Director’s Corner
Klea D. Bertakis, MD, MPH

After a long hiatus, we are pleased to distribute this latest edition of our Center Newsletter. The Center for Healthcare Policy and Research, formerly known as the Center for Health Services Research in Primary Care, is currently undergoing a period of transition. The Executive Committee has recently updated the Center’s Mission Statement, which is included here (See Mission Statement, Page 5).

The Center’s Policy Guidelines have also been revised, and can be found on our website. Of particular interest to members and potential members are the range of professional services available to faculty who seek Center assistance with proposal development and funded project administration. Other available resources include: a community of research collaborators from a wide variety of disciplines throughout the UC Davis campus, pre-and post-graduate education (internships for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as post-doctoral fellowship training); sponsored symposia and seminars; and the synthesis of data to inform policy on key healthcare issues.

The Center is working to increase its ties with the CTSC (Clinical and Translational Science Center) and the Center for Reducing Health Disparities. In an effort to work together to share and leverage our resources, core Center staff have moved to the CTSC (where the Center for Reducing Health Disparities is also housed). This co-location is expected to create synergies and collaborations that will benefit our entire UC Davis research community.

We have received a generous grant from Vice Chancellor for Research, Barry Klein. With a portion of the funds, we have planned a symposium on March 25, 2008 at the UC Davis Alumni Center. This conference will highlight the collaboration between our Center, the CTSC, and the Center for Reducing Health Disparities, encouraging interdisciplinary research discussion between individuals from both the Davis and Sacramento campuses. Areas of thematic emphasis will include practice-based research and community engagement. Our Plenary Session speaker will be John M. Westfall, MD, author of the JAMA article “Practice Based Research – ‘Blue Highways’ on the NIH Roadmap.” The majority of the OVCR funding will be used to support an intramural funding program focused on research projects “bridging the causeway” between researchers from health sciences campus in Sacramento and the rest of campus in Davis.

In summary, we all look forward to being a part of the Center as it begins its next phase of growth as a UC Davis Organized Research Unit. We invite you to consider becoming a Center member, or if you are already a member, to consider serving on the Executive Committee. Thank you to all of the faculty and staff who have been such an important part of Center community.

On the Inside:

News .................................................. 2
Recent Publications ................................ 3
Research Highlights .......................... 3
Welcomes ........................................ 4
Grants Awarded ................................. 5
Recent Presentations ......................... 5
Event Calendar ................................. 6

Bridging the Causeway: A Center for Healthcare Policy and Research Symposium

On March 25, 2008 the Center for Healthcare Policy and Research (CHPR) will host “Bridging the Causeway: A Center for Healthcare Policy and Research Symposium” at the Walter A. Buehler Alumni & Visitors Center in Davis. This half-day program, sponsored by the CHPR in cooperation with the CTSC and the Center for Reducing Health Disparities, will emphasize the themes of community engagement and practice-based research.

John M. Westfall, MD, Associate Dean for Rural Health at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, will be the featured Plenary speaker. Dr. Westfall is the primary author of “Practice-Based Research—‘Blue Highways’ on the NIH Roadmap” (JAMA. 2007;297:403-406), and the founder of the High Plains Research Network, a practice-based research network in rural Colorado with a mission to improve healthcare in rural areas.

The symposium will also feature speakers from the CHPR, the CTSC and the Center for Reducing Health Disparities; breakout workgroups; and a concluding luncheon. Interested persons can contact Laura Bates Sterner at (916) 734-7918 or e-mail lbsterner@ucdavis.edu.

The CHPR Newsletter is designed, written and edited by Laura Bates Sterner, Communications Officer. Consulting Editor is Debora A. Paterniti. All images are courtesy of Laura Bates Sterner, unless otherwise noted.

For submissions or other information, please contact Laura Bates Sterner, at (916) 734-7918 or lbsterner@ucdavis.edu.
News

Pandemic Influenza CME Course Offering
Beginning October 1, a new CME course is being offered through the UC Davis web site. The course is titled “Pandemic Influenza” and details a mental health response to a pandemic. There are six modules, with one CME credit per module. CMEs are available for physicians, physician assistants, psychologists, registered nurses, MFTs and LCSWs.

The module topics are: Basic Clinical Principles, Viruses, Adaptive Responses, Risk Management, Mental Health Response Systems and Other Mental Health Considerations.

Course authors are CHPR member Peter M. Yellowlees, M.D., and former CHPR staff researcher Kathleen M. Ayers, Psy.D.

This project was funded by a grant from the California Department of Public Health. An instructor's manual is available for those wishing to teach small groups. Contact Kathleen M. Ayers at kmayers@ucdavis.edu for more information.

Nathan Kuppermann named First Recipient of Brofeldt Endowed Chair
Center member Nathan Kuppermann, M.D., M.P.H., Professor and Chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine and Chair of the steering committee for the Pediatric Emergency Care Applied Research Network (PECARN), was recently named the first recipient of the Brofeldt Endowed Chair in Emergency Medicine.

Dr. Kuppermann also serves as research director for the Department of Emergency Medicine. His research interests include epidemiology of meningococcal disease in children, laboratory evaluation of pediatric trauma patients, radiography of the cervical spine in pediatric trauma, and pediatric diabetic ketoacidosis and risk of cerebral edema.

The Brofeldt Endowed Chair was created in honor of the late Bo Tomas Brofeldt, a UC Davis Faculty member who made significant contributions to pain relief for burn victims and the development of more efficient ways to perform emergency medical procedures.

Daniel Tancredi Joins Faculty at Department of Pediatrics
CHPR Staff Senior Statistician Daniel J. Tancredi, Ph.D., has been appointed Assistant Professor In-Residence with the UC Davis Department of Pediatrics.

Along with the responsibilities of his new appointment, Dr. Tancredi will continue in his role as Senior Statistician for the Center, providing statistical research support to Center members.

CHPR Members Begin Cross-Collaborative Effort with New Asian American Center on Disparities Research
CHPR member Tonya Fancher is the principal investigator for the Medication Adherence Research Program, a major research program created as part of a grant recently awarded to UC Davis by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

The $3.9-million grant was awarded for the establishment of the Asian American Center on Disparities Research, a new national research center that will focus on mental health disparities among Asian Americans. Nolan Zane, Ph.D., also a CHPR member, has been named Director of the new Center.

CHPR members Debra A. Paterniti, Ph.D., Ladson Hinton, M.D., and Anthony Jerant, M.D., are co-investigators for the Medication Adherence Research Program, which will focus on culturally targeted interventions for the purpose of improving medication adherence among Asian American patients. The Medication Adherence Research Program is one of three major research programs at the new center.

“Building the State’s Budget for Health Programs” Joint Seminar Explores Budget Challenges
Shawn Martin of the California Legislative Analyst’s Office spoke to a packed house at the October 11, 2007 edition of the Thursday Health Services Research Seminar Series.

This edition of the Weekly Seminar Series was jointly hosted by the Center and the Department of Public Health Sciences and was simulcast to the Davis campus. Topics covered included how the state budget is compiled and analyzed, and the challenges involved in maintaining state funding for healthcare and other programs.

Wilhelmina Cottman Receives Award
Center Operations and Project Manager Wilhelmina Cottman was presented with an award from UC Davis Disability Management Services at a ceremony on October 11.

The luncheon awards ceremony was held at the University Club in Davis and honored 10 supervisors and managers from throughout the university who have displayed “exceptional leadership and commitment, working on behalf of staff and faculty with disabilities in their departments.”

We at the Center are all very proud of Willi and her continued commitment to excellent leadership, and are pleased to offer her our most sincere congratulations.
Recent Publications


Research Highlights

Core Center Faculty Member Patrick S. Romano co-authored two recently published studies which looked at patient mortality rates in hospitals following the implementation of resident physician work hours reform.

The studies, published in the September 5, 2007 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association, found that the regulations, which limit the hours a resident works to no more than 80 hours per week, did not lead to an increase in patient mortality. Further, one study, which examined patient deaths in United States Veterans Affairs (VA) System hospitals, appears to show that work hour curtailment led to a decrease in patient mortality rates. This beneficial relationship was not seen in the other study, which looked at patient hospitalizations in the Medicare system.

We asked Dr. Romano to comment on this research relative to possible policy implications, future research directions and potential impact on healthcare education.

On policy implications:
“It should be possible to reduce patient mortality and improve the work hours of resident physicians at the same time, although this dual benefit appears to be more achievable in VA hospitals than in non-Federal hospitals. In some settings, the risk associated with more hand-offs among residents may counterbalance the benefits associated with less work hour curtailment.”

“...Our results from the VA suggest that, at least in certain settings for certain types of patients, hospitals can improve quality of life for physicians-in-training and reduce patient mortality at the same time.

We need to understand the mechanisms behind this phenomenon better so we can apply what we learn to other, non-VA settings.”

- Patrick Romano, MD, MPH

Romano, continued on page 4
Welcomes

New Center Members
The Center for Healthcare Policy and Research recently welcomed the following new members:

Saskia E. Drösler, MD
Visiting Professor, Professor of Medical Controlling and Medical Computer Science
Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences, Krefeld, Germany
Dr. Drösler was recently welcomed as a visiting faculty member. Her research interests include medical classifications, administrative data, and the use of data for management and public reporting. Dr. Drösler will be presenting at the Center’s Thursday Noon Seminar Series on December 13, 2007.

Tonya Fancher, MD, MPH
Assistant Professor, Associate Program Director
Department of Internal Medicine
Dr. Fancher received her medical degree from the New York University School of Medicine and her Master’s of Public Health at UC Davis. She completed a Primary Care Outcomes Research fellowship at UC Davis in 2004. Her research interests include disparities, mental health, and health care system research and policy analysis.

Bo Feng, PhD
Assistant Professor
Department of Communication
Dr. Feng was awarded her doctorate in Communication from Purdue University and holds a Master of Arts in Linguistics and a Bachelor of Arts in English from Beihang University in Beijing, China. Her research interests are in the areas of social influence, persuasion, and cross-cultural communication.

Zhongmin Li, PhD
Adjunct Assistant Professor
Department of Internal Medicine
Dr. Li earned a doctorate in Sociology and Demography from the University of Texas at Austin. He also holds a Master of Science in Statistics from George Washington University, and a Master of Arts and Bachelor of Arts in Economics from The Northwestern University, Xi’an, People’s Republic of China. His research interests include healthcare access, delivery and outcomes.

Jeffrey Sherman, PhD
Professor
Department of Psychology
Dr. Sherman holds a PhD in Social Psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of California, Berkeley. His areas of interest include disparities and clinician-patient interactions.

Laramie Taylor, PhD
Assistant Professor
Department of Communication
Dr. Taylor’s research interests are related to health outcomes and the delivery of health information to the public. He holds a PhD from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor of Arts from Brigham Young University.

Elisa Tong, MD, MA
Assistant Professor
Department of Internal Medicine
Dr. Tong received her medical degree from Stanford University and her Master of Arts, also from Stanford. She holds a Certificate of Advanced Training in Clinical Research from the University of California, San Francisco. Her research interests include health care system research and policy analysis, and tobacco control.

Shagufta Yasmeen, MD, MRCOG
Assistant Professor
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Dr. Yasmeen’s research interests include the delivery of primary care services to women, cancer screening and disparities in health outcomes among women, particularly those with breast cancer. She received her medical degree from the Medical College Srinagar at the University of Kashmir, in Kashmir, India and also holds a Master of Advanced Study in Clinical Research.

On additional research directions:
“There are many future directions for research: (1) studying patient outcomes other than death, such as postoperative complications; (2) studying the impact of different ways of implementing work hours regulations; (3) studying not just how many hours doctors work but how hard they work.”

“Our results from the VA suggest that, at least in certain settings for certain types of patients, hospitals can improve quality of life for physicians-in-training and reduce patient mortality at the same time. We need to understand the mechanisms behind this phenomenon better so we can apply what we learn to other, non-VA settings.”

On the impact of this research on healthcare education:
“In the short term, I anticipate little impact. Some are surprised that work hours reform has not reduced patient mortality (at least outside the VA system), but others are reassured that at least it has not increased patient mortality. In any case, the advocates of reform are likely to argue that these studies give ACGME the “green light” to implement even more aggressive restrictions to improve residents’ quality of life, while the opponents of reform are likely to argue that these studies debunk the original rationale for work hours reform (i.e., to improve patient safety).”

“We did these studies to evaluate the impact of reducing doctors’ work hours on patients’ outcomes. The organization that developed work hour regulations for physicians-in-training (the ACGME) did so in the belief that these regulations would prevent medical errors and improve patient outcomes. But others were concerned that shorter shifts and more hand-offs among physicians would actually lead to more errors and worse patient outcomes. Our studies illustrate how health services researchers attempt to address such controversial questions by designing “natural experiments” using existing data systems.”
Recent Presentations

James P. Marcin, M.D., M.P.H.
CHPR Faculty Member
“Second Annual Pediatric Telehealth Colloquium” (Chair and Speaker)

Nicole Bloser, M.H.A., M.P.H.
CHPR Graduate Student Researcher
“The Cost Effectiveness of the N-of-1 Clinical Trial”. Public seminar of proposed dissertation research presented August 28, 2007 at the Center for Health Services Research in Primary Care.

Camille Cipri, B. S.
CHPR Staff Research Assistant
“Understanding Issues of Access and Barriers to Health Care for Slavic Immigrant Women” Annual Meeting of The Society for the Study of Social Problems (Health, Health Policy and Health Services Division), New York, NY, August 10-12, 2007. §

Grants Awarded

CHPR members reported the following grant awards for the Summer quarter:

“Increasing Access and Improving the Care Delivered to Abused Children in Rural, Underserved Hospitals with Telemedicine” Funding: Health Resources and Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services
Principal Investigator: James P. Marcin, MD, MPH

“The HPV Vaccine: Educational Tools to Reduce Disparities” Funding: UC Davis Clinical and Translational Science Center (CTSC)
Principal Investigator: Joy Melnikow, MD, MPH
Project Begins: Early November. §

For Your Information

Calls for Papers
Medical Care is calling for papers to be published in an upcoming issue with the theme of “US Health Care Insurance: Current Status and Future Vision”. The issue will focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the current health insurance systems. The submission deadline for the theme issue is January 15, 2008. Medical Care is also calling for papers for a new, occasional feature entitled “The Annals of Health Services Research”. For detailed information about both of these Calls for Papers, please visit www.lww-medicalcare.com. §

CHPR Mission Statement

The Mission of the Center is to facilitate research, promote education and inform policy about health and healthcare.

The Goals of this Mission are to improve the health of the public by contributing new knowledge about:

- access
- delivery
- cost
- outcomes

Current emphases include disparities, clinician-patient interaction, utilization, cost-effectiveness and quality.

The Center is an interdisciplinary collaborative research unit that will perform the following Functions:

- development and support of interdisciplinary collaboration on research projects related to the Center’s Mission.
- education and career development for scholars with interests in health services and health policy research.
- synthesis, interpretation and dissemination of research findings that assist healthcare policy formation and improve health services delivery.
Thursday Noon Seminar Series - 2007

October 18, 2007
“How Valid Are Three Recent Studies Comparing Medi-Cal Managed Care Unfavorably with Medi-Cal Fee-for-Service?”
Richard Sun, MD, MPH, Medical Consultant, Medical Policy Section, Policy and Financial Management Branch, CA Department of Health Care Services.

October 25, 2007
No Seminar Scheduled
Alternate Event: “The Future of Health Information Technology”
Douglas F. Busch
Vice President, Chief Technology Officer, Digital Health Group
Intel Corporation
(This event will take place at the first floor lecture hall, Medical Education Building, from noon to 1:00)

November 1, 2007
“Perils and challenges of translational research: A case study in computer-aided mammography”
Joshua Fenton, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor, Family and Community Medicine

November 8, 2007
“Defining ‘Basic’ Coverage: The priorities of the uninsured”
Marge Ginsburg, Executive Director, Sacramento Healthcare Decisions

November 15, 2007
“Adolescent Intimate Partner Violence: What About the Boys?”
Elizabeth Miller, MD, PhD., Assistant Professor, Pediatrics

November 22, 2007
Thanksgiving Holiday

November 29, 2007
Topic TBA
Shagufta Yasmeen, MD, Assistant Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology

December 6, 2007
“Enhancing HIV Surveillance Capacity in Iran: Lessons Learned from Implementation of Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS) among Injecting Drug Users”
Mohsen Malekinejad, MPH, Dr. P.H. Graduate Student, UC Berkeley.

December 13, 2007
“International Application of AHRQ Patient Safety Indicators”
Saskia Drosler, MD
Professor, Economics Engineering and Healthcare, Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences, Krefeld, Germany

December 20, 2007
PCOR Fellows
Este Geraghty, MD, MS, MPH-- Topic TBA

Other Special Events

March 25, 2008
“Bridging the Causeway: A Center for Healthcare Policy and Research Symposium”
8:00am to 2:00pm
Walter A. Buehler Alumni & Visitors Center, Davis
Featuring: John M. Westfall, MD, Associate Dean for Rural Health, University of Colorado School of Medicine
To register call Laura Sterner at (916) 734-7918 or e-mail lbsterner@ucdavis.edu.