She will serve as a mentor to junior investigators interested in doing health services research within VA and at the university. Dr. Fitzgibbon also is a Professor of Psychology, Department of Medicine, UIC.

Joining Dr. Fitzgibbon is Dr. Melinda Stolley. Drs. Stolley and Fitzgibbon have worked together for several years in the areas of health prevention and promotion using behavior change strategies to address issues such as obesity in minority women with breast cancer, and reducing cardiovascular risks for minority populations. Their work compliments and expands upon the work that MCHSPR has done to address issues of complex chronic care and the work of SCI QUERI in implementation research.

Drs. Fitzgibbon and Stolley will be joining several other MCHSPR investigators at Jesse Brown/UIC. They are Dr. Ahsan Arozullah, Dr. Saul Weiner, and Dr. Ben Gerber. Until the renovation of the Jesse Brown facility is complete, the MCHSPR offices will be located in the Health Research and Policy Centers, UIC, 1747 W. Roosevelt Road, Chicago, IL. We would like to welcome Drs. Fitzgibbon and Stolley to MCHSPR and look forward to a long and productive relationship.

*Marian Fitzgibbon, PhD, Associate Director,
MCHSPR at Jesse Brown VAMC*

Dr. Marian Fitzgibbon is a professor in the University of Illinois at Chicago Department of Medicine's School of Public Health, section chief of UIC's Section of Health Promotion Research and Associate Director for Health Services Research at JBVA. Since receiving her doctorate from Long Island University in 1986, Dr. Fitzgibbon

Dr. Marian Fitzgibbon's primary research interest is health risk reduction in people of color

has conducted research in numerous areas, including eating disorders and obesity prevention. Her primary research interest is health risk reduction in people of color. Dr. Fitzgibbon is currently the principal investigator on a project assessing the efficacy of a weight-loss intervention specifically designed for African-American women and a one-year pilot study examining the feasibility of training Chicago Public School teachers to implement a healthy eating and exercise curriculum with preschoolers. She has also worked on projects exploring colorectal screening in low-literacy populations and breast cancer risk reduction in Black women. In addition, she is a research advisor and mentor to graduate students in the clinical psychology PhD program at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, where she was a faculty member from 1988 until 2004.

*Melinda Stolley, PhD, joins
MCHSPR at Jesse Brown VAMC*

Dr. Stolley's primary area of interest is in health behavior and health behavior change, particularly as it relates to cancer prevention and control among minority populations.

Dr. Melinda Stolley is an assistant professor in the University of Illinois at Chicago Department of Medicine's Section of Health Promotion Research and Research Health Scientist at JBVA. Her primary area of interest is in health behavior and health behavior change, particularly as it relates to

cancer prevention and control among minority populations. As such, she has developed a number of efficacious interventions that address changes in dietary and physical activity patterns. Before arriving at UIC and JBVA in December, Dr. Stolley was an assistant professor of psychology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, (1998-2004). Dr. Stolley is the recipient of a National Cancer Institute K07 Career Development Award that will fund her research exploring the efficacy of a weight-loss program for African-American breast cancer survivors. She has also been the principal investigator on research studies exploring a faith-based weight loss intervention for African-American women, breast cancer risk reduction in Latinas and the development of a lifestyle intervention for Black breast cancer survivors. In addition, she has served as the co-investigator on projects examining obesity prevention in young children.

More staff members of MCHSPR at Jesse Brown VAMC

The major research interests of Ahsan Arozullah, MD, MPH include the impact of patient literacy and social support on healthcare utilization and using postoperative complications to measure hospital quality of care. Dr. Arozullah is currently supported by a VA HSR&D career development award and is the principal investigator for a VA HSR&D funded study (IIR 02-010-01) examining the impact of health literacy on racial disparities in cancer stage for veterans with colorectal, lung, and prostate cancer.

Saul J. Weiner, MD joins the Midwest Center for Health Services and Policy Research as a Research Associate. His research focuses in two areas: 1) Examining the process of rationing of services to medically indigent patients at large healthcare institutions; 2) Exploring how physicians factor patient specific contextual information into medical decision making. He joins the MCHSPR with plans to pursue his interest in the latter.

Dr. Ben Gerber is a trained internist and is currently an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Department of Medicine at UIC. He will be completing an MPH in Public Health Informatics in the UIC School of Public Health in May, 2005. His research focus is the use of technology to provide chronic disease education and support.

Processes for Effective Communication in Primary Care

An Article in Annals of Internal Medicine by Saul Weiner, et al.

Processes for Effective Communication in Primary Care

Weiner SJ, Barnet B, Cheng TL, Daalemam TP.

Ann Intern Med. 2005;142:709-714.

In an April issue of Annals of Internal Medicine, Saul J. Weiner, MD, MCHSPR Senior Investigator at Jesse Brown VAMC, and colleagues introduced a conceptual framework for effective communication in primary care. The paper is one of four published as an inbound supplement entitled, The Future of Generalism, sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Health care in the United States can be a fragmented and depersonalized experience. Many patients find themselves in a nomadic environment, often shuttling among physicians who rarely communicate with each other, and with no single provider who is well informed about their overall care. Weiner and colleagues posit that an effective primary care system must confront the challenge of managing unparalleled amounts of information. They focus on the process of how knowledge about patients passes through the system, highlighting opportunities to intervene where information is overlooked, distorted or lost.

The authors observe that communication in the delivery of health care services occurs along 2 axes: between providers and patients and among providers. In primary care, a principal objective in the provider-patient relationship is facilitating *whole-person care*, which is care provided in the context of family and community. In addition, primary care emphasizes communication between the primary care physician and other providers with the goal of *integrated care*, or care provided in the context of a patient's overall health care needs.

The authors define the communication objectives essential to providing whole-person, integrated patient care. Whole-person care depends upon *contextual knowledge*, which is knowledge of factors in a patient's life situation that are relevant to their care. For example, a physician may tailor an educational intervention on insulin self-administration to a patient's shift-work environment. Integrated care depends upon *whole-care knowledge*, which is global knowledge of a patient's care plan. For example, a physician may postpone prescribing warfarin as an anti-coagulant for a patient with chronic atrial fibrillation knowing that another physician has scheduled knee replacement surgery the following week. Ideally, all medical decisions should be informed by both contextual and whole-care knowledge.

In developing their typology of communication obstacles, the authors draw on two disparate bodies of literature that generally consider physician-patient communication and intra-provider communication separately. They conclude with specific recommendations for formalizing requirements for the exchange of information among providers, enhancing communication training, disseminating information technology, and mitigating external factors that disrupt communication in primary care.

Weiner and colleagues posit that an effective primary care system must confront the challenge of managing unparalleled amounts of information. They focus on the process of how knowledge about patients passes through the system, highlighting opportunities to intervene where information is overlooked, distorted or lost.

SCI QUERI Tackles Smoking Cessation

Fran Weaver, PhD, Bonnie Spring, PhD, Sherri LaVela, MPH/MBA, and Kenzie Cameron, PhD recently received funding from the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation (CRPF). CRPF provides funding through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for Quality of Life grants. Dr. Weaver and colleagues were one of the few groups to receive funding in this grant cycle. Their grant, titled, "Creating a Brief Tobacco Cessation Message Targeted to Persons Who are Spinal Cord Injured or Disabled," will focus on addressing

Their grant, titled, "Creating a Brief Tobacco Cessation Message Targeted to Persons Who are Spinal Cord Injured or Disabled," will focus on addressing tobacco cessation in the spinal cord injured population.

tobacco cessation in the spinal cord injured population. Data from VA's Office of Quality and Performance has shown that approximately one-third of veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI&D) are current tobacco users. Because of the high risk for respiratory infections and impairments in this population, it is imperative that risk factors such as smoking are addressed. Using input from veterans through surveys and focus groups, combined with education tools and information available from the Office of the Surgeon General and CDC, the investigators will develop a brief multimedia message to address the importance of smoking cessation in persons with SCI&D.

American Thoracic Society (ATS) 2005 Posters & Presentations

MCHSPR Staff was well represented at the International Conference American Thoracic Society 100th Anniversary in San Diego, CA, May 20 to 25, 2005. Fourteen posters were displayed including many by Kevin Weiss and Todd Lee on the COPD project in VA. Another poster presented was by Eileen Collins on, "Can Ventilation-Feedback Training Augment exercise Tolerance in Patients with COPD?" A presentation was given by Dr. Kevin Weiss on, "What we can do to Reduce Health Disparities and Critical Care?" Investigators had an opportunity to identify potential collaborators for future work.

Patriot Award given to MCHSPR Employees

The **Patriot Award** is presented to civilian employers of National Guardsmen and Reservists by the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense agency charged with gaining and maintaining support for members of the reserve component employed in the private and public sector. The Patriot Award is only given to employers who are nominated by Guardsmen and Reservists, and is a simple but meaningful gesture of gratitude and demonstrates the Department of Defense's recognition that it shares a common work force with America's employers. This Patriot Award is presented to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Dr. Dale Gerding, Mr. Nick Guzzi, Ms. Carol Durczak, Ms. Debbie Malinski and Ms. Keisha Greenwood in appreciation of the support they have given to SGT Cheryl Neely and all other employees who serve their nation in and out of uniform.

Recent Publications of MCHSPR Staff

Bennett CL, Nebeker JR, Lyons EA, Samore MH, Feldman MD, McKoy JM, et al. The research on Adverse Drug Events and Reports (RADAR) project. JAMA 2005;293(17):2131-2140.

Collins EG, Langbein WE, Orebaugh C, Bammert C, Hanson K, Reda D et al. Cardiovascular Training Effect Associated With Polestriding Exercise in Patients With Peripheral Arterial Disease. J Cardiovasc Nurs 2005; 20(3):177-185.

Didie ER, Fitzgibbon M. Binge eating and psychological distress: is the degree of obesity a factor? Eat Behav 2005; 6(1):35-41.

Rozovsky-Weinberger J, Parada JP, Phan L, Droller DG, Deloria-Knoll M, Chmiel JS, Bennett CL. Delays in Suspicion and Isolation Among Hospitalized Persons with Pulmonary Tuberculosis at Public and Private US Hospitals During 1996 to 1999. Chest 2005; 127:205-212.

Snow V, Fitterman BP, Qaseem N, Weiss K. Pharmacologic and surgical management of obesity in primary care: a clinical practice guideline from the American College of Physicians. Ann Intern Med. 2005 Apr 5; 142(7): 525-31.

Sullivan SD, Lee TA, Blough DK, Finkelstein JA, Lozano P, Inui TS, Weiss K, et al. A Multisite Randomized Trial of the Effects of Physician Education and Organizational Change in Chronic Asthma Care: Cost-effectiveness Analysis of the Pediatric Asthma Care Patient Outcomes Research Team II (PAC-PORT II). Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med 2005; 159(5):428-434.

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Kevin B. Weiss, M.D.

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Carol Durczak

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Frances M. Weaver, PhD

DESIGN/LAYOUT
Madeline Thornton

Contributions or
Suggestions should be addressed to:
Madeline Thornton
c/o HSR&D (151H)
P.O. Box 5000
Hines VA Hospital
Hines, IL 60141-5151

EDITORIAL
CREDITS