



heartbeats

SPRING 2021

University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies

INJECTING

HOPE

SONHS AIDS HISTORIC COMMUNITY EFFORTS
TO CURB A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

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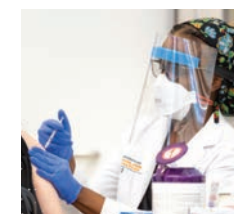
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At the School of Nursing and Health Studies, we transform lives and health care through education, research, innovation, and service across the hemisphere.

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MOVED BY OUR CHANGEMAKERS

Welcome to our Spring 2021 issue of *Heartbeat* magazine. As our cover vividly illustrates, the theme is “injecting hope,” and in these pages, you’ll read of the many ways our students, faculty, and alumni have done just that for their community in a year that tested us right to our cores.

Hope has manifested in the form of sharing new knowledge, showing resilience, and achieving positive health outcomes for communities near and far. Our cover story on page 18 explores the promise with which our outstanding clinical partner Jackson Health System has led a historic public vaccination push, with our graduate nursing students helping on the front lines as clinical volunteers.

Sometimes the act is that simple—demonstrating kindness by educating and vaccinating others, and modeling courage by being vaccinated ahead of the curve. Other times our actions are more complex, spanning decades. Jacqueline Lytle Gonzalez, M.S.N. ’87, D.N.P. ’13—the South Florida nursing hero featured on page 12—has been inspiring her community for 40-plus years, and we are so grateful to call her our colleague, alumna, and friend.

From legend to newcomer, you’ll read about student Diane Stephen on page 16. Diane is making a difference in health outcomes among schoolchildren in the rural village of Milot, Haiti.

Unlike the widely discussed COVID-19 pandemic, the epidemic of human trafficking has spread silently, hidden beneath the surface of society. On page 14 you’ll read about SONHS initiatives to bring greater awareness and resources to this crisis of health and humanity in our midst.

Stories of global importance continue on page 26, with a look at what our



Robert Klemm

redesignation as a PAHO/WHO Collaborating Centre means in this new era for health care workers worldwide.

And leaping from the global into the virtual sphere, on page 24 you’ll hear from faculty and students innovating a mixed-reality version of the operating room just when a new way of learning is needed most.

It’s been more than a year and millions of shattered lives since the world as we knew it came to a halt last March. What can we learn from this pandemic? And how will we carry those lessons with us toward the new normal of tomorrow?

This issue offers our optimistic exploration of these and other important questions facing our health professions and higher education. Thank you once again for joining us on the journey through these pages. I wish you a safe and fulfilling summer.

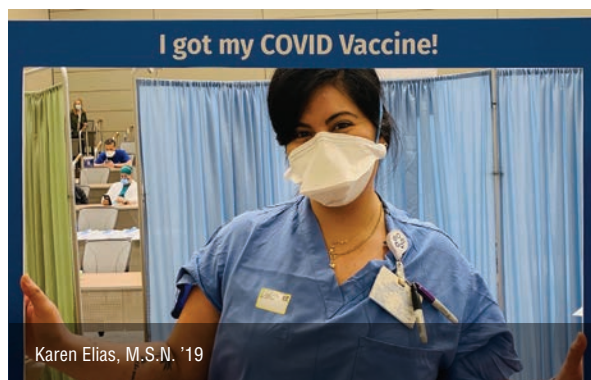
Cindy L. Munro
Ph.D., R.N., A.N.P.-B.C., F.A.A.N., F.A.A.N.P., F.A.A.A.S.
Dean & Professor

Giving It Their Best Shot

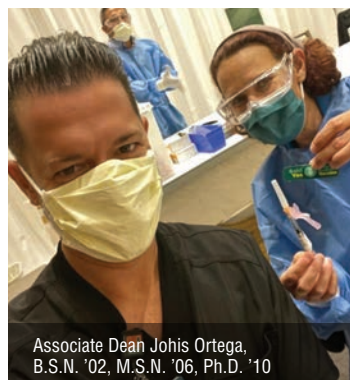
Alumni and faculty show their vaccination pride



Dean Cindy L. Munro



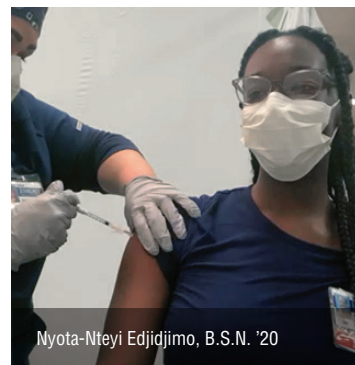
Karen Elias, M.S.N. '19



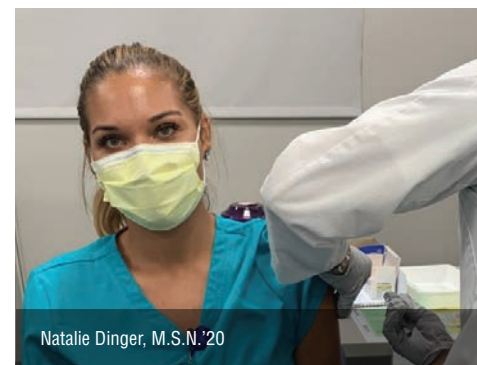
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Anastasia Marie Santiago, M.S.N. '18, D.N.P. '19



Nyota-Nteyi Edjidjimo, B.S.N. '20



Natalie Dinger, M.S.N. '20



“The privilege of administering President Biden’s second COVID vaccine was a highlight of my nursing career. That photo captures a special moment between patient and nurse—that moment when, after a devastating year in our human history, hope is restored as the potential for ongoing health is secured. ... The advanced education in clinical practice and leadership skills I received at the University of Miami gave me the confidence as a nurse to fully participate in this moment in history. Go ‘Canes!”
—Ric Cuming, M.S.N. '95, chief nurse executive at Delaware-based ChristianaCare

Associate Deans Named

Crenshaw takes on new role, while Behar-Zusman reprises a recent one



Associate Dean Crenshaw

Nichole Crenshaw, D.N.P. '14, assistant professor of clinical and longtime director of the Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner program, was named associate dean for nursing undergraduate programs at the School of Nursing and Health Studies (SONHS) in January.

“I am humbled by this opportunity to work with top professionals who are passionate about nursing,” she said. “This is a phenomenal time to contribute to health care and craft a new tomorrow. I am excited to begin this journey.”

On faculty since 2013, Crenshaw is an elected Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners and is board-certified as both an adult nurse practitioner and adult gerontology acute care nurse practitioner. A Certified Healthcare Simulation Educator, she has been a leader in innovating simulation-based education that bridges the gap between didactic instruction and clinical practice.

“Dr. Crenshaw is an exemplary clinician, researcher, educator, and nurse leader, as well as a valued member of our school and health care community,” said Dean Cindy L. Munro. “Her unparalleled commitment to excellence will serve as an inspiration and a driving force for our stellar undergraduate nursing programs.”

Crenshaw belongs to the University of Miami COVID-19 Preparedness Committee, and represents SONHS on UM’s Faculty Senate and Graduate Council. In addition, she works in the cardiothoracic/surgical intensive care unit at Jackson Memorial Hospital. An advanced practice registered nurse, Crenshaw holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing from Florida International University. She earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree and a post-master’s certificate from SONHS.

Victoria Behar-Zusman was named associate dean for research in December 2020—a role she previously held from 2011 to 2018. In addition, she leads the school’s Ph.D. in Nursing Science program.

“I’m honored to have a second opportunity to guide the research enterprise and research training at the SONHS,” said Behar-Zusman, a tenured professor at SONHS since 2006. “With our talented faculty researchers and clinicians, our outstanding research personnel and administrators, and our state-of-the-art facilities, we are positioned to continue advancing clinical and health promotion science for the most vulnerable members of society.”

Behar-Zusman’s 30-year record of National Institutes of Health-funded



Associate Dean Behar-Zusman

research is focused on developing interventions tailored for ethnic and racial minorities, as well as other underserved communities. A member of UM’s Clinical Translational Science Institute Executive Committee, she is principal investigator (PI) for the school’s Center for Latino Health Research Opportunities (CLaRO), an NIH-funded Center of Excellence entering its 15th year of funding (previously known as El Centro).

“Dr. Behar-Zusman’s outstanding track record of leading major multidisciplinary research initiatives at this institution has helped build the School of Nursing and Health Studies into a formidable force in the science of health disparities,” said Dean Munro. “Her rigor, dedication, and agility will prove invaluable to the school at this complex juncture for higher education and community health investigation.”

You can read Behar-Zusman’s “Faculty Profile” on page 32.

Telomere Health and ICU Outcomes

Faculty study awarded Research Impact Grant

Patients who survive the intensive care unit (ICU) have disproportionately higher morbidity than other hospitalized groups. Nearly 70 percent experience declines in physical and/or cognitive function, and almost all experience symptoms of anxiety and depressed mood.

Faculty from the School of Nursing and Health Studies wondered whether some of those declines and mood changes might be related to telomere shortening or damage. Co-investigators Charles Downs, associate professor, and Zhan Liang, assistant professor, will study this question through a new Impact Research Grant from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN).

Telomeres are the “caps” at the ends of each DNA strand that protect the DNA. Damage, or shortening, of telomeres is linked to aging and a variety of disease processes. Downs and Liang specifically wondered whether critical illness causes oxidative stress (an imbalance of oxidants and antioxidants) that accelerates telomere attrition, ultimately affecting physical, cognitive and psychological outcomes among ICU survivors.

Studies have already established that critically ill patients experience inflammation and elevated energy expenditure (hypermetabolism) while in a resting state, both of which may lead



to oxidative stress and have the potential to damage telomeres; increased inflammation is also associated with shorter telomeres.

Previous studies have reported measurable telomere attrition as early as three days after ICU admission. Research has also shown that telomere length controls immune senescence (the aging of the immune system and ability of immune cells to replicate). But what previous studies have not evaluated is the relationship between ICU and post-ICU-related morbidities and telomere length or senescence.

In their study, Downs and Liang will examine the relationship between telomere length, telomere-induced senescence, and ICU-related outcomes; the relationship between telomere

length, telomere-induced senescence and physical, cognitive, and psychological outcomes among ICU survivors; and the extent to which oxidative stress moderates these relationships.

Downs and Liang’s team will recruit mechanically ventilated patients who are newly admitted to ICUs at University of Miami Hospital and Clinics. They will then measure telomere length, oxidative stress, and other illness factors, as well as patients’ post-ICU handgrip, foot strength, participation in activities of daily living (ADL), memory, attention, executive function, anxiety, and depressed mood.



Study co-investigators are Arsham Alamian, SONHS associate dean for health studies, and Tanira Ferreira, assistant professor of medicine and director of inpatient services for UHealth.

SONHS by the Numbers



#23 in Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research 2020 ranking: NIH funding to nursing schools



\$3.21 million NIH funding for fiscal year 2020



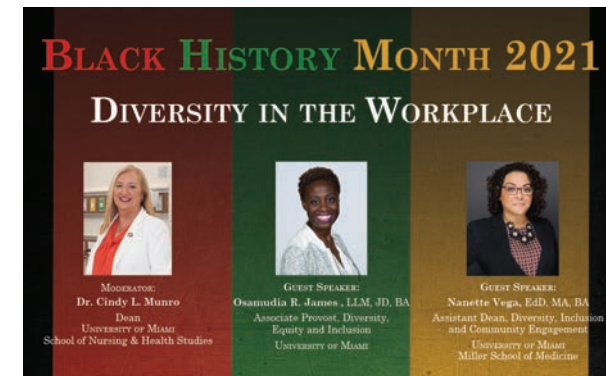
#30 in Newsweek's February 2021 article “50 Best Colleges for Nursing in America”



#49 UM's ranking in U.S. News & World Report's 2021 Best Colleges, National Universities

Diversity and Inclusion Panel

Equitable health care requires changes throughout the industry



As part of Black History Month, a panel discussion hosted by the School of Nursing and Health Studies addressed two important issues in the health care field today: diversity and inclusion.

Studies show that many inequities exist in health care, and some stem from bias among health care workers. Panelist Osamudia James, the university’s first associate provost for diversity, equity and inclusion and a Miami Law professor, offered evidence that race-based misconceptions still exist among health care workers, even those with no other racial animus. For example, studies show some health care workers believe Black patients don’t feel pain as significantly as others. This has led to widespread disparities in how pain is treated in Black patients versus white patients, she noted.

“Surely these misconceptions among medical professionals come from the usual places,” James said. “But it also comes from more mundane social systems to which all of us are more quietly but regularly exposed.” Those systems, she added, include movies and television, the people we see in power, and various work structures.

One component of changing these systems is changing health care education. “The need to deepen diversity and inclusion in higher

education is a critical facet of achieving equity and addressing systemic racism,” said moderator Cindy L. Munro, dean of the nursing school. The nursing school has several efforts underway to ensure that diversity is a priority, including

the new Dean’s Special Advisory Committee on Recruitment and Retention of Black Faculty.

The UM Miller School of Medicine is also working to address racial inequities within the school and patient care. In June 2020, it created a Task Force for Racial Justice, in part to address a call to action from leaders of the Student National Medical Association.

“Racial justice is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities,” said panelist Nanette Vega, who leads the task force and is the Miller School’s assistant professor for medical education and assistant dean of diversity, inclusion, and community engagement. “It’s also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial justice through proactive and preventative measures.”

In January, the task force released an in-depth report with strategies for addressing racial inequities and bias throughout the Miller School, from admissions and student affairs, to faculty affairs, research, curriculum decisions and community engagement.

“What was revealed is that there’s lots of work to be done,” Vega said. The Miller School’s Dean’s Diversity Council is now working to implement the task force’s strategies.

Vega and James both noted that, to create sustainable diversity and inclusion within an organization, efforts must not stop with one event or training session. A diverse and inclusive organization requires embedded structures that become part of the fabric of the organization and live beyond the tenure of any one person or committee. Examples include templates to help in the hiring process and requirements for implicit bias training before serving on an admissions committee.

“A truly sustainable culture requires meaningful participation of all members—every member of the institution,” Vega said.

Also in honor of Black History Month, the Multicultural Nursing Student Association hosted a discussion titled “Health Disparities in Relation to Chronic Conditions Experienced by African American Women,” featuring SONHS panelists Brenda Owusu (MNSA advisor), Susan Prather, Debbie Anglade, Balkys Bivins, and Caroline Elistin, D.N.P. ’11.

In addition to recent events, faculty and staff at SONHS are taking advantage of new educational opportunities offered by UM Human Resources to help elucidate issues of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. “The training sessions surrounding inclusion have been insightful and provide an opportunity to learn from each other as well as share our beliefs,” says Zuzer Calero, SONHS director of business operations. “They have provided employees with a platform to think at a deeper level about the dynamics of our teams and the University.”

View the Diversity in the Workplace discussion: <https://vimeo.com/513142547>.

Teaming Up for High-Risk Tots

SONHS and Linda Ray Intervention Center pilot integrated public health education model

A University of Miami program to help at-risk infants and toddlers, including those born prenatally substance exposed, is getting a boost from an evolving partnership with the School of Nursing and Health Studies.

Since Fall 2019, SONHS students have helped provide health education for the children, families, and staff of the Linda Ray Intervention Center, which delivers early intervention services, including developmental screenings and assessments, behavioral support strategies, and training for families, as part of Miami Dade County Public Schools PreK Programs.



Courtesy of Linda Ray Intervention Center

and then planning, delivering, and evaluating health education sessions to meet the center's needs," says Assistant Professor Yui Matsuda, who coordinates the course with fellow faculty member Régine Reaves.

The partnership grew increasingly creative after Miami-Dade Schools shut down in-person classes in early 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. The center delivered digital devices and school supplies to its young students' homes, so the toddlers and their families could continue receiving virtual services.

Supervised by clinical instructor Nancy Gulotta, SONHS students provided public health information via the internet and conducted family health surveys virtually.

They also adapted the in-person health fair they traditionally host at the center to a virtual format and led online workshops for staff and parents on COVID-19 and other health-related topics.

"This has been a wonderful collaboration," says Reaves. "Our students apply the nursing process from beginning to end from a community perspective and put

the pieces together to produce a great health education project."

The Linda Ray Intervention Center opened in 1993 to help and research infants prenatally exposed to cocaine and facing other risks to their development. Children typically enter the program as babies and graduate at 3 years old. The center has served over 1,000 babies and their families to date. Mounting evidence shows that collaborative, team-based care of the kind being piloted in this partnership helps improve results for patients of all ages. Working at the center with professionals from other disciplines—including teachers, counselors, and clinicians—helps nursing students better understand other roles and share experiences in team-based care, SONHS course leaders say.

"Seeing children in their learning environment, working closely with the teachers and Dr. Katz to further understand the context of their living situation and tailor health education accordingly," says Matsuda, "all of this has been a great learning experience for our students."

This nursing and early intervention partnership arose when UM President Julio Frenk, a noted public health expert, visited the center in early 2019 and saw potential for an academic collaboration with the school. The center's director, Lynn Katz, research associate professor in UM's Department of Psychology, suggested a cross-disciplinary initiative to integrate public health issues.

Dean Cindy L. Munro connected Katz with SONHS faculty, giving undergraduates in the public health nursing course a chance for clinical practice at the center, which serves families struggling with complex issues including substance abuse and poverty. For half the semester, SONHS students interact with preschoolers, parents, and teachers, applying many of the public health nursing concepts they learn in class.

"The students have an opportunity to holistically understand the lives of children and their families by conducting nursing assessments, developing nursing diagnoses based on those assessments,

PROMiSE in the Palm of a Hand

App disguised as a home décor website aims to help domestic violence survivors reach safety

What if you could fit a lifeline in the palm of your hand? PROMiSE stands for PROMoting Safety in Emergencies. Found at WithWomenPromise.com, it is an app that helps users in at-risk relationships identify resources and establish safety plans based on the level of danger being experienced. PROMiSE gives guidance appropriate to the current situation, from stowing small amounts of money and making copies of important papers to logging abusive incidents and, in extreme cases, dialing 9-1-1.

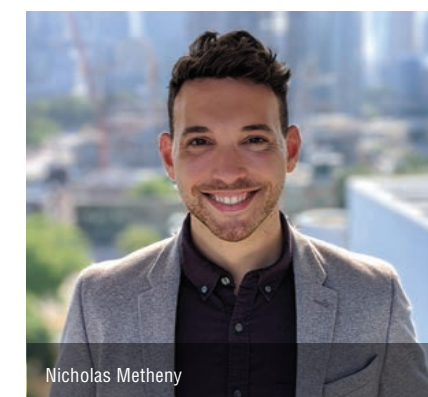
Assistant Professor of Clinical Nicholas Metheny is co-Principal Investigator of the Canadian research team that developed the PROMiSE app after gathering input from over 100 survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) and IPV service providers. "The women we interviewed told us that since users would likely be accessing this content in close proximity to their abusers, the app would need to be disguised in a way that doesn't raise suspicion," he explains.

With funding from St. Michael's Hospital Foundation, Metheny and Patricia O'Campo, of the MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions in Toronto, designed the digital tool to look like a home furnishings shopping site on the surface, but embedded it with a risk survey and local resources tailored to the Greater Toronto area, where Metheny was based before joining the School of Nursing and Health Studies last year.

"Gender-based violence has increased significantly because of the strain COVID-19 is placing on individuals, relationships, and our entire social fabric," says Metheny. "This app is meant to capitalize on safety plans and safety planning activities, while providing linkages to resources that



are still up and running or available to help people in different ways than they did before COVID-19, such as through telehealth or home visitation."



Nicholas Metheny

Metheny and the team learned that COVID-19 decimated traditional resources like shelters and hotlines and made traditional advice for individuals experiencing IPV less relevant in some cases due to quarantine and isolation guidelines.

"Of course, users still have access to local IPV services and support, but we hope this app empowers women to plan for

their safety in ways that are feasible and safe. We are also working on integrating the app into outpatient clinics in Toronto so that women can access it before seeing their provider," says Metheny, noting that the source code for the app will also be made available to anyone who'd like to adapt PROMiSE to their local community services.

Metheny was in his first semester of college when he began giving presentations on dating violence. Now a nurse and public health scientist, he has been focused on research related to intimate partner violence ever since.

"Intimate partner violence is happening all around us," he says. "We need programs and interventions aimed at maximizing the safety of those who are experiencing it now, but at the same time we need to be making progress on the larger, structural issues that lead to violence in the first place... Things like universal health care, marriage equality, racial justice—these can all be thought of as IPV interventions as well."

Going Global Virtually

New SONHS partnership in Dominican Republic creates a pandemic-safe academic exchange

This semester 40 students from the Dominican Republic and Miami broke language and geographic barriers by uniting in cyberspace to learn about global health care.

“Patient Safety Across Borders During the Covid-19 Pandemic,” a virtual course for students from the School of Nursing and Health Studies (SONHS) and Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (UASD), the D.R.’s largest university, launched January 29 on Zoom with a warm welcome from Johis Ortega, associate dean for Hemispheric and Global Initiatives and associate professor of clinical at SONHS.

“This program marks the beginning of an official relationship between SONHS and UASD,” said Ortega, crediting the support of the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

“Our objective in financing virtual programs like this between U.S. and Dominican universities is to promote exchange during the pandemic,” explained Carolina Escalera, a diplomat of the U.S. Embassy and State Department. “We understand that opportunities for dialogue are essential to meet the challenges of this time....”

Dean Cindy L. Munro was also there to congratulate the inaugural cohort. “Your participation in this innovative endeavor represents a commitment to recovery—the recovery of individual patients, as well as the recovery of our health systems and communities,” she said.

Associate Professor of Clinical Juan M. González teaches the course in a hybrid format. In addition to completing several patient safety modules asynchronously throughout the semester, students participated in five real-time virtual class



meetings. A final group project gave students from both institutions even more opportunities to interact with and learn from one another about health issues and care in their respective countries.

“I have no doubt this will offer a model for virtual exchanges in the area of nursing,” said Jorge Asjana David, UASD’s director of National and International Relations and Collaborations. “This collaboration will be the first of many because success is guaranteed.”

Nicole Perez, B.S.N. ’21, one of 20 students from Miami, says she took the course to “enrich her cultural competency as a future nurse in a way that reading about it in a textbook cannot.” She also noted that the bilingual webinars helped her brush up on her Spanish—a “translate” feature on Zoom utilized a real-time interpreter, but Perez says she challenged herself not to use it all the time.

Students were active participants in lively webinar discussions with front line health experts from both countries.

SONHS alumnus David Zambrana, D.N.P. ’09, Ph.D. ’17, Jackson Health System’s executive vice president for hospital operations, gave students a gripping overview of how one of the largest public health systems in the U.S. has been navigating patient care and community education throughout the pandemic.

SONHS faculty Ortega and González shared their perspectives as practicing emergency department clinicians on the front lines of the crisis.

And José Selig Ripley, of the Dominican Republic Ministry of Health, enlightened students on important public health issues facing the Dominican Republic in managing the current pandemic and preparing for future similar events.

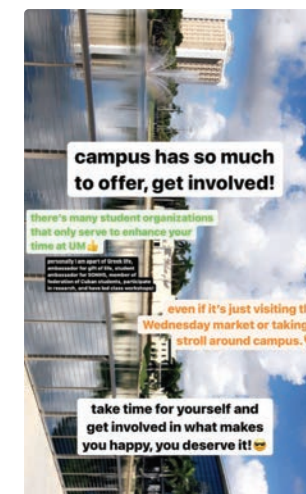
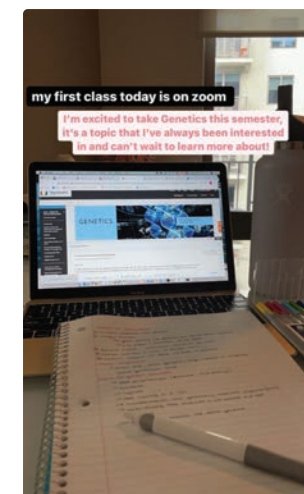
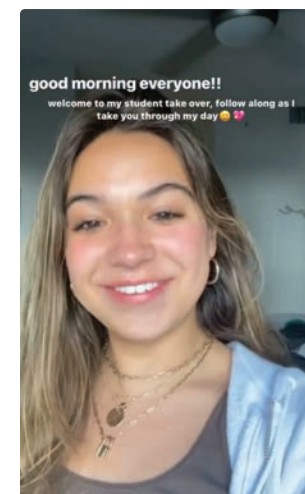
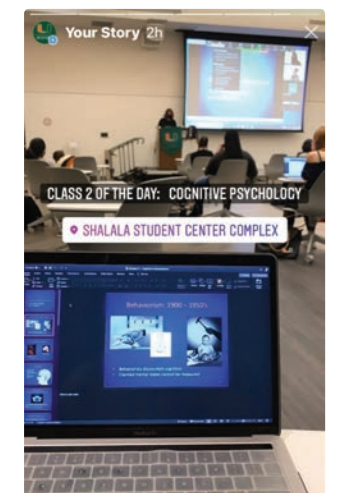
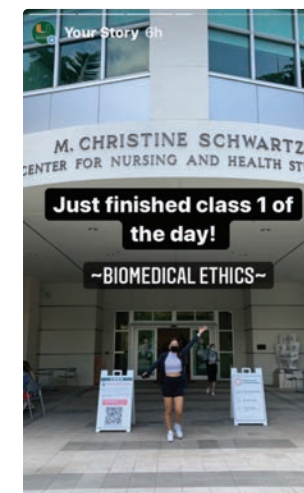
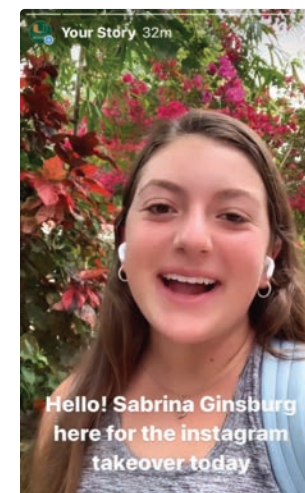
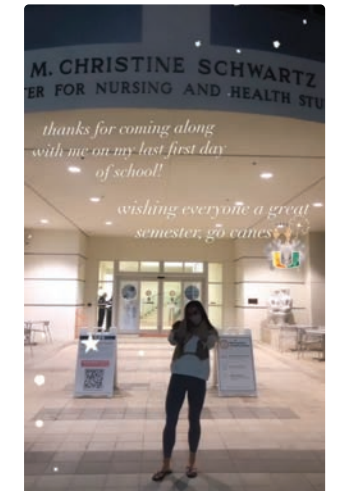
“Teaching and sharing knowledge is very important,” he said. With this new hemispheric course, SONHS and UASD are doing both.

Instagram Takeover

A day in the life of three SONHS students

Dana Webb (nursing), Nicole Flores (health science), and Sabrina Ginsburg (health science) helped us kick off Spring 2021 on social media this past January with a three-day Instagram takeover showing a glimpse of their daily lives as

School of Nursing and Health Studies students. They shared their excitement about the semester, including new classes like biomedical ethics, genetics, health disparities, and cognitive psychology. Enjoy their Instagram stories!



Jackie Gonzalez, Health Care Hero

For 40 years, she's led the way to excellence as a hospital executive, champion of children, policy expert, and perhaps her favorite role, mentor

By Yolanda Mancilla



When a position opened in Nicklaus Children's Hospital's prestigious Magnet Recognition Program in 2011, Chief Nursing Officer Jacqueline (Jackie) Lytle Gonzalez, M.S.N. '87, D.N.P. '13, APRN, NEA-BC, FAAN, immediately thought of a clinical specialist whose unique ability to work with people and processes deeply impressed her. The legendary CNO strode into the young nurse's office and encouraged her to take the position.

"She told me, 'don't worry, we'll do it together—you'll learn and I'll support you,'" recounts Jenny Cordo, D.N.P. '20, RN, NE-BC, who today directs that program. "She has a gift for identifying talent in others before they recognize it in themselves. When you speak with her, you feel you can do anything."

That was the day Cordo learned what it was like to be mentored by the extraordinary Jackie Gonzalez, who recently retired after an illustrious 40-plus-year career at Nicklaus Children's. That their mentoring relationship continues a decade later doesn't surprise anyone who knows Gonzalez—mentoring is at the heart of her work to develop the nurse leaders transforming the profession.

"Jackie plays an integral role in mentoring our D.N.P. students as nurse leaders in practice immersion and scholarly projects," says Mary Hooshmand, associate dean for graduate clinical programs and associate professor of clinical. "She brings out their voices and passion for nursing, and

helps open their eyes to the role they can play as nurse leaders in communities across diverse settings."

Gonzalez, a longtime Dean's Visiting Committee member, started teaching at the School of Nursing and Health Studies after completing her master's degree in nursing there. She has co-taught the D.N.P. program's Health Care Management course with Jackson Health System VP David Zambrana, D.N.P. '09, Ph.D. '17, as well as the Health Policy course with Hooshmand. Gonzalez, who earned her M.B.A. from the George Washington University, works one-on-one with students as they develop policy papers on issues that impact the patient populations they serve.

Her own impact at Nicklaus, most recently as senior vice president and CNO, is tremendous. Gonzalez led the nursing team to its coveted American Nurses Credentialing Center Magnet designation in 2003, plus four consecutive redesignations. She led all inpatient care units to achieve the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses Beacon Awards for nursing excellence, a first for a children's hospital. A pediatric inpatient fall-prevention program she spearheaded with a talented team received the 2015 ANCC National Magnet Prize—another first for a children's facility—and is now used in 16 languages in over 1,500 hospitals worldwide.

Gonzalez's long history as a health executive and nurse practitioner in South Florida provides crucial context for her teaching. "Many of today's students don't know the stories about uninsured children before Florida KidCare came about in the 1990s," says Hooshmand, a former Florida Department of Health executive nursing director. "Jackie combines those and other real-life stories with clinical experience, data, and evidence to illustrate their health policy implications for families and children."

It's a history Gonzalez and Hooshmand remember all too well. "I could always reach out to Jackie about a child in need, and she would ensure they were linked into the system of care," says Hooshmand. "These were very sick children with special needs, cancer, genetic disorders, children who needed surgeries, and there was never a child who was not helped."

Addressing children's unmet health care needs is a lifelong passion that drives Gonzalez. For her own D.N.P. scholarly project, she developed a nurse navigator role for pediatric oncology—a position more common to adults but nonexistent in pediatrics at that time.

Hooshmand also shares that, as founding president of the South Florida Nursing Consortium, Gonzalez built a network of nursing programs and practice partners to match students with the clinical placements crucial for them to enter nursing practice—a contribution that continues to benefit SONHS students today. This and other achievements



earned Gonzalez the SONHS Alumna of Distinction award in 2005.

Recalling how the D.N.P. program "reignited my own passion for clinical nursing," Gonzalez tries to do the same for others. "It's all about leveraging their passion along with their strengths," she says.

Gonzalez credits the late Donna Thaler, then-Miami Children's Hospital's VP of nursing and CNO, as a beacon in her career. "She mentored many in this community," says Gonzalez, "and I was one of the lucky ones she encouraged and molded under her vision and leadership."

Like Thaler before her, Gonzalez lights the way for her mentees. "Creating an environment that provides encouragement and tools for nurses to own their practice, to own their leadership, and really shine is very satisfying," she says. "They bring their ideas and innovation, they reflect on how to solve problems, and they make the decisions. It may seem easier to provide quick answers, but it's more important to listen and to ask questions."

The impact of Gonzalez's teaching and mentoring came full circle when she faced her own health challenges in recent years. She was gratified to see SONHS graduates wherever she went for treatment. "I found my students everywhere, and they supported me and then often thanked me for mentoring

them," she says. "It reminded me how there are many nurses in significant roles in our community who came from the SONHS programs. You can feel their presence. They are our backbone, driving and improving health care, and making a difference given all the opportunities that today's challenges bring."

Gonzalez was personally moved by their compassion and concern. "I felt like I had angels watching over me everywhere," she says. "Knowing I had SONHS students caring for me gave me comfort and confidence and helped me heal."

In 2017, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce hailed Gonzalez as a Health Care Hero—a title Hooshmand echoes today, adding that Gonzalez is "an unstoppable, impactful leader with great vision who knows how to persevere through challenges." For Cordo, her mentor is "a guiding force of nursing excellence."

Asked her message for the nurses she's guided, Gonzalez reflects back to times when she has needed them. "You can thank all my angels for being there for me," she says. "I knew I had advocates, those great human beings whose passion and dedication for nursing was never more appreciated than when they held my hand, giving me strength."



Clinical Education Combats Trafficking



As a trauma-informed standardized patient Lindsay Lester, A.B.S.N. '19, helped SONHS nursing students recognize red flags associated with human trafficking victims.

An award-winning simulation-based program puts nursing students face to face with the public health crisis of human trafficking to help them recognize potential victims.

By Robin Shear

Looking back, Jauvana Hall-Wills, M.S.N. '20, sees that the terrified patient with bruises, who signed herself out against medical orders, must have been a victim of human trafficking. But at the time, she didn't fully grasp the horror her patient was facing.

Years later, a simulated human trafficking educational experience at the School of Nursing and Health Studies, eerily similar to that encounter, helped Hall-Wills piece the red flags together. In both cases, she could hear an angry voice coming

through the patient's cell phone, ordering the patient to leave the hospital despite a clear need for medical care.

"I was like, 'We're trying to take care of you, you're in a safe place,' but she was just so scared," recalls Hall-Wills. "There were many signs there we didn't connect. Now I'll know. I'll be able to handle it better."

Stories like Hall-Wills' are not uncommon. "Approximately 68 percent of trafficked survivors report contact

with health care providers during their time held captive," say SONHS faculty Deborah Salani and Beatriz Valdes.

That's why Salani and Valdes, associate and assistant professors of clinical, respectively, developed a simulation-based intervention for nursing students at SONHS focused on human trafficking awareness. That educational initiative, "Do You See What I See? Recognizing Human Trafficking," recently won a Cane Crusader Award from the University of Miami Citizens Board.



Through it they are preparing students like Hall-Wills to identify, screen, and assist potential trafficking victims encountered in clinical settings.

"Most health care providers do not recognize the red flags associated with human trafficking," explains Salani, director of the post-graduate certificate program in psychiatric-mental health nursing. "More education is essential."

Human trafficking (HT)—the enslavement of people for labor, services, and/or commercial sex—is one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises. The International Labor Organization estimates there to be over 40 million victims globally, with hundreds of thousands in the United States. Florida has the nation's third-highest rate of human trafficking, according to National Human Trafficking Hotline statistics, and Miami-Dade County marks the epicenter of the state's public health crisis.

"Every nurse needs to have the ability to respond in an appropriate way to someone in trouble," says Dean Cindy L. Munro, noting that human trafficking awareness training should be as commonplace and available to health providers as basic lifesaving techniques.

The Florida Board of Nursing agrees. Its mandate for continuing education on the topic went into effect in 2019. That same year, Salani and Valdes rolled out their simulation-based program, built around nationally established best practices from organizations like HEAL (Health, Education, Advocacy, Linkage) Trafficking.

Last year SONHS hosted the HEAL Human Trafficking Awareness Summit and a presentation by Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle, whose Human Trafficking Unit has worked with more than 700 human trafficking victims and filed over 685 human trafficking-related cases since 2012.

In developing their recognition intervention, Salani and Valdes also collaborated with Lindsay Lester, A.B.S.N. '19, then a student in the accelerated B.S.N. program who already had a master's in psychology and experience with both trauma-informed care and sexual assault response.

In addition to consulting with Salani and Valdes on a national presentation and the HT simulation scripts, Lester volunteered to serve as the program's first standardized patient. (Standardized patients in human trafficking scenarios require specialized training and should never be actual survivors so as to avoid retraumatization, experts note.)

"It was well-received," Lester says of the simulation. "Some of the clinicians picked it up quicker than others, but everyone was able to get the gist of what this simulation was about, and that's the important thing."

Lester portrayed two different patients—one a victim of labor trafficking, the other of sex trafficking. Her back-story, medical history, and script were carefully tailored to test students' awareness levels and improve their responsiveness in assisting potential victims.

"It is important for nurse practitioner students to recognize contextual clues that may be helpful in identifying a HT patient, especially if the patient is withholding information or is a poor historian," says Valdes.

Clues that a patient may be trapped in the waking nightmare of human trafficking vary widely but can include a lack of ID or personal items, evidence of physical neglect and psychological trauma, hunger, agitation, and branding marks, such as tattoos. For Lester, now a registered nurse in Nevada, the key to connecting is emotional intelligence, "really pushing your own judgment and opinions aside."

"The patient you're helping, their safety is the most important," Lester continues. "They've been stripped of their human rights and pretty much any decision they're making about their body, so giving them their control back—even if it's in a 20-minute session—that's a start. You can't just expect someone to come right out and say, 'This is my story and I need help.' It takes time."

Learning through simulation brought that message home for nurse Jauvana Hall-Wills. "As nurses, often we're rushing and we're standing over the patients, so I had to step back from that role, especially in a situation like this, where I think it might be human trafficking," she says. "It's not just about checking things off my list or giving medication... I have to have the patient feel comfortable enough to open up to me—give her food, water, a blanket, before going in and asking questions."

Her advice to other health care providers? "Even if the hotline number is all you know, just that number could help one person."

To report suspected human trafficking activity, call the Human Trafficking Miami Hotline at 305-FIX-STOP, the Florida Department of Children and Families abuse hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE, or the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888. For emergencies, dial 911.

Lessons from Lakay

Health Studies student's service project makes 'huge and lasting impact' on Haiti school

By Maya Bell



Nestled in the foothills of Haiti's northern mountain range, the free elementary school in Milot has no running water, no electricity, and no roof over the makeshift classrooms that extend beyond the old, three-room house. When it rains, children sit in puddles.

Yet despite the absence of such basics, the roughly 150 students now have improved health, an invaluable resource which the historic community of about 10,000 owes in large part to a project implemented by School of Nursing and Health Studies senior Diane Stephen.

Six months after Stephen, a public health and health sciences major, introduced monitoring, handwashing, and other measures aimed at curtailing communicable diseases at Ecole Marie Claire Heureuse de Milot, the incidents of scabies, pink eye, lice, diarrhea, ringworm, and viral infections that were common at the school—and too often brought home—have all but disappeared.

"Diane's work left a huge and lasting impact," said Jennifer Charles, a physician's assistant who, with the help of Jude Dhaiti, a longtime data analyst with SONHS, founded the nonprofit HER for Humanity to save the school from closing. "Almost any day, we would have five kids in a room with rashes, or fevers, or lesions. Now such incidents have dropped to maybe two a month. She had tremendous results."

Stephen, a civic scholar with the University of Miami's Butler Center for Service and Leadership, decided to develop a school-based intervention for her required community project last March, just as the novel coronavirus pandemic put much of the world at a standstill. Forced to stay at home and continue her classes remotely, she initially proposed raising money to buy and donate masks and other infection-fighting supplies to Haiti, a place she has close ties to but only visited once. Her parents, who immigrated to Broward County as young adults, were born in or near Milot, the first capital of Haiti, and

the site of some of the country's most treasured landmarks.

She named the project Operation Lakay, which means "home" in Creole, because she pursued it from her own house for her ancestral home, with guidance from Ashley Falcon, assistant professor of clinical, whose course in Public Health Statistics would prove essential.

But after discussing her idea with Charles, also the daughter of Haitian immigrants who began going on medical missions to Haiti after the catastrophic 2010 earthquake, Stephen realized Operation Lakay needed to meet the most basic tenet of public health. It needed to produce enduring change.

"Public health is all about preventing rather than treating disease," said Stephen, who hopes to be a physician and work for a philanthropic endeavor one day. "And Jennifer made me realize that while donating supplies is nice, it's a temporary fix, not a solution. She also helped me

understand that while COVID is a big concern here, it's not a priority in Haiti because there's so little testing for it, and there are so many other health concerns with so little access to health care."

With Charles' help, Stephen focused on identifying the health issues most prevalent at the pre-K through fifth grade school and developing a tracking and triage system to monitor and treat the students. No one had kept records, but the maladies weren't hard to spot: pink eye, scabies, coughs, running noses, nausea, vomiting, ringworm, and lice. Stephen also raised nearly \$1,000, mostly from family and members of her church, and used half to pay for thermometers, masks, hand sanitizer, soap, all-purpose cleansers, bleach, and wipes to curtail the spread of those infections. She donated the remainder to school programs.

Today, teachers, staff, and students at the school ritually follow the same protocols. Everyone wears masks and frequently washes their hands with soap—from new buckets equipped with spigots that dispense unsullied water. Teachers and staff also sanitize seats and tables before each class, and scan faces for sniffles, rashes, or other telltale signs of infections.

"Every month, there was a decrease in the number of people who got sick. I can't begin to describe the feeling. I was overjoyed."

— Diane Stephen, Class of 2021

And now, anytime a student shows signs or symptoms of infection or illness, it's documented with photographs in a medical incident report that is electronically shared with medical professionals affiliated with HER for Humanity and, when necessary, nearby Hôpital Sacré Coeur, which has served North Haiti for decades.

"The whole point was not to treat every illness the same way, to keep track of who got sick, and to intervene when needed," Stephen said. "And it worked. Every single month, there was a decrease



in the number of people who got sick, in the cases referred to the hospital. I can't begin to describe the feeling. I was overjoyed—not only that I was able to help 150 children but also the staff. For them it was eye-opening. We all could see how one little intervention in a population could affect the whole community." There was no joy the first time Charles visited the school in 2018, during her weeklong medical mission to Hôpital

made me a spread sheet, and said, 'This won't cost more than \$1,200 a month to run. We can do fundraisers, write grants, and keep the school going ourselves.'"

A month later, Charles established HER (for Health, Education, and Resources) for Humanity, and invited other professional women who were similarly interested in philanthropic causes to join the board. She has little doubt that, one day, Stephen will be a board candidate, too. If so, they both have Dhaiti, and his passion for doing good at the nursing school and in his homeland, to thank.

A former adviser to the Haitian student organization Planet Kreyol, Dhaiti met Stephen while judging its Mr. and Miss Planet Kreyol pageant in 2019. Until Stephen was crowned Miss Planet Kreyol, neither knew of the other's affiliation with the nursing school or connection to Haiti. Soon after, Stephen sought Dhaiti's help with her capstone project, but when he read her proposal, he connected her to Charles.

"I knew they'd be a good match," Dhaiti said. "They both pretty much have the same interests, and now Diane knows the magic words. To really help a community, it's all about education and sustainability. I can see how she grew and how her project evolved into a lasting solution."

Injecting Hope

SONHS BOOSTS KEY COMMUNITY INITIATIVES TO COMBAT COVID-19

By Robin Shear

Using a golf putter to guide his steps, John Bojnansky walks into Jackson Health System's Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center with some trepidation. Within 45 minutes, though, the 72-year-old retiree emerges, his anxiety replaced by nostalgia. "It reminded me of when my parents took me and my sister to get the polio vaccine in 1954," he says. "But back then we stood in line for hours."

Almost seven decades after Jonas Salk's world-changing vaccine helped prevent the crippling effects of the polio virus, an equally historic vaccine push is injecting hope into a time of fear and fatigue caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bojnansky secured his shot at a site run by Miami-Dade County's Jackson Health System, which has proved a potent force in getting vaccines deemed 95 percent effective into the arms of the community it serves.

By week 10 of its ambitious program, Jackson had managed to vaccinate more than 108,000 individuals—members of the public, patients, and its frontline health team—with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.



Among the leaders of Jackson’s massive COVID-19 vaccination effort is David Zambrana, D.N.P. ’09, Ph.D. ’17, executive vice president of hospital operations for Jackson Health System. Zambrana oversees six hospitals throughout the county, with a seventh, Jackson West, set to open in June.

Jackson’s public vaccination effort began in January and continues, as of press time, at three vaccination sites throughout the county seven days a week for 10 hours each day.

“Our focus has been getting as much vaccine out to our community as quickly as possible,” explains Zambrana, “and making sure the demographic of populations that are accessing the vaccine really matches the patients that are most vulnerable or at greatest risk.”

Initially Florida designated patients 65 and older (over 4 million of the state’s 21.5 million residents) as the most vulnerable demographic. Connecting with this generally less tech-savvy segment of the population has required a great deal of support, from outreach personnel, vaccinators, and observers, to the pharmacy staff mixing the vaccine on site and the security staff needed to guide thousands of cars and patients daily.

One of the ways Jackson leaders like Zambrana managed to implement this well-choreographed plan without draining resources from the six-hospital, 2,000-bed acute care health enterprise was to enlist support from county departments and community partners such as the University of Miami.

In addition to engaging help from Miami-Dade County paramedics and other emergency personnel, Zambrana reached out to his alma mater (see Alumni Profile, page 35). He contacted School of Nursing and Health Studies (SONHS) Dean Cindy L. Munro and Associate Dean for Graduate Clinical Programs Mary Hooshmand.

“And without hesitation they said, ‘Of course we’d be willing to help,’” recalls Zambrana.

According to Hooshmand, as soon as the announcement went out to graduate nursing students, many responded to sign up for clinical hours at Jackson’s largest vaccination location: the

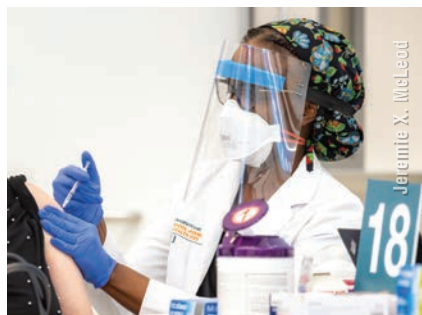
Student Involvement

From vaccination station number 18, one of those students, Desiree Simon, D.N.P. ’17, M.S.N. ’21, could see the parade of seniors entering the Lynn Rehab Center’s first floor lobby. They represented a range of ethnicities and ages, from 65 to over 100. Some were using wheelchairs, walkers, or canes. Others required supportive oxygen.

But more than anything what struck Simon during her first shift as a volunteer vaccinator for Jackson was the intensity of emotion she witnessed in her patients. “Some of them were just so grateful to be alive, and they just hope the COVID vaccine will help them go back to some type of normalcy,” she says.

Simon recounts the saga of a woman who managed to get her 89-year-old mother an appointment at the Jackson main vaccination site just hours before it was to close, having already driven from one end of the county to the other in search of the vaccine.

“She and her daughter were clapping because for them it was such a relief to finally get the vaccine,” says Simon. “She said she was so grateful at how efficient it was and she was just giving blessings to everybody.”



Another patient, a woman whose son served as her translator, began crying after receiving the vaccine. When Simon asked why, she told Simon it was a mix

Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center for The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis at UHealth/Jackson Memorial.



of being anxious about the vaccine and being overjoyed because now she’ll be able to see her grandchildren again.

Simon remembers the longevity advice offered by a 101-year-old patient who arrived for her vaccine: “She said, ‘Just be happy, just be positive, don’t hold grudges.’” She also recalls seeing patients laughing and dancing after getting the shot. “I think it gave a lot of them hope, something they weren’t sure they were going to be able to see,” notes Simon.

When Simon entered the school’s adult-gerontology primary care track in 2019, she already had a master’s degree in nursing administration and leadership, as well as a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from SONHS. She is currently the lead oncology nurse navigator for both breast and complex colon patients at Mercy Hospital and says she does a lot of walking to combat the compassion fatigue COVID-19 has exacerbated this past year.

Taking an active role in Jackson’s vaccination effort has also offered a

measure of comfort. “The experience was really rewarding,” says Simon, who plans to return for future shifts. “I got a lot of great feedback from the patients. It was good working with the team at Jackson too.”

Simon’s classmates in the master’s program, Johan Nelson, M.S.N. ’21, and Neslihan Yorukoglu, M.S.N. ’21, also completed clinical hours at Jackson’s Lynn Rehab vaccination site. As observers, they were responsible for patients during the post-vaccine period. They watched for any concerning symptoms or allergic reactions, took vitals as needed, and answered patient questions—lots of them—about the virus and the vaccine.

Nelson recalls it as a welcoming, safe, well-stocked environment.

“The vaccination was really going fast,” Yorukoglu adds. “It was really organized well.”

One of many patients Yorukoglu assisted was a senior named Claire (she asked that her last name not be used to protect her privacy). At first Claire was afraid to enter a hospital setting, especially a public hospital, fearing exposure to COVID or something else, but Jackson’s new rehab center erased all of her fears. “The rehab center is beautiful, and I was very, very much impressed the way they had everything so organized, and it went so fast,” she says.

Yorukoglu remembers Claire well. “She’s very sharp and sweet,” Yorukoglu says. “I liked chatting with her because she’s well-informed about this virus and the vaccination efforts in Florida.”

A clinical research coordinator at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, Yorukoglu enjoyed the opportunity to interact directly with patients while fulfilling her intellectual curiosity about the pioneering vaccination initiative. The observational clinical experience was “rewarding in every way,” she says. “I’m very impressed with the vaccination process over there. The nurses were amazing, and I was glad to provide any little help I could for the organization.”



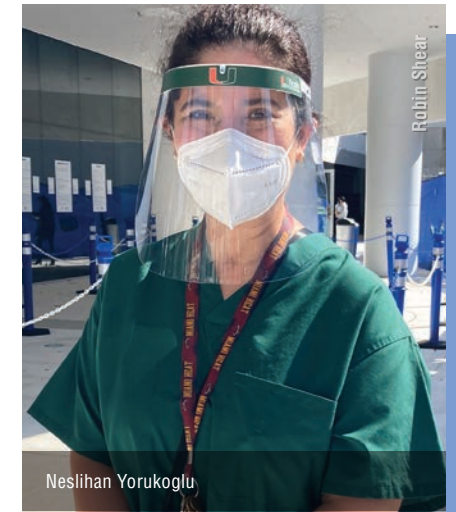
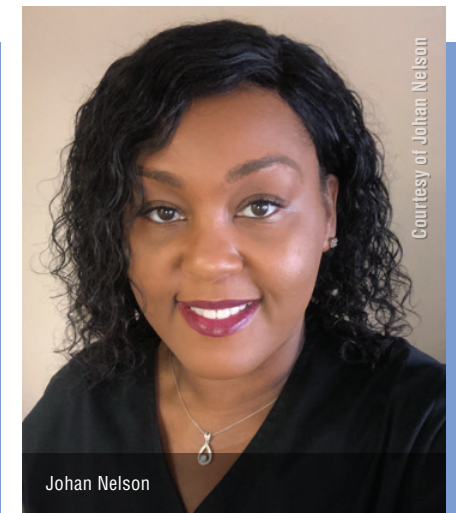
Yorukoglu answered Claire’s questions during the 30-minute observation, then texted her the link to Jackson’s vaccine information site, jacksonhealth.org/keeping-you-safe, for additional information.

“Neslihan was wonderful,” says Claire, who received her first injection at Jackson in January. “Everyone was very professional and helpful.” Yorukoglu’s text turned out to be helpful in yet another way when, the next day, Claire realized she’d dropped her medical alert button at Jackson. Claire called Yorukoglu, who contacted Jackson administration. They not only found Claire’s emergency device but shipped it to her home right away.

At Claire’s second vaccination appointment in February, she had a chance to reunite with Yorukoglu. “I was very pleased I could get the vaccine,” says Claire. “I know it’s not a cure, but if I get the corona[virus], I know it will be milder. God forbid, I don’t want to be hospitalized. I pray every night for my good health. I wash my hands constantly.”

Assistant Professor of Clinical Brenda Owusu directs the primary care nurse practitioner program that Simon, Nelson, and Yorukoglu graduated from this past May. “I support the great work our students are doing in this vaccine venture with Jackson,” she says. “Students have told me they love the effort, and it helps supplement their clinical placements, which have been impacted by COVID-19.”

Indeed, Jackson, an academic and teaching hospital, has been collaborating



with UM for about 75 of its 103 years, notes Jackson executive Zambrana, but in the wake of COVID-19 the hospital had to lock down to the outside world, even long-time partners like UM, “because it was not safe to allow folks in,” Zambrana explains. This vaccination effort represents yet another sign of progress in combatting COVID-19, and Zambrana is enthusiastic about its outcome.

“This gives the students an ability to contribute toward their education process while doing things they love to do—caring for patients, interacting with individuals, helping observe and vaccinate,” he says. “They’ve been wonderful.”

“Our relationship and partnership with the UM School of Nursing and Health Studies is really an important one,” he continues. “The product of the education programs is exceptional, and it’s been very gratifying to know that when we needed support, the school was there without hesitation.”

Fighting COVID-19 Disparities

CLaRO joins NIH's Community Engagement Alliance

By Robin Shear

The ray of hope COVID-19 vaccines represent has been tempered by data on who is and isn't receiving the protective shot.

While racial and ethnic minorities have been disproportionately harmed by COVID-19 in the U.S.—experiencing significantly higher infection, hospitalization, and death rates—vaccination rates continue to lag in these more vulnerable communities.

From fear and mistrust of medical professionals to technology and transportation barriers, any number of issues may be keeping people most at risk of COVID-19 from taking this potentially lifesaving measure.

Now the School of Nursing and Health Studies is part of a National Institutes of Health initiative announced this past September to combat mistrust and fear of public health recommendations. “What this pandemic has shown us, among many other things, is how persistent inequities are,” says SONHS Professor Guillermo “Willy” Prado, vice provost for faculty affairs and dean of the Graduate School. “It's another example of continued disparities among underrepresented groups.”

But persisting disparities cannot be pinpointed to any one cause. “It's a confluence of many factors,” says Professor Victoria Behar-Zusman, associate dean for research and Principal Investigator (PI) of the Center for Latino Health Research Opportunities (CLaRO), a joint University of Miami-Florida International University initiative that addresses a range of health issues affecting Latino populations.



One factor, she notes, is that African American and Latino populations are more likely to work in jobs that expose them to the virus, “where they are not able to work remotely from home—essential jobs such as those in the food and health care industries, construction, and elder caregiving, many of which continued during the shutdowns,” she says. “And they may rely on public transportation which exposes them to COVID-19.”

Unnaturalized immigrants also face greater risk from COVID-19, forgoing testing because they fear being deported. And with no access to unemployment benefits or health insurance, many continue to work in jobs that expose them to the virus, she adds. Compounding matters, vulnerable communities sometimes lack information or are misinformed about COVID-19.

To assess the needs minority communities are experiencing in relation to the pandemic, CLaRO has joined the NIH's Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities. CEAL is a \$12 million yearlong study across 11 states, including Florida, to address misinformation and mistrust about

the coronavirus and related scientific responses to it within minority communities.

Florida's CEAL team, led by physician Olveen Carrasquillo at the Miller School of Medicine, includes efforts by UM, FIU, Florida A&M University, the Moffitt Cancer Center, and Health Choice Network. Of the seven CEAL projects being implemented in Florida, each focuses on a different issue and population.

CLaRO's project for CEAL is focused on meeting the needs of low-income urban residents, agricultural workers, and sexual/gender minorities from South Florida's Latinx communities.

Initial results from community members reveal high levels of vaccine hesitancy among some Hispanic groups in South Florida. Although few have outright refused the vaccine, there seems to be a “wait and see” mentality that may delay vaccine uptake. Many are also suspicious of information they receive from government sources, but expressed trust in experts and our local academic institutions, says Behar-Zusman, who contributed to a national survey deployed by CEAL earlier this year.



Maria Jose Baeza Robba, Ph.D. in nursing science student.

The study leaders hope to come up with best practices and resources to provide members of these communities with sound information about COVID-19 and its treatments. “What we're focused on in these grants is to get out there and do outreach in our communities using our existing infrastructure for community engagement and work on how to engender trust in the vaccine process in these communities,” explains Behar-Zusman, principal investigator for the CEAL grant at SONHS.

She and her co-investigator, Assistant Professor Nicholas Metheny, are addressing the Latinx sexual/gender minority community (SGM) for their portion of the grant. Working with CLaRO community partners like Pridelines and Latinos Salud, the SONHS team has conducted focus groups and surveys throughout South Florida to better understand attitudes toward COVID prevention, clinical trials, and vaccines.

“We are focusing on vaccine hesitancy and the spread of misinformation, which

seems to be a major problem across our communities,” says Metheny.

The findings will help tailor communications materials to effectively promote accurate information about vaccination. Metheny says the data will also help them advise on adaptations and Spanish-language translations of existing COVID-19 educational materials, as well as offer guidance on developing new outreach resources and strategies that could help community organizations harness social and local media to improve public health outcomes.

SONHS Ph.D. student Maria Jose Baeza Robba is currently collecting and analyzing focus group data, says Metheny, and she will ultimately help get the appropriate educational materials out into South Florida's sexual and gender minority Latinx community. Undergraduate public health student Caitlin Rempson is working with the team to make sure resource materials are “relevant and engaging” to the population, says Metheny. “Working with Maria

Jose, Caitlin will also create twice-weekly newsletters with information that is tailored to the hesitations we're seeing about vaccination in the sexual/gender minority community.”

While there is overlap among the Latinx communities that CLaRO is working with on this project—farmworkers in Homestead, low-income urban residents in Little Havana and North Miami, and SGM communities throughout South Florida—Metheny notes that the sexual and gender minority subgroup SONHS is focusing on has been uniquely affected.

“LGBT people are more likely than the general population to be financially impacted by the pandemic,” he notes, “and these problems are exacerbated when people are multiply marginalized, such as when they identify as both ethnic and sexual minorities.”

—Barbara Gutierrez and Robert C. Jones Jr. contributed to this report.

Heartbeat Award

Our Spring 2020 issue of *Heartbeat*, “Nurses: Frontline Heroes,” received a gold award at the inaugural Healthcare Digital Marketing Awards, in the Digital Publication-Single category. Entries were received from health care institutions across the country.

The HDM Awards is a national competition that began its efforts

to recognize the field of health care marketing and advertising in the pioneering area of digital marketing.

Judges consisted of a national panel of health care marketers, advertising creative directors, marketing and advertising professionals, and the editorial board of Healthcare Marketing Report.



Anatomy of an Operating Room

A mixed-reality simulation conceived at SONHS is helping new nurse anesthesia students learn their way around an operating room

By Rochelle Broder-Singer and Robin Shear



TJ Lievonen

From forced-air warming blankets to bispectral index monitors, no matter how much you've learned about equipment, setup, procedures, and monitoring, your introduction to an operating room (OR) can be a confusing, even frightening experience.

"When I first walked into the OR it was very intimidating," recalls third-year nurse anesthesia student Kelsey Boily. "I felt very lost and I didn't really know how to set up the equipment."

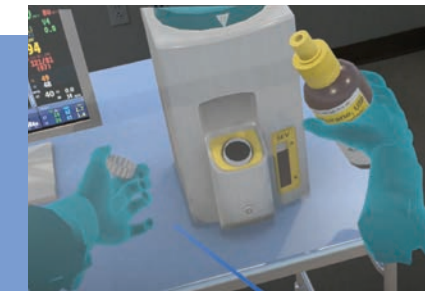
Even with the best preparation, a student's first clinical day can be their first time

seeing a fully equipped OR in person. But a new mixed-reality simulation conceived and co-developed by faculty and students at the School of Nursing and Health Studies has changed that.

Now, well before they step foot into the OR for clinicals, first-year Student Registered Nurse Anesthetists (SRNAs) at SONHS can put on Magic Leap goggles and step into a virtual anesthesia suite to practice a series of patient preparation activities with a wide range of anesthesia equipment that would be too expensive to purchase and maintain for real-world physical simulations.

"We keep telling the students about all these things they'll encounter in the OR, but they have no idea what the equipment looks like and how it operates until they go into the operating room for the first time," explains Greta Mitzova-Vladinov, the SONHS faculty member who led development of the app. "This app allows them to become familiar with all of the equipment and supplies they've never seen before."

The project, Escape Operating Room, was selected for funding from the office of Jeffrey Duerk, executive vice president for academic affairs and provost, through



a competitive proposal process for UM's XR Initiative. Escape OR uses Magic Leap goggles to transport first-year SRNAs from whatever physical space they're using into a virtual OR. The training was named Escape OR, says Mitzova-Vladinov, because students must maneuver successfully through three modules, manipulating the virtual equipment as they go.

Much like in a video game, students navigate the immersive space while using a handheld remote to set up equipment and interact with the patient. By doing this, they how and why equipment is used, as well as where the patient's physiologic values are displayed on the anesthesia monitor.

The first module covers use of normothermia equipment, such as the Bair Hugger forced-air warming blanket, which is used to regulate the patient's body temperature under anesthesia. In the next module, students learn to set up fluid warming equipment frequently used to deliver large intravenous fluid boluses for fluid management in anesthetized surgical patients. They learn fluid administration in this interactive environment by understanding its effect on pulse pressure variation and other physiologic parameters. The third and final module features equipment for monitoring depth of anesthesia. Students use the remote device to practice filling liquid anesthetic cassettes properly and placing a bispectral index monitor on the patient to gauge sedation level.

"Some of the biggest problems novice learners and junior students have when they're first entering the clinical arena is their lack of confidence and high anxiety levels in the unfamiliar operating room environment," says Mitzova-Vladinov, associate director of the nurse anesthesia program and assistant professor of clinical.

But with the Magic Leap goggles and Escape OR app, students can practice anywhere they have a bit of empty space, enhancing their in-person teaching and simulation activities.

"This provides the students an opportunity to really see the equipment and learn how to set it, so when they walk into the OR they can feel much more confident," says SRNA Boily, who, along with classmate Jackie Ferreira, helped Mitzova-Vladinov develop the app. For her D.N.P. scholarly project, Boily plans to create another mixed-reality app, this time to assist with difficult airway training.

Building an OR App

Escape OR's genesis came when Mitzova-Vladinov asked then-second-year students Boily and Ferreira how they would go about familiarizing first-year nurse anesthesia students who have not yet been in the clinical environment with the equipment, terminology, and everything else they would encounter in an OR.

Boily and Ferreira suggested producing and narrating a series of videos demonstrating set up and use of the equipment in a real operating room, with quizzes along the way. The SONHS team then shared the completed videos with their XR Initiative collaborators Michael Mannino, project lead from UM's Institute for Data Science & Computing, and Nicolas Alberti, of UM's Center for Computational Science, who worked on Escape OR's design and development with Xennial Digital Studios.

After Beta testing and practice sessions, Mitzova-Vladinov implemented Escape OR with her first-year students in Summer 2020. Based on survey results, she

found all users highly satisfied with the application. "They can wear the goggles, practice as many times as they want, and feel more confident when they enter the clinical setting," she adds. "The whole run-through takes around 15 minutes."

Mixed-Reality Curriculum

Escape OR is the fourth mixed-reality simulation SONHS faculty have created using Magic Leap goggles. The project is part of the University's XR Initiative to use augmented, virtual, and mixed reality in learning and research, founded on the belief that immersive environments will be an important platform for a variety of fields, including education and health care.

Mitzova-Vladinov now sits on UM's XR Initiative Advisory Board and continues her commitment to advance nurse anesthesia education with the use of emerging technologies such as virtual and mixed-reality simulations. She is evaluating Escape OR and expects its innovative approach to have lasting benefits, especially in the wake of COVID-19.

"My bottom line is getting the students to understand this anesthesia equipment," she says. "Now they can practice individually in any empty space and figure out how and why everything works together, so they are more prepared to enter the complex clinical environment."

Go to <https://xr.miami.edu/projects> to find a demo video of Escape OR.

—Amanda M. Perez and Kelly Montoya contributed to this report.

Collaborating to Improve Health Care

Collaborating Centre at SONHS earns redesignation from WHO, embarks on new initiatives to strengthen nursing workforce

By Pamela Hayford and Robin Shear



The School of Nursing and Health Studies will continue its role of improving health care in the Americas during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and World Health Organization (WHO) have redesignated the school for another four years as a PAHO/WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing Human Resources Development and Patient Safety. SONHS remains one of only eight nursing-related Collaborating Centres in the United States, and this announcement marks the school's third redesignation since being named a Collaborating Centre in 2008.

The good news comes at a critical time for the region, as the entire health workforce struggles to recover and regroup from the lasting impacts of the worst pandemic seen in over a century.

"Vulnerabilities intensified by the pandemic have only strengthened our resolve to build lasting academic bridges with the Caribbean and Latin America," says Johis Ortega, Collaborating Centre co-director and associate dean for Hemispheric and Global Initiatives at SONHS. This relationship, he explains, gives the school broad opportunities to make a difference on global health issues.

Adapting for Strength

The school's 2020-2024 Collaborating Centre workplan reflects a world reshaped by COVID-19. Travel restrictions necessitated an increased emphasis on innovative virtual courses, but the centre's mission has not changed: to develop the nursing

workforce, improve patient safety outcomes, and address health disparities throughout the hemisphere.

Pandemic-related initiatives include:

- A study of COVID-19 infection rates among nurses and other health care professionals in the Americas to help health leaders understand trends and conditions, and create policies that better protect their workforce.
- A personal safety training course for health care personnel.
- An online course and webinar to strengthen technology use in nursing and midwifery education.

COVID-19 also reinforced the urgency of meeting the universal demand for more nurses. According to Sigma, about half of the world's RN workforce is on the verge of retirement age. Supported by findings from the inaugural State of the World's Nursing Report released

last April, the school and Collaborating Centre agree that one of the keys to addressing the nursing shortage in the Caribbean is to support and strengthen the skills of nursing educators and leaders. Doing so helps schools graduate more highly qualified nurses.

One new initiative in Jamaica unites both the pivot to virtual learning and the push to prepare nurse leaders. The PAHO Virtual Training on Nursing and Midwifery Leadership is a collaboration between SONHS and the University of the West Indies School of Nursing (UWISON), launched in November 2020 to build on the abilities of nursing leaders in Jamaica and ready them to lead courses for others. The first cohort of 32 promising students from UWISON graduated in April.

The Jamaica program empowers experienced nurses and midwives in the Caribbean region by giving them a better understanding of leadership and management principles that can be used in the clinical setting.

Amid this unprecedented pandemic, the timing is critical for a course that will offer a clear and accessible path to transformational leadership for nurses in the Caribbean," says Cindy L. Munro, dean of the UM School of Nursing and Health Studies and director of the Collaborating Centre.

Although virtual, the course offered participants a supportive learning environment with mentoring from veteran nurse educators—five from SONHS and five from UWISON.

Dean Munro helped launch the 20-week curriculum offered through PAHO's Virtual Campus of Public Health with a 45-minute webinar on strategies for successful nurse leadership in a "VUCA" world. The acronym, which stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity, was originally coined by the Army War College to describe precarious political climates but is easily applied to today's pressing health care predicament, says Munro.

Leaders in VUCA environments, she explains, must be both agile and stable, exploring multiple options and strategies, and embracing creative



solutions, rather than getting hemmed in by zero-sum game decision-making.

"VUCA environments require a lot of cooperative effort to enhance the resources we have to share," says

Munro. "Seek to have cooperative win-win solutions that can move you and your organization forward in a way that protects you not only in the VUCA world, but makes you more successful in the new normal that follows."

Graduation in Guyana

The Collaborating Centre's plan for this next period was informed by the school's own emergency response plan—created for natural disasters like hurricanes—and builds upon real-world experiences and programs already in place. One of those existing programs, the Certificate in Nursing Education program in Guyana, has been revised for the new normal.

With just four nursing schools in a nation of about 783,000 people, a key holdup in getting more Guyanese nurses in the field has traditionally been a lack of teaching faculty. The SONHS Collaborating Centre, PAHO, and the Guyana Ministry of Health launched the certificate program to teach nursing leaders how to train other faculty. This builds Guyana's instructor pool and its capacity to graduate nurses.

Offered since 2015 as a hybrid in-person/online curriculum, the course moved online in 2020 due to the pandemic. The first all-online cohort graduated this March, overcoming everything from severe weather and spotty internet service to pandemic curfews and COVID fatigue.

"We're having challenges here in the U.S., but the magnitude of what they're experiencing is much greater," says SONHS Assistant Professor of Clinical Susan Prather, who taught the certificate

course for the first time. "Some of the students do not have access to internet at home or if they have internet at home, it doesn't work well."



Connectivity concerns couldn't dampen participant enthusiasm. Nurse tutor Cenise Glasgow Fraser says completing the course online helped her consider new ways to tie virtual resources into her own teaching. "My knowledge has been expanded about various instructional methodologies or strategies I can incorporate as a nurse educator to meet the needs of my students," she says. "Given the COVID-19 pandemic, the knowledge is really timely too."

"This course has been a tremendous learning experience," adds fellow 2021 graduate Jenesa Fields, 33, a nurse/midwife who teaches full-time at Guyana's Georgetown School of Nursing. "We're not only looking at quantity, the amount of students we're putting out there. We're also addressing the quality of the nurses we send out to work in our health care system here."

Dean Named to Top Nursing Advisory Council

At the onset of her career, Dean Cindy L. Munro was awarded a fellowship to pursue her doctoral degree by the predecessor to the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). The investment paid off: While working on her Ph.D. at Virginia Commonwealth University, she was part of the team that showed how oral bacteria infect heart valves, a finding that led to the first of three patents Dean Munro holds with co-investigators. She went on to lead research that showed dental plaque was a risk for pneumonia in patients on mechanical ventilation, resulting in practices that changed oral care guidelines for intensive care patients.

In January, Munro began her four-year appointment to the NINR's National Advisory Council for Nursing Research. "I couldn't be more thrilled to serve on the advisory council, which is a really important voice for the NINR," said Munro. "Their early support was instrumental in starting my research career, and I have such admiration for the work NINR does. I look forward to making a contribution to their mission in this way."

Established in 1986 as the National Center for Nursing Research, the NINR was elevated to one of the National Institutes of Health's 27 institutes in 1993—by a federal notice signed by then-Health and Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala, the University's immediate past president. Comprised of at least seven nursing experts in clinical practice, education, or research, its 15-member advisory council makes recommendations on the direction and support of NINR research that has enabled nurses to improve the health of individuals, families, and communities at all stages of life and across diverse populations and settings.



Robert Klemm

Council members also provide a second-level review of grant applications and recommend which should be approved for funding. The NINR has continuously funded Munro's research, much of it aimed at reducing complications in ventilated ICU patients, for 20 years.

The council will play a crucial role as NINR Director Shannon N. Zenk reviews and updates the NINR's strategic plan, an endeavor Munro said has important implications for the future of nursing and patient care that go beyond the continuing COVID-19 health crisis. "The work of the NIH and the NINR is much larger than COVID. It is funding the pivotal science

that drives health care forward," Munro said. "So, while some of the work will be COVID-specific, it will continue to be less about a specific disease and more about general strategies that are applicable to lots of different patient populations—including COVID patients."

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Munro and fellow council members will continue to meet remotely for the foreseeable future, instead of at the NIH's Bethesda, Maryland, headquarters.

Visit ninr.nih.gov/aboutninr/nacnr for more on Dean Munro's appointment and upcoming meetings.

Faculty Honors



Nicholas Metheny, assistant professor, has been selected to participate in the Faculty Fellowship Program in Israel. This competitive academic fellowship links full-time university and college faculty members from diverse disciplines with Israeli counterparts at major institutions for the purpose of initiating exchanges and collaborations.



Cynthia Foronda, associate professor of clinical, was invited to serve as a consultant by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health on an e-module related to teaching culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS) in nursing. In addition, her new method of debriefing, Debriefing for Cultural Humility, was featured

in Laerdal's e-book "How to use simulation-based training to reduce implicit bias and promote equitable care." Foronda was lead author on "Virtual Simulation in Nursing Education: A Systematic Review Spanning 1996-2018," which was published in the journal *Simulation in Healthcare* and acknowledged at the 21st International Meeting on *Simulation in Healthcare* Virtual Event as a Society for Simulation in Healthcare 2021 Article of Influence.



Greta Mitzova-Vladinov, D.N.P. '13, associate director of the B.S.N.-D.N.P. Anesthesia track and assistant professor of clinical, was appointed to a subcommittee of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Education Committee. The five-member Simulation Subcommittee remains current on the state of simulation science in

support of the nurse anesthesia profession.



Debbie Anglade, M.S.N. '10, Ph.D. '14, assistant professor of clinical, was appointed as an alternate member of the University of Miami's Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board.



Denise C. Vidot, assistant professor, is the supplement-project lead on the study "Multidisciplinary Approach to Assess Frequency, Patterns, and Reasons for Cannabis Use among Cancer Patients," funded by the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center's National Cancer Institute grant.



Rosina Cianelli, associate professor, is the supplement Principal Investigator on "SEPA+PrEP: A Promising HIV Prevention Strategy for Cisgender Hispanic Heterosexual Women to Access, Initiate, and Sustain Use of PrEP." The project is a Center for AIDS Research supplement. Cianelli's co-investigators are Associate

Professor **Joseph De Santis** and Assistant Professor **Giovanna De Oliveira**, Ph.D. '15, from SONHS, and Professor Jose Castro at the Miller School of Medicine. The Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) pill prevents infection from the AIDS virus. The proposal was funded by the National Institutes of Health to advance the federal government's Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) plan.



Cynthia Lebron, assistant professor, is principal investigator on a \$170,433 National Institutes of Health supplement grant for "Latinx Obesity Syndemic Theory," a study of how risky sex, substance use, and obesity enmeshed in Hispanic adolescents in the Familias Unidas health and wellness trial. The grant is administered through the Center for Latino Health Research

Opportunities (CLaRO) at SONHS. Lebron also received a 2021-22 Provost's Research Award for "Baby-Friendly Hospitals: A Geographic Perspective on Access and Equity in Florida."

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Mentor on a Mission: Victoria Behar-Zusman

By Yolanda Mancilla

It started when a Los Angeles high school student took a college psychology course just because a friend was taking it and never looked back. Born in Cuba, Associate Dean for Research and Professor Victoria (Vicky) Behar-Zusman was inspired to pursue higher education by her mother, one of the rare women in her generation to earn a doctorate in pharmacy and direct a hospital pharmacy.

Behar-Zusman went on to forge a stellar career in health disparities research. Today two enduring passions drive this Ph.D.-trained clinical psychologist—ensuring minorities are equitably represented in research studies and mentoring the next generation of health disparities scientists.

When Behar-Zusman joined UM's Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB) in 2003, not many studies enrolled non-English-speaking participants because few measures were available in other languages. "It was shocking to see this in Miami, where another language is spoken in a majority of households," she says. "One of the Belmont principles—justice—maintains that all communities should benefit from research. But how can we conduct research if measures aren't available?"

Under Behar-Zusman's direction, the National Institutes of Health-funded Center of Excellence for Health Disparities Research: El Centro created a library of measures, translated to Spanish, that is now used by researchers worldwide. Today, Behar-Zusman chairs the IRB.

Ensuring equitable access to research also means responding quickly in a crisis. During the early weeks of the pandemic, Behar-Zusman and her colleagues created a measure to understand the impact of COVID-19 on families. More than 4,000



respondents on six continents completed the measure, providing a global snapshot of family conflict and cohesion. That measure is now available in six languages and included in the NIH's PhenX Toolkit of COVID-19 measures. In November, Behar-Zusman was named to the NIH's Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) to Combat COVID-19 Disparities.

The pandemic has not slowed Behar-Zusman's drive to advance the careers of emerging health disparities researchers, "whether that means helping them to first-author publications, demystifying IRB protocol development, or guiding the grant-writing process," she explains.

"Vicky is a great mentor and role model," says Amber Vermeesch, Ph.D. '11, associate professor of nursing at the University of Portland, whose dissertation committee was chaired by Behar-Zusman. "I always appreciated how she would make time to meet, discuss, problem-solve, and provide feedback on every aspect of the dissertation process."

What advice does Behar-Zusman give mentees? "Don't give up, even when you're discouraged," she says. "Being critiqued is part of the process. Every time I'm asked

to revise and resubmit a paper, the product ends up being so much better."

Still, she's noticed that minority students and young faculty often suffer in silence. "If you don't come from a privileged background, one thing you don't know is that you can ask for help, for resources, for another chance," she says. "There's no shame in asking for support, and it's OK not to know everything."

As Principal Investigator of the Center for Latino Health Research Opportunities (CLaRO) and lead of the Investigator Development Core of UM's Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health (CHARM), Behar-Zusman has created non-competitive professional support networks for the students and young scientists at the heart of her mission.

"It's crucial for young researchers to know they belong and they have what it takes," she says. "Sometimes it feels like everyone else in the room is smarter and more capable, and it's easy to feel like an impostor. But I tell them, this isn't 'Survivor,' and no one's getting kicked off the island. We want everyone to succeed and continue the mission of addressing health disparities."

1960s

Eleanor Lamb Malchus, B.S.N. '62, has retired after 33 years as an on-call school nurse for the Amphitheater School District in Tucson, Arizona. From 1965 to 1996, she worked as an emergency room nurse in Ohio, where she was also a clinical nursing instructor at Lorain Community College for 18 years.

Joanne Cantor Friedman, B.S.N. '67, is still working as an adult and women's health nurse practitioner at the Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic, Backus Hospital, Norwich Connecticut. "I have worked throughout this pandemic under mask, goggles, and face shield," reports Cantor Friedman. "It certainly has been a challenge to offer care to the brave souls who venture out of their homes. This pandemic challenged all of us to do our best, which we did. I do hope we, as health care professionals, can lead by example in getting the COVID vaccine. Stay safe and carry on. Hopes and prayers for a better year for everyone."

1970s

Ann M. Thrailkill, C.N.P. '76, has retired from the VA in Palo Alto, California, after 35 years, having started the women's health program there. "I am so glad to see the recognition NPs have now and the DNP programs available. I will always consider myself a Hurricane," she writes.

Cliff Morrison, M.S.N. '79, who spearheaded the first fully dedicated AIDS unit in the country, 5B, at San Francisco General Hospital, was the honoree at the School of Nursing and Health Studies 2021 Alumnus of Distinction event, held via Facebook Live and sponsored by VITAS Innovative Hospice Care.

1990s

Charles P. Buscemi, B.S.N. '99, M.S.N. '01, Ph.D. '05, a clinical associate professor and assistant chair of Graduate Nursing at the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Science at Florida International University, has been promoted to interim director of the school's Doctor of Nursing Practice program and was appointed to the Editorial Board of the *Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners*.

2000s

Ana Restrepo, B.S.N. '00, was named the 2020 Wound Ostomy Care Nurse of the Year by the United Ostomy Associations of America in recognition of her work with the Miami Ostomy Aftercare Program, where she leads support group meetings and is one of the nonprofit organization's board members. Restrepo works as a specialist and supervisor with the inpatient wound and ostomy care service at University of Miami Hospital.

Anna Lozoya, B.S.N. '06, recently joined Northshore University HealthSystem in the Chicago area as system director of Quality, Safety and Risk Management. Lozoya is a lawyer, a nurse, and a certified professional in health care risk management (CPHRM) who was recently profiled in the Chicago Bar Association Daily Law Bulletin's 40 Under Forty Feature. Since 2019 she has served as Region IX President of the Hispanic National Bar Association.

Rosa Gonzalez-Guarda, Ph.D. '08, Duke University School of Nursing associate professor, received the 2020 Excellence in Research award from the Nursing Network on Violence Against Women International.

Samantha Rowley, M.S.N. '08, is senior vice president of surgical services at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, Texas. She was featured in the Dallas Mavericks Behind-the-Mask campaign highlighting "hometown heroes" during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2010s

David Meropol, B.S.N. '11, has moved to Boston Children's Hospital as a radiology nurse after spending the past six years working in the pediatric intensive care unit at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. Before the PICU, Meropol spent three years working adult general medicine at UPMC in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Amber Vermeesch, Ph.D. '11, associate professor of nursing at the University of Portland, is the editor of a new book from Springer, *Integrative Health Nursing Interventions for Vulnerable Populations* (2021).

Shakira Henderson, Ph.D. '15, was named vice president research officer for UNC Health. She was previously senior systems administrator for research and grants and director of nursing and health research for Vidant Health.

Summer DeBastiani Hartley, Ph.D. '18, is the assistant vice president and chief operating officer for West Virginia University's Health Sciences Center Office of Health Affairs.

Khaila Prather, B.S.P.H. '19, earned a Master of Public Health from the Miller School of Medicine and worked as a biological scientist for the Florida Department of Health before joining Abt Associates in Rockville, Maryland, as an analyst this year.

2020s

Brianna G. Scott, B.S.P.H. '20, will join ZS as a strategy, insights, and planning associate intern in Evanston, Illinois, this summer.

Taylor Skelton, B.S.N. '20, works in the cardiovascular intensive care unit at Holy Cross Hospital in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. "The simulation-based training and education I received at the U gave me a solid base to get in there and be a contributing member of the team," he says.

In Memoriam

Sergio Victor Hernandez, B.S.N. '05, M.S.N. '09, passed away suddenly on February 11, 2021. Hernandez was a



Miami-based certified registered nurse anesthetist who received his master's training at the School of Nursing and Health Studies

and went on to earn his D.N.P. A loving father of two young children, a dedicated son, and an esteemed nurse anesthesia professional, Dr. Hernandez was 39 years old. A celebration of his life was held February 18. "Sergio was a shining star from the beginning. He represented our profession, our 'Canes program, and the U to the highest of standards," says UHealth Tower CRNA Valerie M. Bell, D.N.P. '11, who taught Hernandez as a former associate director of the SONHS Nurse Anesthesia Program. "Sergio was well-respected, well-loved, and a pleasure to be around. He will be missed."

Reflections of a New Nurse

Nyota-Nteyi Edjidjimo, B.S.N. '20, Nurse Residency Program, Emory Healthcare

“Being in the emergency department during a pandemic has exposed me to so many learning opportunities. After Thanksgiving, my hospital definitely experienced a surge in COVID cases. It is so shocking to see a healthy patient complain of fatigue and shortness of breath one day, and learn that six days later they have lost their battle to COVID. I am thankful for the chances I get to see a patient really improve and send them home to spend another day with their families. This career has made me even more grateful for my health



and the health of my family. I work night shift and, having completed orientation,

I am now handling my own load of four patients independently. I am finding my footing. It has been difficult at times, but I feel myself growing in my profession, and I feel supported by my coworkers. I'm very new to this, but I'm much more confident than I was before. At home, I go on walks and do lots of reading (I love Reese Witherspoon's book club!). My advice to current students is: Keep a journal of your clinical experiences. It will help you build your resume and help you on interviews. Also, don't limit your options—apply to multiple hospitals.”

PHILANTHROPY

Hugoton Foundation

Virtual resources bridge classroom to clinical

A significant award from the Hugoton Foundation provided 250 undergraduate nursing students with full and free access to the i-Human virtual simulation program, UWorld exam prep app for the NCLEX-RN, and Shadow Health digital clinical resource.

Students used the new academic tools to boost their experiential knowledge and clinical judgment during a year of clinical limitations and other challenging circumstances.

“Virtual apps do a great job of simulating many patient signs and symptoms,” says nursing student Nicole Perez, who used Shadow Health to bolster her coursework. “This software is super advanced. The interactions with the digital standardized patients force you to think and practice trial-and-error questioning in a safe and comfortable place.”

As a founding donor of the Simulation Hospital Advancing Research and



Nicole Perez shows off the virtual assessment program the Hugoton gift enabled her to use.

Education (S.H.A.R.E.™), the Hugoton Foundation has helped thrust SONHS to the forefront of evidence-based simulation training and nursing education. “The Hugoton Foundation’s support has significantly enhanced our ability to prepare students for the sophisticated demands associated with

modern health care,” says Dean Cindy L. Munro. “The enduring generosity of the Foundation’s president and managing director, Mrs. Joan K. Stout, RN, remains a bedrock of support for the future of the nursing profession.”

Leading with Heart: David Zambrana

By Yolanda Mancilla and Robin Shear



In white coat and personal protective equipment, David Zambrana, D.N.P. '09, Ph.D. '17, rounds the COVID-19 units, connecting with patients and providers. Everyone is masked, but one by one, he looks into their eyes. “Are you OK?” he asks.

In a crisis, the executive vice president of hospital operations for Jackson Health System leads with his heart. “We as leaders need to be present so frontline staff know we’re here for them,” he says.

Zambrana is devoted to team-based health care and transformative leadership. Starting out as a bedside nurse for pediatric and trauma patients in the same system he now helps run, Zambrana went on to earn an M.B.A. He received two nursing doctorates from the School of Nursing and Health Studies, where he co-teaches nurse leaders in the D.N.P. program’s Health Management course.

“I’m a nurse by training and very proud of that,” he says. “When anyone asks ‘what do you do?’ I always say ‘I’m a nurse’ first.”

For the past year, Zambrana has worked with each team at Jackson’s six hospitals to keep pace with the pandemic. “We saw our first COVID-19 patient on March 19,” he recalls. “From that day forward it was a whirlwind.”

From acquiring PPE and staying current with therapeutics to creating negative pressure environments and in-house testing operations, a whole new system of care and resources had to be developed seemingly overnight for Jackson’s 2,000-plus-bed enterprise.

“This past year has been surreal, but by far the most gratifying of my career,” says Zambrana. “We saw unprecedented change, and what we accomplished was nothing short of miraculous.”

The son of a preacher and Cuban immigrants, Zambrana does not use the word “miraculous” lightly. Still, he points out, Jackson’s triumphs through three virus surges did not come without a toll.

“So often our nurses were the ones at the patient’s bedside, holding their hands, not allowing them to die alone,” he

says. “The resilience of our teams has renewed my belief in why we care for our community and why we are in health care.”

Further renewing Zambrana’s hope these days is Jackson’s successful COVID-19 vaccination program, with up to 4,000 vaccines delivered daily at three sites, plus significant outreach addressing vaccine hesitancy in Miami’s most vulnerable Black and Latinx communities.

“Vaccines are the tool to curb the pandemic,” he says, marveling at the science. “It’s really one patient at a time, one family at a time. I can’t tell you how many grandparents say to me, ‘I get to hug my grandbaby for the first time!’”

For the near future, Zambrana envisions dual systems of care for patients with and without COVID-19. “You can imagine the complexity—we have to make sure our systems of care are pristine, so both groups of patients get the right care at the right time,” he explains.

As a youth, it was his sister’s passion for nursing that led Zambrana into the profession. Today, Zambrana and his sister, Isis, VP and chief quality officer for Jackson Health System, work side by side, leading their hometown community’s public health system into the future.

With each vial of vaccine Jackson pharmacists mix and deliver, that future appears brighter to Zambrana. Sometimes, while helping at a vaccine site, he’ll reflect on the magnitude of the moment he’s helping bring to fruition. “I see people come in for an injection, and I think to myself, ‘I’m just grateful you’re here. Let’s get you vaccinated, educated, and armed to deal with 2021 safely.’”

Sisters Find Solidarity in Nursing

By Robin Shear



The Webbs were a typical New Jersey family until a medical emergency changed their perspectives forever.

Dana and Kristen Webb, B.S.N. '21, were still teens when their seemingly healthy mother collapsed at home. As the ambulance rushed to the scene, their father, a businessman who once worked as a volunteer EMT, continued performing CPR on her until help arrived.

Their mother ultimately made a full recovery and, as a result of this transformative event, the Webb sisters grew passionate about the promise of health care.

But how these sisters, two years apart, ended up graduating from the same nursing school in the same class is another story.

Dana knew immediately that nursing was how she would channel her gratitude for her mother's survival. She became fully engaged in life at the University of Miami from the start. Admitted as an academically prestigious Foote Fellow in 2017, she joined Zeta Tau sorority, played club soccer, and signed on as a PEERS ambassador for

the school, showing prospective families around the exciting Simulation Hospital Advancing Research and Education (S.H.A.R.E.™).

Kristen, meanwhile, earned her exercise science degree, initially thinking occupational therapy would be the route she'd take to paying forward her mother's miraculous recovery. But after a few years of hearing about Dana's experiences at SONHS, another fateful family occurrence led to a major life decision.

In November 2019, their grandmother passed away. Not long after, the Webbs decided some family time visiting Dana at UM might be a good distraction from their grief.

"Our grandmother was a nurse," says Kristen, "and she was so proud of Dana, so supportive."

During the visit, Dana signed the family up for a tour of S.H.A.R.E.™ and it was on that tour that Kristen's future became crystal clear.

"I went from being sad to being excited by all the potential I saw at UM," she

recalls. "I felt nursing would give me the opportunity to reach patients on a much deeper level and in a holistic way."

Within a month, Kristen applied to the Accelerated B.S.N. program. By May she was taking her first classes, in the middle of the pandemic. "I give Kristen a lot of credit," says Dana. "I could not imagine doing everything in one year, especially a COVID year."

For 12 months, the sisters lived together, studied together, and supported each other. The pairing must have worked, as both excelled, finishing their respective B.S.N. programs in unison this May.

"It's been a dynamic relationship where we've been able to help each other," says Dana. "I take from Kristen's confidence and the knowledge she has from being older and at the same time I can give her knowledge I have of the nursing field."

For Kristen's part, she has newfound respect for her little sister's achievements: "I've seen Dana grow through this program. Each year she would come home and have more knowledge and confidence. She's proof that if you put in the effort, it works. We have the potential to be really good nurses with the UM education."

Oldest sister Lauren is also following the family's health care legacy, through medical school.

"We really have been inspired by everything related to health care," says Dana.

"And we just want to give back," adds Kristen. "We have a lot of gratitude for what's happened in our life."

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PAHO/WHO Collaborating Centre

The World Health Organization (WHO) has redesignated the University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies (SONHS) as a **Pan American Health Organization/WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing Human Resources Development and Patient Safety** for the next 4-year cycle (2020-2024). The prestigious SONHS designation has been in place since 2008. The school is currently one of only **8** nursing-related WHO Collaborating Centres in the nation and one of **44** in the world.

Re-designation initiatives:

- Develop, implement and evaluate a Health Personal Safety Training Course
- Develop and implement an online course and three webinars to strengthen nursing education and advanced educational technology
- Offer a training program on Nursing Education in different countries of the Caribbean
- Provide support to strengthen PAHO/WHO's work in nursing research in the region of the Americas
- Develop an analysis of Nursing workforce infection rate with COVID-19
- Evaluate and update the content of the nursing leadership online course: *Empowering Nurses in Latin America and the Caribbean*

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