Nursing Research Advances Health

NURSING RESEARCH is the engine that drives new solutions to help improve health. Nursing research is critical across specialty and administrative areas—from hospitals to community clinics, from skilled nursing facilities to home health-care services, from government and public health agencies to neighborhoods and communities. Research questions address the care continuum from prenatal care to death, delving into symptom management, preventive health measures, health disparities, promoting optimal health, chronic illness, care delivery systems and health politics and policy.

Nursing research influences both practice and policies which impact individuals and our global society, as illustrated by the pioneering research and work of Kathryn E. Barnard, nursing professor emeriti and founder of the Center on Infant Mental Health and Development at the University of Washington. Barnard’s research led to the development of a comprehensive program providing health-care workers around the world with guidelines to assess infant development and intervene with appropriate support for parents.

LIKE THE NURSING PROFESSION ITSELF, research goes beyond laboratory work to where care is provided and conducted using a variety of methods—quantitative, qualitative or a mix of both. Quantitative research emphasizes mathematical and statistical data and enables testing of hypotheses and predicting outcomes. Qualitative research provides in-depth understanding of human behavior and the social processes involved in health and illness. By using both research methods, Barnard and her team developed parent-child interaction scales, giving pediatric nurses the tools to assess an infant’s progress and guide parents on ways to encourage their babies to learn to speak.

On the other end of the life spectrum is the ground-breaking research of Mary Naylor, a gerontology professor the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. Naylor leads an interdisciplinary team of scholars in a program of research designed to enhance the quality of life of vulnerable older adults and their caregivers. Since the late 1980s, Naylor’s research tested new models of discharge planning and home follow-up by advanced practice nurses that consistently demonstrated improved health outcomes and decreased health-care costs compared to standard care. Again, she employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative research to not only improve nursing care in long-term care facilities but to ensure improved health for those returning home following discharge from care centers.

NURSING RESEARCH AT UC DAVIS

With the growing need for more nursing research and more doctorally prepared faculty to conduct studies and mentor future generations of nurse scientists, the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at
UC Davis launched its first academic degree program in Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership in 2010. The Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership is the first research-focused doctoral nursing degree in inland Northern California, making access easier for graduate students in nursing and providing a much-needed focus on leading health improvement in this region.

The addition of the **BETTY IRENE MOORE SCHOOL OF NURSING** further enhances research at UC Davis by bringing a specific emphasis on Healthy Systems and Healthy People. Research for Healthy People promotes health for individuals, families and populations in partnership with communities, with an emphasis on aging, rural and diverse populations, and includes community health, public health, epidemiology, gerontology, rural health and health disparities. The school's faculty, postdoctoral scholars and graduate students discover and share knowledge on the priorities and needs of population subgroups as well as tailor and test approaches to advance health in those groups.

Research for Healthy Systems improves health-care systems and health policies to be effective, efficient and responsive. The scholarly work includes health policy, organizational change, informatics, implementation science and leadership. Healthy Systems research discovers and shares knowledge to analyze, shape, redesign and evaluate health systems.

Founding faculty of the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing are active contributors to the scientific community at UC Davis. They examine urgent societal issues and ultimately influence both practice and policy. As part of UC Davis Health System in Sacramento, the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing research studies join a large portfolio of more than 775 interprofessional research studies—including basic science, translational and clinical research—currently under way. Research at the School of Nursing will add a critical perspective to many of these studies as well as those throughout UC Davis, one of the fastest growing research universities in the nation. UC Davis received $678 million in awards in 2009-10, the sixth consecutive year that research funds topped a half-billion dollars. In 2010, UC Davis Health System was recognized by the Association of American Medical Colleges as first in the nation for rate of research funding growth over the past decade.

**UC DAVIS HEALTH SYSTEM** is also home to a number of centers and programs that conduct studies on the leading edge of health care, providing established opportunities for Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing faculty and students to join teams conducting advanced and pioneering research. These include the UC Davis Cancer Center, the Center for Health and Technology, the Clinical Translational Science Center, the Center for Reducing Health Disparities, the National Children's Study Center, the Center for Health Policy Research, the UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center and the Institute for Population Health.

Today's complex health problems cannot be solved through single-discipline research. Interdisciplinary research, drawing from nursing and such collaborative fields as medicine, life sciences, public health and social sciences, is essential to the complex study of health and illness experiences. By working together, scientists and scholars can find creative solutions that are meaningful to society. The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing's growing research program transforms society by discovering better solutions that lead to Healthy People and Healthy Systems.

**LEARN MORE** about current research projects at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing by visiting the website at [http://nursing.ucdavis.edu](http://nursing.ucdavis.edu).