

heartbeat

FALL 2020

University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies



PRIORITIZING PUBLIC HEALTH

SONHS INNOVATES SAFE RETURN TO CAMPUS



SAME ON THE OUTSIDE,
PREPARED ON THE INSIDE.



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FALL 2020

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EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Marina Parada
SONHS Senior
Business Officer

Rosa M. Lamazares-Romero
SONHS Assistant Director,
Communications + Marketing

Robin Shear
SONHS Senior Editor

WRITERS

Robin Shear
Maya Bell
Robert C. Jones Jr.

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BRIGHT PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE

In the words of trailblazing educator and civil rights leader Mary McLeod Bethune, “The progress of the world will call for the best that all of us have to give.” This year has been a sharp, unmistakable call for each and every one of us to give our best.

It’s a call I’ve heard answered time and again, our health professions worldwide rising courageously in the face of daunting challenges. I am equally moved by what I’ve witnessed here at the School of Nursing and Health Studies. Moved, but not surprised. Courage has always been a defining characteristic of the health professions.

This new issue of *Heartbeat* magazine highlights just some of the many ways in which the SONHS community has stepped up with courage, grace, and agility to traverse the constantly shifting pandemic landscape—whether that required transforming the educational experience, tending to critical community needs, or giving lifesaving care.

For a glimpse of our new landscape, read “Prioritizing Public Health,” a behind-the-scenes look at the immense amount of planning and innovation, dedication and teamwork it took to safely meet all learning objectives and make a timely return to the School of Nursing and Health Studies possible. In addition to our faculty and staff, I commend our students for ongoing patience, flexibility, and promotion of healthy behaviors as we brave this new world together.

Progressing in this new world includes addressing the intersecting public health crises of COVID-19 and social injustice. COVID-19 has brought to wider attention how social determinants of health disproportionately affect Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and pervade every environment, from local neighborhoods to nations.



We must continue to advocate for equity not only in our own health practice, but more broadly across the health care system and society at large. On page 14, in what is intended to be the catalyst for a larger, ongoing conversation, a handful of SONHS alumni and faculty speak candidly about inclusion and cultural competency, health disparities, the need for increased diversity at SONHS, and more. SONHS stands in solidarity against racism and inequality. We know this is just a beginning, and we are listening.

I also welcome you to learn about the positive impact our Year of the Nurse initiatives are making in promoting transformational nurse leadership for the next generation and how, in the fight against COVID-19, SONHS faculty are using simulation to innovate and test 3-D designs for improving personal protective equipment and patient care. In other stories, you will see some very good “Vital Signs” of our school’s health: competitive grants and critical donations totaling over \$6.4 million, as

well as a new on-site patient-centered biobehavioral research laboratory and full accreditation for simulation teaching and education from the internationally recognized Society for Simulation in Healthcare, to name a few.

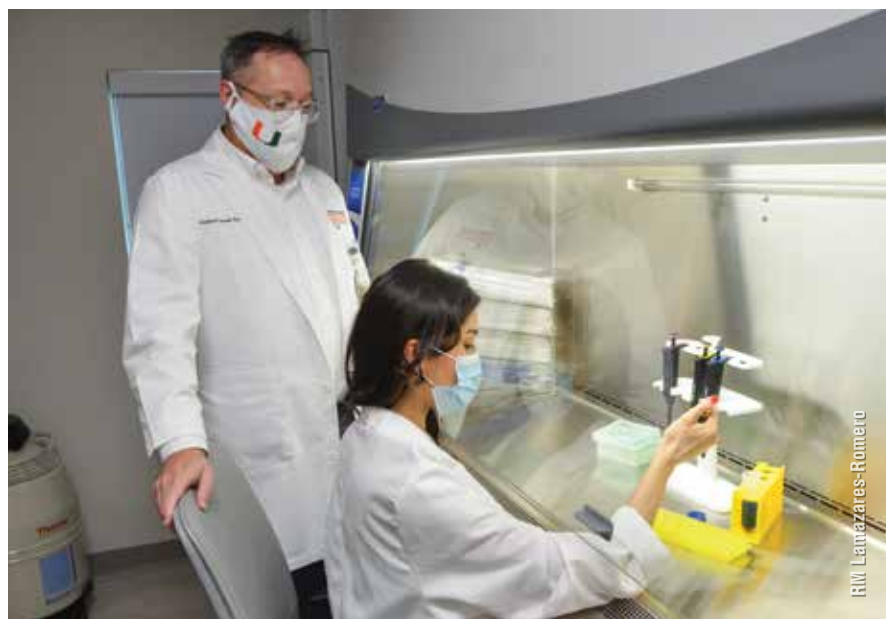
Finally, our beautiful closing photo collage highlights participants from our inaugural Facebook Live Spring 2020 Awards Ceremony. Forged for leadership on the front lines of a new era, our SONHS grads represent our health professions’ brightest promise for the future. I hope the words and images showcased in this publication help inspire us all to keep giving our best. If we do, I believe we have a chance to emerge from these current crises stronger, healthier, and more connected than before.

In health and hope,

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

Biobehavioral Research Lab Debuts

New facility at SONHS opens doors to understanding health, illness, and the complex interface between human biology and behavioral response



A small, socially distanced group gathered at the University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies (SONHS) this fall to celebrate the unveiling of the school's first on-site Biobehavioral Research Laboratory.

The get-together was intentionally small due to physical distancing measures, but the promise of the new facility is immense. SONHS Dean Cindy L. Munro explains that the lab is an important addition to the school's Biobehavioral Technology Core, which is dedicated to exploring how biology at the cellular and genetic level interacts with behavioral and environmental factors on a range of health issues across the lifespan.

"A facility such as this will enable us to attract other prominent faculty and promising postdoctoral fellows doing work at the top of their field," says Dean Munro. "The research conducted here is not theoretical. It has direct implications for patients in the foreseeable future,

with the ultimate intention being to apply evidence-based answers to the most patient-centered, life-sustaining, and potentially life-saving improvements in patient care."

Associate Professor Charles Downs, associate dean for research, has been overseeing an ambitious build-out of the 1,000-square-foot lab since arriving at SONHS from the University of Arizona in 2018.

"The lab is really going to help our investigators and students perform research across the continuum, from preclinical studies to translation," says Downs, who also directs the school's Ph.D. program. "Most highly ranked universities have biobehavioral laboratory capacity. This will make us more competitive."

The newly opened SONHS Biobehavioral Research Laboratory is located on the third floor of the M.

Christine Schwartz Center for Nursing and Health Studies, just a few footsteps from Downs' office.

He says the sophisticated capacity of the lab will enable investigators do just about anything on site, from testing biomarkers and performing cell and bacterial cultures to studying phenomena using preclinical models and working with human subjects.

"We're equipped for conducting blood assays, such as inflammatory markers, stress hormones, and cytokines," adds Downs. "Other capabilities include determining gene expression, genotyping, and measurement of telomere length, as well as assessment of redox indicators and proteomics, among other capabilities," he adds.

Proteomics, for example, is the large-scale study of proteins, and redox proteomics—which looks at how changes in oxidant and antioxidant balance affect proteins—is important in understanding observed changes in cell functions, cell signaling, and disease processes of Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome, the devastating lung condition Downs investigates.

With help from a lab manager/senior technician, Downs is eager to promote use of the premier facility to develop new research opportunities at SONHS. "I am working with many of our students and faculty who are interested in incorporating biological measures into their work," he says.

One of those students, Sameena Sheikh-Wu, B.S.N. '15, enrolled in the Ph.D. program at SONHS in 2018 after



working as an oncology nurse. "I felt like I needed to know more about the cancer survivors' symptoms to make a difference for the patients," says Sheikh-Wu, who is using the new facility with Downs as her advisor. "I was blown away," she says. "The lab is state of the art. So many opportunities come with having a biobehavioral research lab at SONHS. Students will have the ability to gain more skills and knowledge that lead to advancements in symptom

science research. Nursing research is on a path to further the understanding of patients' symptom experience and biological mechanisms."

Sheikh-Wu's own goal is to improve colorectal cancer survivors' quality of life by identifying evidence-based interventions for managing adverse symptoms through their cancer survivorship. Although the research taking place in the biobehavioral lab will

"The research conducted here has direct implications for patients in the foreseeable future."

— Dean Cindy L. Munro

address a wide range of concerns, all of it will share at least one common aim—translating advances in knowledge into person-centered precision health. "Biology is intrinsically linked with behavior, so for a full picture it is often most helpful to incorporate both," says Downs. "Taking a biobehavioral approach gives you a deeper understanding of the phenomena of interest." Tour the lab virtually at <https://vimeo.com/465909848>.

Showcasing Student Research

SONHS undergrads take part, virtually, in UM Research, Creativity, and Innovation Forum

Organizers of the 2020 Research, Creativity, and Innovation Forum (RCIF) launched their first-ever *Abstract Book* last semester. The digital publication offers a glimpse into the over 100 outstanding projects that would have presented during the annual RCIF Forum, which has been celebrating undergraduate research at UM since 2008. The in-person forum slated for March 31 was cancelled because of COVID-19 health guidelines, but SONHS maintained its strong presence, with 10 research projects from 13 students included—more than all schools except the College of Arts & Sciences. SONHS research topics ranged from the use of podcasts for promoting sexual health education, to understanding the neurobehavioral bases of memory, to examining e-cigarette use among college students. Students featured were public health majors Karina Cepeda, Tatiana Esparza, Lydia Franklin, Emily Hawver, Maryam Jawid (biochemistry), Shwetha Mudalegundi (neuroscience),

Megan Nguyen, Willow Webb, and Nina Wojtowicz; nursing majors Juliana Byers and Maehar Grewal; and health science majors Azin Pooresmaeil (religious studies) and Sharnikha Saravanan

(neuroscience). SONHS faculty mentors were Andrew Porter, Ashley Falcon, and Rosina Cianelli. Read the abstracts at <https://tinyurl.com/y25vvaan>.



Grant Renewed for \$3.25M

Federal funding supports graduate nursing education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds

In July, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) renewed the four-year, \$2.5 million grant it had awarded to School of Nursing and Health Studies (SONHS) in 2016 to help 84 nurses from disadvantaged backgrounds, many of them minorities, embark on one-year master's programs in either family health or adult-gerontology primary care.

This \$3.25 million competitive renewal from HRSA will put the career dreams of even more diverse nurses within reach by covering roughly two-thirds tuition cost for 105 students, plus mentorship and other support, over the next five years. The award increase reflects the success of and need for the program directed by Johis Ortega, B.S.N. '02, M.S.N. '06, Ph.D. '10, associate dean for hemispheric and global initiatives.

A recent article by Ortega and colleagues Juan M. Gonzalez, Nichole Crenshaw, Kenya Snowden, and Lila De Tantillo, Ph.D. '19, in *The Journal of Nursing Education*, explained that of 45 students who graduated in the first two years of the initial HRSA grant, 43 were working as Advanced Practice Registered Nurses who can provide culturally sensitive primary care. A year later, well over half were working in primary care settings and medically underserved areas.

Increasing the number of primary care nurse practitioners from underprivileged backgrounds is critical in a field where physician shortages are especially acute, particularly for underserved populations. According to Ortega, all program graduates to date passed their certification board exam on their first try. But that hardly surprises him.



Javier A. Corrales

After all, he notes, the grantees already had earned bachelor's degrees in nursing, which can be challenging for any student—but particularly those from low-income neighborhoods who attended underperforming high schools or were the first in their families to go to college (see "Alumni Profile," page 35).

These students, Ortega says, typically rely on student loans and often must work full time while in college—a burden Ortega, understands well. He recounts working two jobs waiting tables to put himself through UM's nursing school when he first arrived in Miami from Cuba without knowing English.

"The financial challenges of pursuing an advanced-level nursing education are insurmountable for many full-time students. They often abandon their goal or drop to part-time status so they can continue earning an income," Ortega says. "But these obstacles are more prevalent in minority students—the very students we need to retain if we are going to diversify the nursing workforce. By relieving the financial burdens, the

HRSA grants will accelerate graduation rates, increase the number of nurse practitioners from disparity populations, and help meet the growing need for primary care providers in Miami-Dade County."

As Dean Cindy L. Munro explains, that's always been one of nursing's driving goals, but it's especially important now, with COVID-19 and calls for social justice underscoring racial and ethnic health disparities. "As fortunate as we are to live in a richly multicultural region, we know the burden of chronic diseases and their associated risk factors are greater for minorities," says Munro. "This renewed HRSA support will be critical in helping us continue to prepare advanced practice nurses, many from minority groups themselves, to promote equity in medically underserved communities and address serious health disparity gaps across Miami-Dade County and our nation."

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under grant number T08HP30147, "Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students," for \$3,250,000.

Taking 'Baby Steps'

NICU nurses make virtual house calls with new grant

Like every expectant parent, Yui Matsuda hoped for an uneventful delivery and a healthy baby. But moments after giving birth, the first-time mom learned her newborn would have to be admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). "Our son was only in the NICU for four days, but it felt like forever," says Matsuda, an assistant professor at the School of Nursing and Health Studies. "Some babies stay for months."

However long they stay, babies receive round-the-clock specialized care in the NICU, and their families come to rely on the expertise of highly skilled NICU nurses. But what happens when it's time to graduate from that protective environment, where lifesaving bonds have been formed? Even Matsuda, a nurse educator with access to an array of peers in her profession, found that prospect unsettling. "The anxiety and stress I felt as I went home with my son was very difficult," she admits.

For advice and reassurance, Matsuda turned to friend and colleague Danielle Altares Sarik, Ph.D., APRN, CPNP-PC, a pediatric nurse practitioner and research nurse scientist at Miami's Nicklaus Children's Hospital. From their conversations grew a plan to help other parents of NICU grads better navigate the critical transition from hospital to home.

Thanks to a three-year grant from the Florida Blue Foundation, Sarik and Matsuda's proposal, "Baby Steps: A Telehealth Nursing Intervention to Improve the Transition to Home for Pediatric Patients," is now a reality for parents at Nicklaus Children's, where each year, more than 800 critically ill newborns from Florida, Latin America, and the Caribbean receive complex care. Most infants admitted to the



Courtesy of Dr. Matsuda

"Our son was only in the NICU for four days, but it felt like forever."

was able to visit, what they should do to keep the baby from getting sick, etc." Otherwise, her advice runs the gamut, from which diaper rash cream to use to identifying signs and symptoms of seizures. "The parents say they really like having someone they can talk to about their child's care," says Miranda. "And if they need to show me something on the baby, they can show me through the app."

NICU weigh under three pounds and stay over a month. Some return home with assistive medical devices, such as tracheostomies, G-tubes (a tube inserted through the belly that brings nutrition directly to the stomach), and ventilators.

"Caring for an infant is one thing, but caring for infants with multiple special needs makes it much more complex, so having the support of a NICU nurse after discharge is very important for families," says Matsuda, the project's co-principal investigator with Sarik. Baby Steps makes culturally tailored telehealth nursing services provided by a Nicklaus NICU nurse available to parents for free, five days a week through a simple Facetime-like app called Pediatric Virtual Care.

Nicklaus nurse interventionist Maria Miranda, R.N., RNC-NIC, CLC, was among the first bedside NICU nurses trained for this new telehealth position. When the service launched in April, Miranda explains, she fielded a number of COVID-19-related calls, like "who

Students in Matsuda's Public Health Nursing course complete a clinical rotation by observing and simulating this telehealth nursing intervention, exposing them to what may be a growing trend in nursing. In this pilot year, Matsuda and Sarik hope to serve 125 families. They believe access to a novel telehealth service like theirs, where caregivers initially connect with their NICU telehealth nurse in person at the hospital, will have measurably positive effects on both caregiver confidence and patient outcomes, such as significant reductions in hospital readmission rates and unplanned emergency care use.

The investigators credit Florida Blue Foundation, Nicklaus Children's Hospital Foundation, and the Nicklaus NICU and telehealth teams for significant collaborative contributions. "This is something I would have loved to have had when I gave birth to my son," says Matsuda, "so I'm very excited that we have been able to realize 'Baby Steps' in a tangible way and offer it to families."

Is Cannabis Heart Healthy?

Denise C. Vidot awarded \$2.9 million NIH grant to study how routes of cannabis administration affect heart disease risk

Over the past ten years, marijuana, or cannabis, use has changed drastically in the United States, says epidemiologist Denise C. Vidot, an assistant professor at SONHS and cannabis research expert. As states legalized cannabis, use increased, with the highest prevalence of use among 18 to 25 year olds. There are also new routes of administration, such as electronic vaporizing devices, or vapes. Significantly, she points out, evidence shows potency of THC (Δ^9 -tetrahydrocannabinol), the psychoactive component in cannabis, has risen from 3.7 to 30 percent.



But evidence-based research has not kept pace. That's where Vidot is making a difference. This past July she received a four-year research project grant (R01) totaling \$2,866,576 from the National Institutes of Health's National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute for her collaborative study, "The Effects of Cannabinoids and Route of Cannabis Administration on Subclinical Cardiovascular Disease Risk." It is Vidot's first major NIH award as principal investigator (PI).

"The impact of THC on cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk is unclear," she says. "Studies suggest that THC may play a role in adverse cardiovascular health; however, the combined levels of THC and nonpsychoactive compounds within cannabis, such as cannabidiol (CBD), on CVD risk are understudied as well. Accumulating evidence suggests that CBD has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties that benefit the cardiovascular system."

Vidot's multidisciplinary team will examine the relationship between THC, CBD, and CVD among cannabis users ages 18 to 30.

Understanding this relationship is important because CVD, which encompasses a range of heart conditions, remains the leading cause of death in the U.S., killing someone every 37 seconds, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vidot's long-range goal is to inform responsible cannabis use and identify levels of THC/CBD associated with dangerous cardiovascular outcomes for cannabis users at increased risk for heart disease.

The first step will be to compare subclinical CVD risk in cannabis users versus nonusers of cannabis and tobacco, as well as subclinical CVD risk based on the users' most common route of administration for the cannabis: blunts (cannabis rolled into a tobacco leaf), joints (cannabis rolled in paper with no added tobacco), or vape. Blood and urine samples will be used to quantify THC/CBD levels. Several subclinical risk factors for CVD, such as waist circumference, blood pressure, and fasting lipid profile, will be measured at baseline and one year out.

This will be the first study to examine at multiple time points the impact of

urine- and blood-quantified THC/CBD levels by route of administration on objective measures for subclinical CVD risk in this age group, notes Vidot. The study is also among the first to implement recommendations from the National Academies of Science Report on the Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids, which cites Vidot's cannabis and metabolic syndrome research as one of two published studies in the literature.

"We hypothesize that there will be a differential effect of subclinical CVD risk by route of administration," she says.

Vidot's co-investigators are, from the University of Miami, cardiologist Claudia Martinez, psychologist Barry Hurwitz, forensic toxicologist Lisa Reidy, and biostatistician Kristopher Arheart, and, from Florida International University, substance use psychologist Raul Gonzalez.

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Big Renewal for Nurse Anesthesia Initiative

Increased U.S. funding speaks to national need for nurse anesthetists in medically underserved regions

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has awarded the School of Nursing and Health Studies a competitive grant renewal, funding its Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship project (NAT) for three additional years.

NAT provides financial support and mentorship to nurse anesthesia students who express a commitment to work after graduation in areas with medically underserved populations and/or a shortage of health professionals. This year's HRSA funding will enable the school to provide NAT aid to over 60 percent of students currently in its 36-month B.S.N.-D.N.P. (Doctor of Nursing Practice) Nurse Anesthesia Track program.

Along with a three-year extension of the award, which began in 2019 with \$16,649, comes a significant financial boost—\$62,653 for the 2020 budget year, with recommendations of \$47,446 and \$43,902 for fiscal years 2021 and 2022, respectively—for a four-year total of \$170,650.

The grant's positive renewal terms demonstrate both the success and relevance of the project, led by Juan E. Gonzalez, professor of clinical and director of the Nurse Anesthesia program at SONHS. "This training grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will contribute to a better understanding of the role that health care disparities play in the health of the population," he explains. "The program orients traineeship recipients to identify possible barriers to the health



care their patients may encounter and fosters a sense of commitment."

The award also supports the federal government's priority to combat the opioid abuse epidemic with an emphasis in rural, underserved populations, where most anesthesia services are provided by certified registered nurse anesthetists. "In addition to opioid management," notes Gonzalez, "we teach all of our students opioid-sparing techniques in anesthesia, which could be an emphasis on regional anesthesia without narcotics whenever possible, as well as a more holistic approach to pain management and other non-opioid approaches."

According to Gonzalez, last year over 75 percent of SONHS doctoral nurse anesthesia graduates were practicing in settings considered medically underserved and/or facing a shortage of health professionals after graduation.

"We are in a very good location for diversity," says Gonzalez. "Through our clinical site placements, program grads of all backgrounds become even more aware of the need and the importance of taking care of underserved demographics. As they become more aware of this reality, it makes sense that they choose to serve where the need is greatest. Diversity is also important to patient care because if you can increase the number of culturally competent providers who patients can identify with, those patients may be more likely to follow up with their care, as opposed to feeling neglected."

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$79,302 with 0 percentage financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

Accreditation Where It's Due

International health care simulation organization confers maximum accreditation for teaching and education



The Society for Simulation in Healthcare (SSH) has finalized full accreditation status in the area of teaching and education for the School of Nursing and Health Studies Simulation Hospital for Advancing Research and Education (S.H.A.R.E.™).

The maximum five-year accreditation was granted by SSH for June 1, 2020 through December 31, 2025. “The accreditation process is a journey that represents a time for self and peer assessment of our simulation program,” says Donna McDermott, associate dean for simulation programs and associate professor of clinical. “This is international recognition from our simulation colleagues that reinforces our own standards for providing students with the highest-quality simulation experiences and learning outcomes. I feel fortunate to be part of such a dedicated, creative team.”

The rigorous application process for accreditation began back in May 2019 and continued through SSH’s final site visit this past May. In the months of preparation leading up to final accreditation, McDermott and the entire simulation team were also innovating strategies to provide top-notch remote and virtual simulation-based instruction as U.S. campuses shut down in the wake of the global pandemic.

“The award of SSH accreditation is a great recognition for the school and S.H.A.R.E.™, and a testament to the hard work and dedication of the simulation team, our faculty, and our students,” adds Jeffrey Groom, professor of clinical and director of special projects for S.H.A.R.E.™. “It is a strong statement about the importance of simulation-based education and its role in the education and lifelong professional development of our students, alumni, and clinical colleagues.”

McDermott and Groom credit the school’s team of nurse specialists and simulation operations technologists for their critical role in the success of the SSH accreditation process. That process included satisfying extensive criteria in core areas of mission and governance, program and resource management, human resources, program improvement, ethics, and expanding the field, as well as meeting all teaching and education standards across the areas of educational activities, educational activity design, qualified educators, and evaluation and improvement.

The SSH Board of Review’s accreditation report highlights a number of strengths. Among those are the passion and expertise of the nurse specialists at S.H.A.R.E.™, the ability to deliver simulations in the native language of international visiting students and cater to Spanish-speaking simulation centers, the availability of per diem technologists and nurse specialists, well-established philanthropic support, and clear institutional support.

SONHS received provisional SSH accreditation in 2016. Since the five-story, 41,000-square-foot simulation hospital, now known as S.H.A.R.E.™, opened in September 2017, SONHS educators have provided nearly 47,000 learner contact hours for future and current nurses, physicians, and allied health professionals. S.H.A.R.E.™ is also a venue for research, innovation, and service. Recent initiatives address the needs of health providers on the front lines of COVID-19 (see page 24).



Introducing Arsham Alamian

Associate Dean for Health Studies and Associate Professor



On August 1, Arsham Alamian joined the School of Nursing and Health Studies as an associate professor and the associate dean for Health Studies, overseeing the school’s public health and health science programs.

“I feel fortunate to have Dr. Alamian join our leadership team at this critical juncture for global public health,” said Dean Cindy L. Munro. “His impressive leadership skills and international epidemiological expertise make him a powerful asset as we navigate a safe, successful return to campus and as our faculty and students continue to address public health challenges at the local, national, and hemispheric level.”

A noted epidemiologist focused on chronic diseases research and public health systems, Alamian began his post as Miami’s COVID-19 rates continued to rise. This semester he taught applied statistics. “It is our job as public health leaders to inform the public that our best defense is to stay apart as much

as possible, wear a mask when social distancing is not possible, and wash our hands throughout the day,” he said.

Prior to SONHS, Alamian served on the faculty at East Tennessee State University’s College of Public Health since 2011, most recently as a tenured associate professor of epidemiology and director of the Master of Public Health program. “I look forward to continuing the School of Nursing and Health Studies’ tradition of delivering an excellent educational experience to a diverse body of students,” he said. “I am also eager to work with Dean Munro and the faculty in developing new and timely curricula, forging new collaborations with public health organizations and authorities, and training the next generation of students ready to tackle future outbreaks.”

An elected fellow of the American College of Epidemiology and elected leader of the American Public Health Association, Alamian has successfully

obtained nearly \$2.95 million in extramural funds for his research. He is currently co-investigator on two NIH grants, including a study on the role of a novel adipokine on liver-adipose tissue and a study on the role of family dynamics in childhood obesity. “I am pleased that my research interests align with those of several wonderful researchers at the school,” noted Alamian, who has published 35 peer-reviewed manuscripts and authored 70 research presentations.

Fluent in English and French, Alamian completed a public health fellowship with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research; a Ph.D. in public health, with a specialization in epidemiology, from the University of Montreal; a master of science degree in pharmacy, with a pharmacoepidemiology specialization, from Laval University in Quebec City; and a bachelor of science in physiology from McGill University in Montreal.

‘Be Bold’

The Year of the Nurse continues at SONHS

By Robin Shear



The International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife was supposed to be a chance for the nursing profession to celebrate its critical role in society and raise awareness of its impact on a global scale. But there was little time for that as 2020 quickly gave way to the most significant pandemic in a century.

“We certainly are getting the exposure about what nursing is about and why nursing is so desperately needed,” said School of Nursing and Health Studies Dean Cindy L. Munro. “It’s a tough way to learn that lesson. But if any good comes from this, maybe that will be it.” Anticipating the 2020 Year of the Nurse, Munro had pledged the school’s support to Nursing Now, an international campaign committed to raising the status and profile of nursing in order to improve universal health conditions. In addition, SONHS accepted the Nightingale Challenge, a central Nursing Now initiative calling for health care employers to provide leadership training to at least 20,000 early career nurses around the world in

2020, the 200th birthday of trailblazing nurse Florence Nightingale. The leadership development program SONHS implemented drew emerging nurse leaders from Miami, Mexico, Chile, El Salvador, Brazil, Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay.

This past April, noted nurse leader Elizabeth Madigan, CEO of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing (Sigma), delivered the program’s closing lecture, broadcast via Zoom in English, with simultaneous Spanish interpretation. “This is a more critical time than ever to identify nurse leaders,” said Madigan, who shared key findings from the recently released State of the World’s Nursing Report and described how Sigma, the world’s second-largest nursing organization with over 135,000 active members, is supporting the Nightingale Challenge as well.

Describing hard-won lessons from her own career, Madigan explained what being a nurse leader means to her.

“Nursing leadership requires dealing with a complex system of people, and it takes the time and willingness to understand the perspectives of those you are leading—not necessarily to agree, but to know where they are coming from, where the barriers and obstacles are,” she said.



“Leadership qualities really start with knowing yourself.”

In a post-program survey of SONHS Nightingale participants, the majority of respondents were extremely satisfied with the leadership program and quality of lectures presented. Additionally, they said the program helped them develop nursing leadership skills. By the end of the series, over half had identified a leadership project they thought could help them continue developing their nurse leadership skills, and all said they would appreciate additional nursing leadership activities. “We have to continue helping our Nightingale Challenge participants progress, to be better nurses and better leaders tomorrow,” said Johis Ortega, director of the school’s PAHO/WHO Collaborating Centre and associate dean for hemispheric and global initiatives.

Nursing Now invited Ortega, a driver of international participation in the Nightingale program, to speak on its Nightingale Challenge Employer Webinar panel, “Adapting to the COVID-19 Pandemic,” as well as on two other global panels as part of the Nightingale Challenge: One Year On! first anniversary virtual conference held in June. First, Ortega joined two SONHS Nightingale program participants—Magaly Miranda Ávila, of Chile, and Kevin Rojas, of El Salvador—to discuss the importance of investing in nursing leadership to improve health care and public health. Next, on the international Career Advice Clinic panel, Ortega shared his own story of working as a waiter to pay for nursing school after arriving in the U.S. from Cuba without

“This is a more critical time than ever to identify nurse leaders.”

knowing English. “Accept challenges, be bold,” advised Ortega, a recently inducted Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. “I would recommend adopting the attitude of a leader.”

Nursing Now’s One Year On event drew over 1,000 participants, with 67 speakers from 21 countries, including Game of Thrones star Emilia Clarke, a Nursing Now ambassador; Nursing Now co-chairs Lord Nigel Crisp, of the U.K. House of Lords, and former Botswana health minister Sheila Tlou, a nurse specializing in HIV/AIDS and women’s health; and WHO director Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

“It’s essential that the efforts employers have made in encouraging nurses and midwives to be leaders extend far beyond the first year of the Nightingale Challenge,” said Ghebreyesus.

According to Nursing Now, 30,000 nurses and midwives are enrolled in leadership development programs around the world. Nursing Now is among the groups that have announced plans to extend Year of the Nurse efforts like these into 2021 due to the impact COVID-19 has had among the ranks of the profession. SONHS Dean Cindy Munro is not surprised by how nurses everywhere have taken the lead during the present pandemic. “Courage has always been a defining characteristic of nursing,” she said. “We have a long history of stepping up during pandemics, during wars, during any kind of major disaster. We have a history of doing this, and doing it well.”

Find the Nightingale webinar links at <https://tinyurl.com/y5sl44b7>.



Advancing Diversity

Straight talk about social justice, health equity, and higher ed

By Robin Shear



Kemika Lundy, B.S.N. '20, was writhing in agony. She had been vomiting all day when her roommate decided it was time to call an ambulance. But when the second-semester nursing student presented to the Emergency Department with excruciating pelvic pain, her physical distress was only compounded by an uncomfortable encounter with a medical professional. “A doctor came up to me and said, ‘You’re fine.’ I was like, what do you mean? I’m dying, I’m in pain.” She also recalls the physician telling her, prior to testing or examination, that she probably had a sexually transmitted disease.

The experience shook Lundy, who was later diagnosed with endometriosis. Had she been made to feel as if she

was faking her pain or drug-seeking because she was a young woman? An African American woman? Both? Lundy wasn’t sure, but whatever the reason, as a future health professional herself, she knew it wasn’t right, and that infuriated her. Lundy became hypervigilant about her own bedside manner during clinical experience. “Every single night after that, I walked into the room of each and every one of my patients and made sure I gave them justice, that I was really fair,” recounts Lundy. “I made sure my own biases were not affecting my judgment. It’s called cultural competency, being culturally sensitive.”

With dual degrees in biology and nursing from the historically black Florida Memorial University and the

University of Miami, respectively, Lundy is now a registered nurse beginning an acute care residency. She was among those from the School of Nursing and Health Studies community who spoke candidly with *Heartbeat* in the wake of a nationwide outcry for social justice, fueled by the appalling murder of George Floyd and a global pandemic that is disproportionately killing minorities.

“I see it as a duty to educate. You can help someone else see their own flaw, because everyone has biases. It’s in us,” says Lundy, who was inspired to become a nurse by her mother, a licensed practical nurse (L.P.N.) who was deported to Haiti when Lundy was just 11. “How you view a person can really affect how you take care of them.”

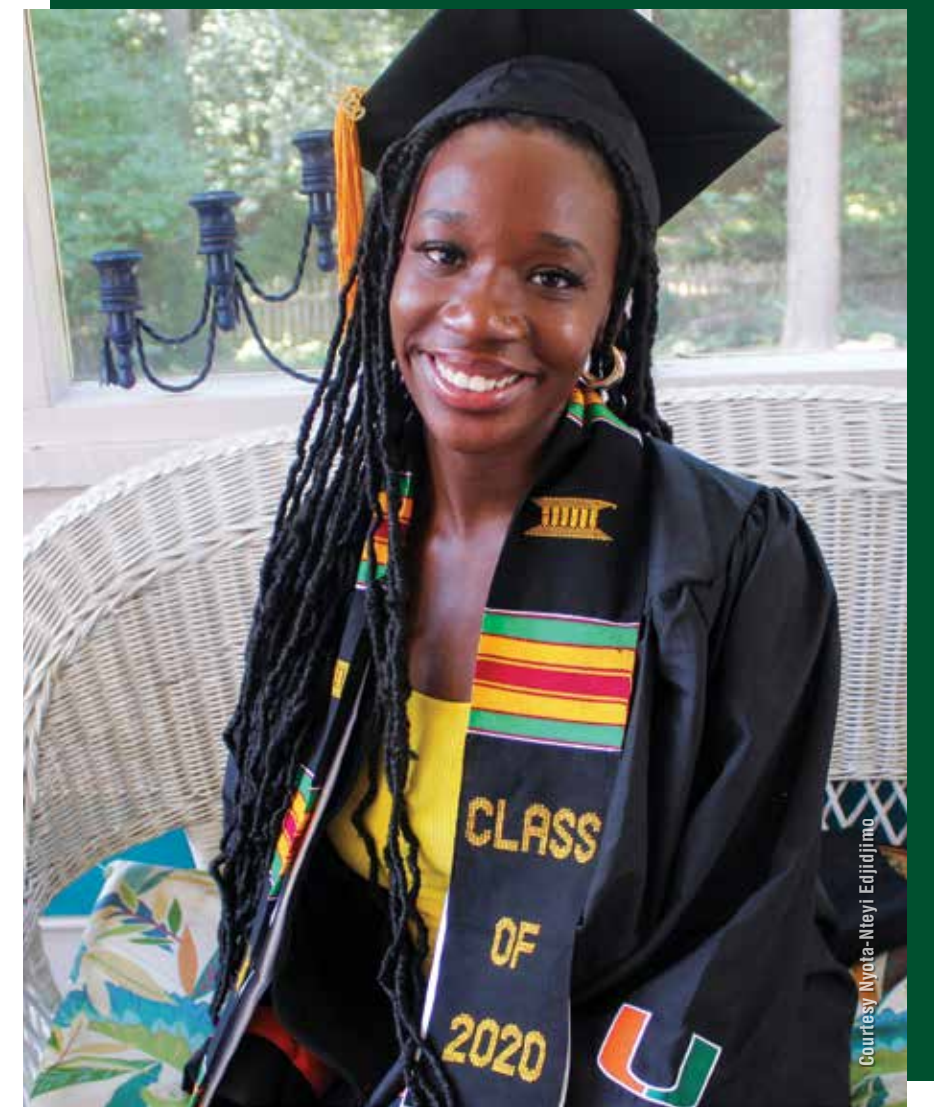
Cultural Competence

Nyota-Nteyi Edjidjimo, B.S.N. '20, attended UM on a Ronald A. Hammond Scholarship, which honors the legacy of the University’s first director of minority affairs. In her senior year, she was invited to revive the school’s chapter of the Multicultural Nursing Student Association (MNSA). Under Edjidjimo’s leadership, the club hosted cultural celebrations highlighting important contributions from diverse communities and health care leaders. They also brought in multicultural health care providers to speak about their experiences in Miami. “Being able to bring diverse content to the School of Nursing and Health Studies was definitely a rewarding experience,” she says. “That was not something I experienced previously during my years at the school. For me, the most rewarding part is to know that if a multicultural student was looking for an outlet, or at least a haven to learn more about multicultural issues within health care, MNSA was there.” Senior nursing student Kiara Davis recently took over as MNSA president.

Meanwhile, Edjidjimo was hired as an Emergency Department R.N. in the same Atlanta hospital where her parents work—her mother as a nurse and her father as a respiratory therapist. “I’m definitely grateful for the education I got at the University of Miami,” Edjidjimo says, noting how important Miami’s diverse clinical settings were to her development. She also has suggestions for how the school could increase its commitment to cultural competency. She gives a seemingly simple example that could go a long way toward inclusion. “Whenever we have pictures in the textbook or PowerPoints, some of the skin conditions and things like that are

“Commitment to social justice underpins all of the health professions.”

— Dean Cindy L. Munro



usually white or fair-skinned people exhibiting the condition,” she says. “I know it’s kind of difficult to have a white and black comparison of every single skin condition, but I definitely think that as health care providers it’s important to know there are variations in the way different conditions affect different skin colors.”

A class she found invaluable was Health Disparities, taught by Assistant Professor of Clinical Andrew Porter. “We learned about not just racial diversity, but diversity of thought and different marginalized communities, like the LGBTQ community, and how different preconceived notions people may have about these populations could affect the provision of care,” she recounts. “Making that class mandatory would definitely be a step in the right direction to helping students become more culturally competent.”

Edjidjimo agrees that diversifying faculty representation—an aim of the Dean’s Special Advisory Committee on Faculty Diversity (see page 17)—is another important step toward advancing equity and inclusion. However, she cautions, it’s not an end in itself.

“Anybody of any race or ethnicity could say something insensitive or stereotypical without the appropriate cultural competency education,” she says. “If you are hoping to be a well-trained, equitable health care provider, it’s your job to read and learn as much as you can, to make sure you’re able to check your biases, check your privilege, and make sure you’re not banking on any stereotypes or preconceived notions before providing care to patients. You have to continue to teach yourself and relearn different things as you progress in your career.”



Kenya Snowden, M.S.N. '10, D.N.P. '11, advises Jessica Saint Clair, M.S.N. '17, D.N.P. '18.

Social Justice

Balkys Bivins first came to UM at age 17 for a summer research program sponsored by the American Chemical Society. “I had to take three buses and a Metrorail train,” she recalls. “I did that for the whole summer, and I loved the experience.”

For Bivins, an honors science student at an underperforming public Miami high school, traveling to Project SEED (Summer Experiences for the Economically Disadvantaged) was like being transported into a new dimension. “That really changed my life,” she says.

Today, Bivins holds B.S.N. and M.S.N. degrees from UM, as well as a Ph.D. in nursing. She presents her health disparities research around the world and is currently studying the impact COVID-19 is having on university students’ stress levels. A clinical instructor at SONHS, students voted her the recipient of the 2020 Clinical Excellence Faculty Award.

As a Haitian-born Black woman who has overcome ethnic, racial, and gender-based obstacles in her own career,

Bivins is eager to address how nursing can help bring about social justice for minority students in higher education. “When we talk about social justice, I think about some main principles,” says Bivins. “I think about inclusivity, I think about equity, I think about access and participation.”

One important step she sees toward social justice is encouraging students from diverse backgrounds to enter specialized disciplines that address “notorious disparities in patient outcomes, such as maternal mortality and NICU survival rates.” Another is recruiting and enrolling students from diverse backgrounds, and providing them with extensive access to aid, scholarships, and forgivable loans.

“There’s a difference between what we call equality and equity,” explains Bivins. “Equality is just giving everybody the same. But somebody may need a little more help to achieve their goal because of the obstacles they’ve faced. If somebody hadn’t recognized in me something other people overlooked, I might not be where I am today.”

Bivins emphasizes that social justice is not a handout, and it’s not just a “nice thing to do for disadvantaged, vulnerable people. Bringing diverse individuals to the table allows the organization to learn from their different perspectives and lived experiences,” she says. “Social justice gives that entity, whether it be an institution or corporate board, a better chance at helping more people by realizing a higher-quality product that is reflective of our humanity.”

Assistant Professor of Clinical Kenya Snowden, M.S.N. '10, D.N.P. '11, also a double 'Cane, is a mentor for the Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students program at SONHS and president of the Beta Tau Chapter of Sigma Honor Society. She has previously served as faculty advisor for the National Student Nurses Association and MNSA. As past director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program at SONHS, Snowden started a leadership development and shadowing program for undergraduate underrepresented populations in nursing.

For Snowden, who started in nursing as an L.P.N. at age 18 and now directs the school’s M.S.N. Family Nurse Practitioner program, social justice takes shape in the form of continuing to empower and share resources with the many SONHS students she has mentored through the years.

“From the beginning I help students to realize that advanced degrees are achievable no matter what their background is,” she says. “One of the reasons I’m the type of mentor I am—I’m very frank and honest with students—is because I’ve been there. I know what it’s like to not have support, to come from nothing, and not have true role models. Planting that seed early sets them up for success, makes them believe, hey, I can do this, or I need to do this—for the patients, myself, and the profession.”



Seated left: Balkys Pierre-Paul Bivins was in high school when UM faculty selected her for the SEED program.

Courtesy Dr. Balkys Bivins

Taking Action

In her recent editorial as the *American Journal of Critical Care*’s co-editor-in-chief, SONHS Dean Cindy L. Munro emphasized the clear duty health professionals bear not only to treat each patient with dignity and respect, but to actively work to make society more just for all. “Commitment to social justice underpins all of the health professions,” she wrote.

To that end, Dean Munro called together the Dean’s Special Advisory Committee on Faculty Diversity. The faculty-led group first met in July with a focus on improving recruitment and retention of underrepresented educators at SONHS, where Black/African American faculty members currently represent 18 percent of the school’s total faculty.

According to Fall 2020 Office of Student Services statistics, 63 percent of SONHS’ 1,343-member student body belongs to at least one minority group. Specifically, 16 percent identify as Black/African American, 36 percent as Hispanic, 7 percent as Asian, 4 percent as two or more minority groups, and fewer than

1 percent as American Indian/Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; 33 percent identify as white, and 4 percent chose not to specify.

“We join the University of Miami in amplifying nationwide calls for racial and social justice,” says Dean Munro. “SONHS will continue to focus on increasing diversity, modeling inclusion and cultural competency in its core curriculum, and eliminating health disparities through ongoing research, scholarship, and service initiatives.” SONHS’ initiatives align with steps being taken at the University level, starting with the 15-point plan President Julio Frenk introduced in July to advance “racial justice on campus and beyond.”

As part of the plan, President Frenk appointed a special advisor on racial justice, and SONHS Professor Guillermo “Willy” Prado, in his capacity as vice provost for faculty affairs and Graduate School dean, recruited Miami Law Professor and Distinguished Scholar Osamudia James to be UM’s first associate provost for diversity, equity,

and inclusion. James recently met with the Dean’s Special Advisory Committee at SONHS to discuss efforts underway to support underrepresented faculty and boost faculty diversity at UM, where, according to Frenk, Black/African American faculty represent 5.1 percent of the total.

Other aims listed in UM’s 15-point plan include admitting and retaining more Black/African American students; conducting a comprehensive racial climate survey; providing comprehensive training on implicit bias for students, faculty, and staff; creating a Center for Global Black Studies; supporting, amplifying, and extending faculty research on anti-Black racism and bias; and increasing investment in and partnerships with the Black/African American community.

“Universities have a crucial role to play in modeling racial justice,” expressed Frenk. “The work must go on even when distressing episodes do not dominate the headlines.”

Prioritizing Public Health

SONHS INNOVATES A SAFE RETURN TO CAMPUS, CLINICALS, AND SIMULATION-BASED EDUCATION AMID THE CHALLENGE OF THE CENTURY

By Robin Shear

After the three Ts of virus containment—testing, tracing, and tracking—comes a fourth and equally important T: transitioning—how to do it, when to do it, and in what capacity. Months before the University of Miami officially reopened in the fall, the School of Nursing and Health Studies was grappling with the transitional complexities unique to a health-based educational endeavor, from student requirements for in-person clinical hours to faculty and graduate students working on the front lines of the pandemic.

Despite the accompanying ups, downs, and uncertainties, not to mention a full slate of classes scheduled for the summer, school leadership moved quickly to implement protocols prioritizing the safety and well-being of its students, faculty, and staff.

“Student and personnel safety is the primary goal,” said Dean Cindy L. Munro. As early as March, a comprehensive blueprint for meeting that goal, along with the educational objectives of over 1,000 students from undergraduate to doctoral levels, began to emerge. School planning, conducted in lockstep with work being done at the institutional level, comprised public health and science-based protocols, significant investments in safety resources and supplies, and timely educational campaigns for employees, health personnel, students, and parents.



March: Safety First

Not long after students left for spring break, it became clear to Donna McDermott that COVID-19 might not allow for their scheduled return. As the school's relatively new associate dean for simulation projects, McDermott leapt to action, re-envisioning what pandemic-era instruction might look within the school's five-story Simulation Hospital for Advancing Research and Education (S.H.A.R.E.™). She and colleague Jeffrey Groom, director of special projects for S.H.A.R.E.™, immediately began working with the school's nurse specialists and simulation technologists to translate in-person, hands-on lessons into virtual learning.

Within one week they conceived, filmed, and edited a number of live clinical scenarios into a virtual format, addressing acute health issues that students could engage with safely while sheltering in place anywhere from Kendall to Calgary.

Nicole Sacchi, now in her third semester of the accelerated nursing program, is no stranger to emergency situations. As a Floridian, she's weathered hurricanes. Born in dictator Hugo Chávez's Venezuela, she's faced dire conditions that forced her family to flee their homeland by the time she was 8. So, when SONHS transitioned from



Courtesy of Nicole Sacchi

in-person to remote learning, the Helene Fuld Scholarship recipient took the change in stride.

"I loved the simulation hospital. It was a great way to prepare us for going into real hospitals," Sacchi said of her first six weeks at S.H.A.R.E.™. "Because of the pandemic, we moved into a more virtual clinical setting after spring break. We would have Zoom meetings in groups of seven or eight and work with our instructors on patient case studies. Everyone did their best to make our education as good as possible."

The S.H.A.R.E.™ team collaborated with SONHS nursing faculty to make sure there were virtual simulation resources to meet the objectives of each clinical course. Pre-recorded simulations enabled students to discuss and debrief from the experience using guided questions.

"I'm proud that we as a team have been able to come up with solutions to continue the engagement and learning of our students," said nurse specialist Michelle Arrojo, D.N.P. '19. McDermott agrees. "I am proud of what the S.H.A.R.E.™ staff accomplished together," she said. "Our team worked collaboratively all semester to create contingency simulated activities, supplemented with commercial virtual simulation products, that foster students' critical thinking skills and meet their clinical learning objectives."

May: Innovating for the New Normal

Among many tough calls during the Spring 2020 semester was the University-wide decision to postpone Commencement. To celebrate graduates from afar, SONHS decided to hold its first-ever Facebook Live Spring Awards Ceremony on May 8. Hundreds of faculty, friends, and family logged in to congratulate the 220 new graduates. Just 10 days later, the first academic summer session began at SONHS fully remotely, with students enrolled in three different degree programs, including a new cohort of accelerated nursing students. The annual Interprofessional Patient Safety Course took place for the first time via Zoom, with two days of virtual simulations, discussions, and case study care planning.

Meanwhile, Dean Munro continued working with key administration and faculty to finalize strategic plans for the remainder of the summer. On June 29, after three months, S.H.A.R.E.™ was able to reopen for students in the A.B.S.N., M.S.N., and B.S.N.-D.N.P. Nurse Anesthesia Track programs for face-to-face simulation skills sessions. "I'm very excited to get back and see our students," said McDermott. "The simulation team is excited to be back, too, and they've been very creative and innovative in implementing new ways that will allow us to provide the best experience for students to meet learning outcomes."

Direct care clinical placements resumed over the summer for certain programs, too, with newly established safety guidelines and screening protocols, while all lectures continued to be conducted remotely. A 20-point bulletin posted to the S.H.A.R.E.™ website detailed stringent facility use requirements based on UM's four pillars of testing, tracing, and tracking; cleaning and disinfecting; protecting personal space; and vaccinating. "Continuous quality assessment and improvement will be ongoing during S.H.A.R.E.™ simulation experiences," stated the bulletin.

Despite her joy at seeing students again, those first few weeks McDermott

recalled feeling like she was part traffic cop, part troubleshooter as she zipped from floor to floor, making sure everything was going according to carefully orchestrated plan and anticipating any potential problems. "We are bringing students in groups of no bigger than six," she explained. "We are doing hand-washing and physical distancing of at least six feet. There are sinks and hand sanitizers throughout the simulation area, and students are all required to wear face coverings."

The elaborate choreography of logistics included staggered class times to ensure everyone was sufficiently spaced out across four of the hospital's five floors, with an extra half hour allotted between each student group to allow sufficient time for sanitizing all high-touch areas and equipment before use.

"I'm being very cautious. I'm making sure everything is clean," said simulation technologist Omar Hernandez. "So far everything has gone smoothly."

Students, faculty, and staff also were required to submit daily self-screening health evaluations prior to entering the building or visiting their clinical site. And McDermott installed a number of portable plexiglass shields to give added protection during instructional activities.

"It's been super weird having the big acrylic shield between the teacher and student, but everybody has been able to adjust," said simulation technologist Luis Perez. "It's all part of this transitional moment that we're living, but we come together to make it happen."

The whole objective of this is to educate the students so they can go on and serve others."

SONHS lecturer and nurse specialist Evan McEwing discovered another unexpected challenge of the new normal. "As strange as it sounds, teaching with a mask on is quite challenging in terms of making sure you're speaking loudly and clearly enough for all students to hear," he said. But McEwing's mask did nothing to mute his enthusiasm for



Donna McDermott

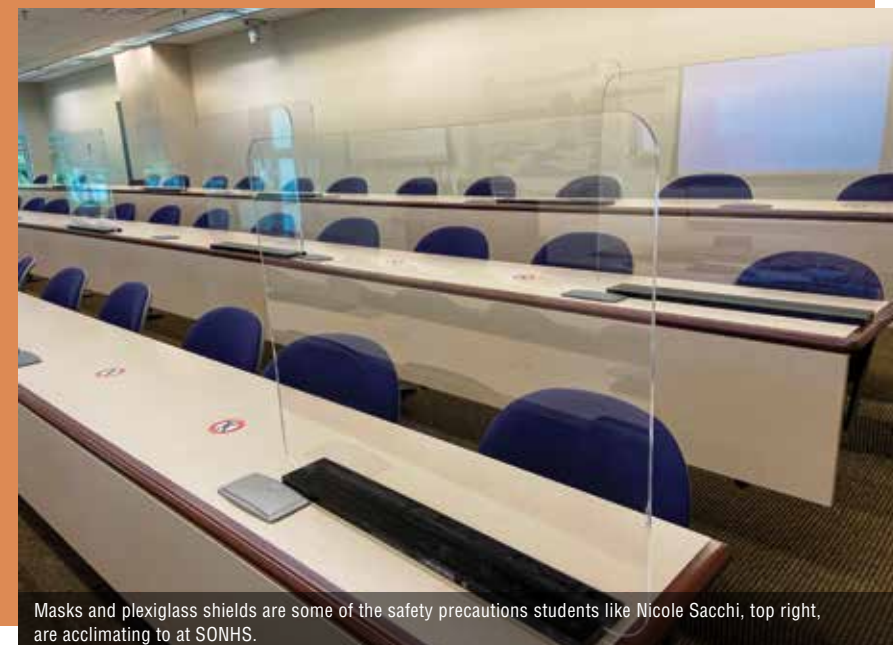


Robert Blau

teaching. "Seeing our students back on campus has easily been the most gratifying experience," he said. "In my estimation, students are thrilled to be back and have the opportunity to practice hands-on learning."

Sacchi agrees that transitioning from Zoom back to hands-on learning went well, and offered some bonus training in resilience. "Anyone who graduates during this time is going to be very adaptable," she said. "The experience is just so new to everyone."

Dean Munro commented on the invaluable lessons derived from piloting three hybrid summer sessions successfully. "The feedback from students has been overwhelmingly positive," she said. "This summer's instruction has helped us fine-tune safety protocols, clinical rotations, and the use of S.H.A.R.E.™ as we finalized arrangements for Fall 2020 clinical sections."



Masks and plexiglass shields are some of the safety precautions students like Nicole Sacchi, top right, are acclimating to at SONHS.



Evan McEwing



August and Beyond: Going the Distance

Usually pandemics are something SONHS students learn about in their epidemiology or global health classes, or experience as participants in a disaster preparedness simulation. But what was once purely academic has become a new reality to adapt to.

This new reality is apparent to anyone who enters the M. Christine Schwartz Center for Nursing and Health Studies, from the signs about wearing face coverings and physical distancing, to the disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer dispensers around every corner, to the arrows on the floor directing students to follow the proper flow of foot traffic in and out of the building.

“It’s very quiet without the hustle and bustle of the students,” noted Michelle Arrojo a month before the fall reopening. In preparation for making that safe return to campus, every instructional space inside the Schwartz Center was reimagined and reconfigured to promote a physical distance of at least six feet between students and educators. Dedensification efforts included moving lecture classes to larger spaces, blocking or removing seats, and installing signage

throughout the building as visual cues for required behavior.

With new lessons and new infection numbers emerging daily, SONHS students, staff, and faculty continue to pursue evidence-based public health guidelines and best practices that are foundational to the disciplines being taught at the school. Due to the nature of their experience and interests, SONHS faculty and students have also contributed to University-wide efforts during this critical transition period.

Faculty member Carmen Presti, for example, serves on one of the committees UM leadership convened to develop recommendations and strategies in preparation for the University’s Fall 2020 reopening. Presti, an advanced practice nurse who teaches in the clinical setting and manages care of COVID-19-positive patients, helped to support the committee’s work by facilitating SONHS faculty and student involvement in testing and tracing students, faculty, and staff. “I felt I could provide insight as both an educator and health care provider,” she said. “I am very honored and proud to be associated with such an

innovative and selfless group of people working towards making the U safe for all.”

Another University-wide effort to support the safe reopening of campus and COVID-19 operating plans is the Public Health Ambassadors program, which launched in August. Senior administration wanted to use peer influence to promote shared healthy behaviors throughout the Coral Gables campus. “This is a great opportunity for our students to be leaders,” said Andrew Wiemer, director of the Butler Center for Service Leadership, and the program’s organizer. “It was important for us to find individuals who care and who want to help us be responsible as we continue to reopen.”

Out of the inaugural 75 Public Health Ambassadors selected from over 270 applicants, 24 of them are students from the School of Nursing and Health Studies. Public health ambassadors offer support and use peer-to-peer influence to encourage members of the campus community to engage in the healthy behaviors of physical distancing, wearing face coverings, and hand washing/

Making the Safe Return to Campus

Please pay close attention as we review the ways we are preparing for the resumption of in-person classes and the materials you will receive in your Safe Return to Campus Kit for the fall semester.



sanitizing. They also distribute masks as needed and educational materials about proper hand hygiene.

“I really wanted to do something that would be able to help the community,” said Jacques Calixte, a first-year health science major in the premed track at SONHS. “The main problem I’ve come across is that people aren’t wearing their mask correctly, so I’ve just had to remind them. But people have been very compliant about following the policies.” Patricia Whitely, vice president for Student Affairs, said public health ambassadors “have stepped up to take an active role in safeguarding our campus community by reminding each of us daily how we can do our part to help slow the spread.”

Cachay Byrd is another SONHS student stepping up for her community. Byrd completed her health science degree requirements virtually in May, just a few days before beginning the accelerated B.S.N. program. While on campus for her clinical skills classes at S.H.A.R.E.™, Byrd appeared in an online safety module that all UM students, faculty, and staff were required to complete before being allowed to return to campus. In the video, Byrd offers detailed instructions on safely donning and doffing a mask or face covering safely.

She then addresses another important but sometimes-overlooked casualty of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic: mental health. “If your feelings of stress become overwhelming, please know that we have resources here on campus at our University Counseling Center, Faculty and Staff Assistance programs, and other programs to help,”



Dean Munro reconnects with returning students.



Byrd states in the video. “There is no stigma or shame in reaching out when you need others to provide support here at the U.”

As executive director of the school’s Office of Student Services, Joe Tripodi is also concerned with bringing attention to mental health resources for students in these challenging times. “I want to make sure our students are taking time for self-care,” he said. “In the spirit of ‘Canes caring for ‘Canes, we are all better when we look after each other.”

Epidemiologist Arsham Alamian joined UM from East Tennessee State University on August 1. As associate dean for the Health Studies program at SONHS, he is optimistic yet pragmatic about the fluidity of the current situation. “It is more important than ever to highlight the role of public health and health sciences in guiding our decisions to mitigate and slow down the spread of disease,” said Alamian.

“As you might expect, this fall will be very different than previous years.

However, rest assured that the faculty are dedicated to providing a safe and excellent educational experience. At the same time, we should continue to be flexible throughout this pandemic. There are still so many unknowns about this virus.”

Another unknown is what the world will look like in January 2021, when students are scheduled to make the transition back to campus after an extended Thanksgiving/Winter Break. But right now, pandemic or not, in-person learning or virtual, there’s no place nursing student Nicole Sacchi would rather be than SONHS. “From the interactions I have with every one of my professors, it is evident that attending UM was absolutely the right choice,” said Sacchi. “I have found a passion in nursing I never found with anything else. This pandemic has had many disadvantages, but one of the positive side effects is that I really, really found my calling. I’m on the right track.”

Please monitor coronavirus.miami.edu for up-to-date guidance, advisories, and links to resources.

Beyond the Front Line

Innovative contributions from SONHS in the fight against COVID-19

By Robin Shear, Robert C. Jones Jr., and Maya Bell



COVID-19 has led to life disruptions and fear, isolation and financial distress. In these turbulent times, the School of Nursing and Health Studies is focused on initiatives aimed at curbing the pandemic's profound effects on global health and well-being.

With increased isolation raising the risk of domestic violence, for example, Nick Metheny, SONHS assistant professor, is an investigator on a Canadian-based project aimed at keeping women and children safe during COVID-19-related home confinement. Substance use, not to mention the heightened danger of smoking amid a pandemic that attacks the lungs, is another issue being targeted by Denise C. Vidot, assistant professor. Vidot designed a COVID-19 Cannabis Health Questionnaire and is principal investigator on related multi-institution studies to understand cannabis consumer behaviors during the pandemic.

Preliminary results from over 3,000 respondents in dozens of countries have demonstrated, she warns, "an alarming prevalence of anxiety and depressive symptoms associated with increased alcohol and non-medical cannabis use since the start of the pandemic, particularly among young adults."

COVID-19 also has intensified an already high rate of health disparities among people with disabilities. To support equitable, objective treatment of this vulnerable population, Ashley Falcon, assistant professor of clinical, led the creation of a rapid response team training in collaboration with the Miller School of Medicine's Mailman Center for Child Development. The free online course, "Preventing discrimination against people with disabilities during a public health emergency," is available at <https://bit.ly/2QcnD98>.

Harnessing simulation to support their frontline colleagues from behind the scenes, SONHS faculty Juan E. Gonzalez, director of the B.S.N.-D.N.P. Nurse Anesthesia program, and Greta Mitzova-Vladinov, associate director, provided certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) from UHealth Tower with hands-on refresher courses at the Simulation Hospital for Advancing Research and Education (S.H.A.R.E.™). The sessions have focused on ultrasound-guided central line insertion, a highly specialized skill.

"This gives us a chance to serve other nurse anesthetists in the UM community so they can better serve the community at large during the COVID-19 pandemic," says Mitzova-Vladinov.

Read on to learn other ways SONHS faculty and students are combatting this global health crisis.

Teaming Up for Health Care Workers

Looking like something out of a horror movie, smoke billows from the patient simulator's nose and mouth, filling the clear acrylic chamber encircling its head. This dramatic scene played out during a series of prototype tests conducted recently at the Simulation Hospital for Advancing Research and Education (S.H.A.R.E.™).

The theatrical fog streaming from the retrofitted manikin is intended to replicate the aerosol and particle spray that occurs during intubation. This invasive ventilation procedure requires clinicians to be mere inches from their patient's face, a concern for contagion even with the requisite personal protective equipment (PPE) in place.

"We're trying to elucidate exactly how the particles spread and how they affect the intubator," explains Nichole Crenshaw, the SONHS assistant professor of clinical performing the mock intubations to test the effectiveness of the chamber-like acrylic barrier.

Crenshaw and Professor of Clinical Jeffrey Groom, director of special

projects for S.H.A.R.E.™, are members of the University of Miami's COVID-19 Preparedness Committee, a team of engineers, architects, physicians, nurses, and other innovators recruited by vice provost for special projects, Jean Pierre Bardet.

"Our role is to weigh in on the clinical discussions and help facilitate any prototype testing that could be done in the setting of S.H.A.R.E.," explains Groom.

He, Crenshaw, and Richard McNeer, a professor of anesthesiology at the Miller School of Medicine, are finalizing the prototype along with members of the College of Engineering and School of Architecture. The final product will be part of committee's initiative to 3-D print and fabricate devices and PPE that will better safeguard medical personnel from COVID-19.

McNeer, the team's lead, observed that the protective intubation box, or barrier, flawlessly shielded Crenshaw from smoke exposure. Something else he noticed led to an "aha" moment for all involved.



If Crenshaw positioned the Yankauer, a commonly used oral suctioning tool, strategically near the base of the manikin's vocal cords, known as the periglottic region, she could evacuate most of the aerosol particles prior to intubation.

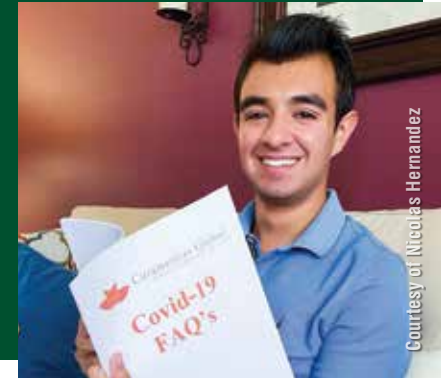
"It was a serendipitous discovery," recalls McNeer. "Suction has been used to remove everything from stomach contents to blood. But this is perhaps the first time it's been considered for use in suctioning out aerosols. This is something that can be done upstream of just about any of the other strategies and safety measures to prevent exposure to the virus during intubation."

Groom, a nurse anesthetist and former paramedic, says the team's work has implications beyond COVID-19 and recommends that both an intubation shield and periglottic suctioning be used by any health care worker facing infection risk from aerosol or particle exposure.

"Being a part of this project has been a way to make sure we're all staying safe," says Crenshaw, a nurse practitioner in the ICU at Jackson Memorial Hospital. "There's been a heightened sense of taking care of each other during this crisis. That's what has stood out to me more than anything."

Watch <https://bit.ly/3aG2SMY>.





Courtesy of Nicolas Hernandez

After recovering from COVID-19, the young mother from Guatemala was having trouble finding domestic work again in North Carolina. Like so many of the Spanish-speaking immigrants junior Nicolas Hernandez calls every week, her biggest worry was feeding her daughter. Usually, Hernandez has a ready solution: After learning where the family lives, he texts them a list of nearby food resources. But that approach wouldn't have worked for this young mother because, as she told Hernandez, she never learned to read or write, so she wouldn't understand his message. After nearly a dozen more phone calls, Hernandez was elated to be able to give the woman news that lightened her burden. He'd found a local food pantry that would provide both mother and child with weekly groceries.

For Hernandez, the woman's palpable relief was reward enough for the 10 hours a week he has spent since mid-May volunteering for Curamericas Global. To date, the nonprofit dedicated to reducing maternal and child mortality around the world has provided accurate information about the novel coronavirus to more than 10,000 Hispanic families in the Carolinas—about a thousand of whom Hernandez personally contacted while social distancing in his parents' Miami home this summer.

Ordinarily Hernandez would have spent his summer, as he has since age 16, shadowing physicians at Jackson Memorial Hospital's south campus. But after the pandemic forced the hospital to bar non-essential personnel, he jumped at the opportunity to reach out to Spanish-speakers in the Carolinas.

"As a first-generation American, I know how hard my parents' first years here were because they didn't know English," says Hernandez, the son of Colombian immigrants who moved to the United States before he was born. "Drawing on their experience, I wanted to help these families connect to the resources they need to weather this virus a little bit better."

Quaranteam Dynamics



With more families working, playing, and schooling at home, SONHS Professor Victoria Behar-Zusman spearheaded the development of the COVID-19 Household Environment Scale (CHES) with Research Associate Professor Karina Gattamorta and Jennifer Chavez, coordinator for the Center for Latino Health Research Opportunities (CLaRO). Their aim is to advance understanding of the impact

social distancing is having on family conflict and cohesion—both of which are significant determinants of resilience in the face of major stressors.

"Family cohesion, which plays an important role in a family's ability to recover and cope with disasters, is often seen as a buffer to family conflict," explains Behar-Zusman. "But chronic stress, problematic coping, and disaster-driven disruptions can significantly increase family conflict during a disaster."

Between April and May, 3,965 adults across 81 nations answered questions about household activities and functioning before and during the era of social distancing. Behar-Zusman says

A public health major, Hernandez is well aware that the pandemic has exacerbated existing disparities and insecurities faced by the region's 100,000 Guatemalans. "Even though the Hispanic population there is a lot smaller, they make up almost half of the COVID-19 cases and are the ones suffering most from chronic diseases and not having health insurance or access to doctors on a regular basis," he says. "These are not just issues in a textbook, but what people are living day to day."

Hernandez begins his outreach with questions designed to learn what the person he called knows about COVID-19 risks, symptoms, and precautions. From there, he can usually ascertain any services he should try to connect to them. He says many—like the young mother recently recovered from COVID-19—have lost their jobs and worry about their next meal.

"As long as this program is ongoing, I'll keep calling," says Hernandez. "I've learned a lot about the power of a simple phone call. At the end of the call, a lot of people say, 'I don't have any friends or family here, and it's nice to know that someone out there actually cares.'"

the results indicate a certain level of universality for how social distancing has impacted households.

"Social distancing created tremendous potential for generating disagreements in the home as well as opportunities for increased togetherness," she adds. Behar-Zusman believes the CHES—which is in the National Institutes of Health's PhenX Toolkit of common data elements for social determinants of health in the COVID-19 pandemic—is the first research measure to address family functioning in this specific context. It is available for use in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Mandarin, with a Haitian Creole translation in progress. Find this and other measures at sonhs.miami.edu/covid19.

Personal Best

In a year like no other, Nichole Crenshaw is hitting her stride

By Robin Shear

With over two decades of professional clinical experience in acute care, Nichole Crenshaw is well-acclimated to stressful situations. She likes to say, "If you stay ready, you don't have to get ready." But in a year like this one, even someone as calm and prepared as Crenshaw has had to, as she puts it, "kick it up into high gear."

Crenshaw is an assistant professor of clinical and director of the Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner program at the School of Nursing and Health Studies. A nurse practitioner for 15 years, she recently celebrated her induction as a Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, one of just 71 chosen from throughout the U.S. for the Class of 2020. "I'm beyond delighted," she says.

Recruited in March to a University-wide multidisciplinary group tasked with addressing global COVID-19-related concerns, Crenshaw is currently helping test prototypes designed to reduce clinician exposure during intubation. While the testing is simulated, for Crenshaw, the implications are very real.

"I have a lot of friends on the front line working in COVID units. I myself have taken care of patients with COVID," she says. "It's a scary thing, but you never hesitate or think, I can't do it, I'm not going to do it. It's what you sign up for when you become a nurse."

In honor of National Nurses Week, the University of Miami Alumni Association featured Crenshaw, D.N.P. '14, an alumna and parent (two of her three kids are at UM), in its "Coffee With a 'Cane" video series. During the interview, Crenshaw explains, "Nursing was in my blood before I even knew it."



RM Lamezares-Homero

Her grandmother was a nurse, her mother is a nurse practitioner, and her sister is a nurse.

"I thought I wanted to be a lawyer, but after two classes I realized it was not for me," laughs Crenshaw, whose husband graduated from Miami Law.

Instead, she started her nursing career in trauma, then worked in a transplant unit, and ultimately intensive care. By age 26 she'd earned her master's degree while working full-time. "Nursing was where I was supposed to be," she says. "I loved knowing as a nurse I had many paths I could choose throughout my career."

Crenshaw is still pursuing those paths, teaching in the classroom, clinical setting, and simulation and advanced skills labs, while practicing part-time in Jackson Memorial Hospital's cardiovascular intensive care unit. In addition, she recently joined the Dean's Special Advisory Committee to enhance recruitment and retention of black faculty at SONHS, is the School Council's elected speaker, and represents SONHS on the Faculty Senate and Graduate Council at the University level.

Since joining SONHS in 2013, Crenshaw has taught and mentored hundreds of students, nurses, and nurse practitioners, proving to be a leader in advancing simulation-based education to bridge the gap between didactic instruction and clinical practice. One example is a simulated scenario in which undergraduate nursing students and nurse practitioner students interact on case assessment and management.

"This is how it's going to be when these students graduate," says Crenshaw, "so it's really important and helpful for both groups to improve communication and gain experience working together to drive the patient's care forward."

For Crenshaw, it's all about helping students transition smoothly from expert nurse to novice nurse practitioner.

"Hopefully I'm a mentor and role model for students," she says. "But I also hope I'm able to push people to understand what it is to want to be the best, to be one of many who is driving the profession forward and pushing policy so that nurse practitioners can practice to their full scope."

Faculty Honors

Ethics Committee Appointment



Cindy L. Munro dean and professor, was appointed by the American Society for Microbiology as a member of the ASM Ethics Committee in July.

COA Council Director



Juan E. Gonzalez, professor of clinical and director of the Nurse Anesthesia Program, was elected for a second three-year term as an educator council director of the Council on Accreditation (COA) of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs. He is one of six educators on COA's 13-member board of directors.

Provost's Research Awards



Karina Gattamorta, research associate professor, received a 2020 University of Miami Provost's Research Award in the amount of \$6,500 as principal investigator for "Latinx LGBTQ Caregivers Acceptance Scale Development." San Francisco's Bay Area Reporter wrote about the new study in June, <https://bit.ly/3hfgRvd>.



Denise C. Vidot, assistant professor, received a 2020 University of Miami Provost's Research Award in the amount of \$17,000 as principal investigator for "Cannabis as a Hemispheric Health Priority: A Preliminary Investigation of Anxiety and Depression as Potential Mediators in the Relationship between Cannabis Use and

Cardiovascular Disease Risk among Persons Living with HIV in Jamaica." She also received a UM COVID-19 Rapid Response Grant in the amount of \$25,000 from the Office of the Vice Provost for Research for a young adult adaptation of her COVID-19 Cannabis Health Study

National Fellowship



Cynthia Foronda, associate professor of clinical, was recognized as an inductee of the 2020 Class of Fellows of the American Academy of Nursing at the Academy's annual Transforming Health, Driving Policy Conference, which took place virtually October 29-31.

ELAN 2020



Stephen McGhee, associate dean for Nursing Undergraduate Programs and associate professor of clinical, was selected to the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses Elevating Leaders in Academic Nursing (ELAN) Class of 2020.

Spring Faculty Awards



Beatriz Valdes, B.S.N. '99, assistant professor of clinical, was voted 2020 Teacher of the Year by SONHS students during the Spring Awards Ceremony.



Balkys Bivins, Ph.D., APRN, FNP-BC, received the 2020 Clinical Excellence Faculty Award from SONHS students during the Spring Awards Ceremony and is a proud 'Cane herself (B.S.N., M.S.N.).

New Faculty at SONHS

Guillermo (Willy) Prado

Willy Prado, the University of Miami Graduate School dean and vice provost for Faculty Affairs, received a primary appointment as SONHS professor in June. Recognized internationally as a top scholar in preventing drug abuse, sexual risk behaviors, and obesity among Hispanic adolescents, he has been principal investigator, co-investigator, or mentor on over \$100 million in NIH funding. He co-developed the Familias Unidas family-based intervention to reduce health risk behaviors among Hispanic youth and is currently evaluating an online adaption of Familias Unidas for Hispanic youth in primary care. Dean Prado serves as president of the Society for Prevention Research and director of the Investigator Development Core of the NIMHD/NIH-funded Center for Latino Research Opportunities (CLaRO). Prado earned his M.S. in statistics and Ph.D. in epidemiology and public health from UM.



Cynthia Lebron

Cynthia Lebron joined SONHS in August as an assistant professor. A researcher focused on uncovering risk factors associated with early childhood obesity that lead to health disparities across race and ethnicity, Lebron recently concluded a study supported by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases that used machine learning to predict early childhood obesity among ethnically diverse families. She was previously a senior clinical research coordinator at the Jay Weiss Institute for Health Equity at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center and held research and outreach positions at Miami Healthy Heart Initiative and the Clinical and Translational Science Institute at UM's Miller School of Medicine. Lebron is an American Public Health Association 2019-2020 Maternal and Child Health Fellow. She holds an M.P.H. and a Ph.D. in prevention science and community health from the Miller School and a B.S. in health sciences from FIU.



Nicholas Metheny

Nicholas Metheny, R.N., joined SONHS in August as an assistant professor. A postdoctoral fellow from the MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, Metheny is a public health and nurse scientist who investigates community and structural drivers of intimate partner violence in marginalized populations, as well as sexual and LGBT health. He is principal investigator on two grants currently funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Metheny was twice named a Rising Star of Research and Scholarship by Sigma and received the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Postdoctoral Training Award. He completed a Ph.D. in Nursing at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, an M.P.H. in Global Health Policy at The George Washington University, an Accelerated B.S.N. at the University of Pennsylvania, and a B.A. in public health and Hispanic studies at The College of William & Mary.



Christopher Weidlich

Christopher Weidlich, PMHNP-BC, R.N., returned to his alma mater this past July as an assistant professor of clinical. He has spent the past two years as an assistant professor and a psychiatric nurse practitioner coordinator for the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas. Weidlich's military career also started at the U, through the ROTC. He subsequently became a U.S. Army officer, serving 23 years as a psychiatric nurse at both inpatient and outpatient facilities in garrison and deployed, including two tours in Iraq. He is currently the principal investigator on a grant-supported study of cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia in service members in a residential facility. Weidlich earned his B.S.N. and Ph.D. degrees from SONHS and his M.S.N. (APRN-PMH) from the University of Maryland.



Selected Faculty Publications

Published between April and August 2020

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Liang, Z., Munro, C. L., Ferreira, T. B., **Clochesy, J.**, Yip, H., Moore, K. S., & Kip, K. (2020). Feasibility and acceptability of a self-managed exercise to rhythmic music intervention for ICU survivors. *Applied Nursing Research*, 54. doi: 10.1016/j.apnr.2020.151315

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Honoring the Gift of Life

Donor inspired by fascination with technology, respect for life-improving value of Simulation Hospital for Advancing Research and Education



Michael Incorvaia, Jr. recently made a \$50,000 gift of life insurance to the SONHS Simulation Hospital for Advancing Research and Education (S.H.A.R.E.™). This contribution was made in light of the donor's fondness for the University of Miami and its ability to leverage innovation for broader societal gains.

Incorvaia is, and always has been, a big believer in technology. He's the consummate "super user," and has parlayed his tech savvy into a highly successful real estate business in Cleveland, Ohio.

"My fascination with technology hasn't waned since childhood," he

says. "For me, it wasn't just the latest video game fads, trends in home entertainment, or information processing systems that brought me joy, but the actual hands-on, integrative process of mastering technology to improve my family's everyday life. The Simulation Hospital perfectly embodies this sentiment, and it's why I'm extremely proud to support it."

Family is the ultimate driving force for Incorvaia and his wife, Cara, who have three young daughters: Luciana (6), Natalia (3), and Carmen (1). They maintain close relationships with relatives and friends who live in South Florida,

and frequently visit the area. With family members in the health care profession, the Incorvaia's also have a strong appreciation for the importance of caregiving, both in the clinical environment and in the home.

"For us, the ultimate gift is life," says Incorvaia, "so to have the opportunity to donate something toward the improvement and extension of other lives is the perfect way to honor the many blessings bestowed on our family."

Visit miami.edu/plannedgiving.

SRNAs Set to Soar

Blumark naming gift creates generous professional development fund



Blumark has been in the business of supporting health professionals since 2005, so they've seen the effect of COVID-19 on their clients at the front line of the crisis. "That impacted us personally, watching our customers rise to the occasion," explains Shannon Klug, CEO of Blumark. "We've seen what advanced health professionals have endured in the wake of COVID-19."

As South Florida became a COVID-19 hotspot, Klug was glad his company was able to rise to the occasion too, for the health care workers in this region. This fall, Klug's boutique Michigan-based financial service and tax advisory firm established the Student Registered Nurse Anesthetists Travel Fund at the School of Nursing and Health Studies (SONHS).

Over the next five years, Blumark's gift will provide financial assistance to student registered nurse anesthetists

(SRNAs) participating in national anesthesia conferences, virtually or in-person, and other elevated educational opportunities outside of the classroom setting.

"There was a clear need for this," says Klug. "Attending conferences and participating in industry associations is critical in creating relationships and setting the foundation for a strong professional future. We want to ease financial burdens for SRNAs and allow for easier access to the highly valuable professional development tools."

Professor of Clinical Juan Enrique Gonzalez, director of the school's B.S.N.-D.N.P. Nurse Anesthesia Track program, notes that SRNAs gain important benefits from national conferences—from access to hundreds of faculty presentations and student posters to unrivaled networking with their peers and prospective employers. "There are

so many learning opportunities at those meetings," says Gonzalez, a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA).

While Blumark has been providing free financial literacy programs for advanced health care programs throughout the country for years, this is the company's first naming gift for SRNAs. A debriefing room in the school's Simulation Hospital for Advancing Research and Education (S.H.A.R.E.™) has been named in recognition of Blumark's long-term commitment to SRNAs.

"Blumark's generous investment in our students sets a strong philanthropic example that supports our commitment to developing highly educated certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs)," says Gonzalez. "It will be a great incentive for our students to know they have help to attend these very special professional programs that really get at the heart of our profession."

MIAMI ALUMNI SCHOOL of NURSING & HEALTH STUDIES

Dear Alumni Community,

I am honored and humbled to serve as the leader of this venerable association of dedicated, hardworking members on whose shoulders I stand. I extend special thanks to our current board members and immediate past president Carmen Sierra, B.S.N. '96, who mentored me.

On behalf of our board, I want to acknowledge all of our members and their families who have been affected by COVID-19, extend condolences to those who have lost loved ones, and uplift and encourage any members recovering from the novel coronavirus. The SONHS Alumni Association salutes all of the brave 'Canes working on the front line despite the threat of illness to them and their families. Like Florence Nightingale, we continue to hold the lamp and give hope to our isolated COVID-19 patients.

I am excited to be part of this association, but recognize that this year, more than ever before, we face notable challenges that have halted our

efforts to collaborate and connect in the usual and customary ways. COVID-19 has affected our members physically, psychologically, and economically, imposing unimaginable limitations. As a result of further limitations placed on us by physical distancing, several of our UM-sponsored P.R.I.D.E. activities are suspended or eliminated.

Amid these challenges, your association is working creatively to fulfill its mission. First, we have always wanted to optimize the use of social media, and this year we are doing just that. We are also using Zoom as our primary meeting platform, so keep a lookout for upcoming meeting notices. Second, we plan to recognize our outstanding alums serving selflessly during this pandemic. Third, we look to support and provide educational opportunities for our members. Finally, we are exploring ways to address our school's needs. So far this year, for example, we have collaborated with Beta Tau in a successful community Back-to-School Supplies Drive and are



supporting the SONHS Alumni Web Series, sponsored by Dean Munro, which debuted in August.

In closing, I implore you all to wear your mask, maintain physical distancing, and stay safe.

Go 'Canes!
Beverly Fray, B.S.N. '03, M.S.N. '06
President, SONHS Alumni Association

Beverly Fray, Ph.D., APRN-BC, is a clinical educator with Jackson Health System.



Goldie Wasman, M.S.N. '80, who has taught at SONHS for 26 years, spoke candidly (is there any other way with Wasman?) with former student and current colleague **Patricia Larrieu Briones, B.S.N. '98**, assistant professor of clinical, during the inaugural SONHS Alumni Web Series: Golden Hour with Goldie. The event drew current and former students and many other fans, logging nearly 600 views. Dean Munro made an on-screen appearance, too, urging Wasman to "never retire."

The New York Times



Carmen Presti, D.N.P. '12, assistant professor of clinical at SONHS, was featured on page A13 of *The New York Times* on June 8 as part of its "In Harm's Way" series, a collection of reflections from health care workers around the world. "I volunteered to work in the Covid I.C.U.," writes Presti. "It is difficult to give loved ones updates on the phone because they are clinging to any shred of hope that their relative will improve, and often I cannot provide this. Telling a wife that her husband's oxygen levels on the ventilator had improved slightly brought her to tears." Read more at <https://nyti.ms/2FwMfHu>.

1970s & 1980s

Janine Plavac, B.S.N. '76, is the director of the Academy of Health Professions in Alachua County magnet program at Gainesville High School, where she has worked since 2004. "All of my students leave high school with industry certifications as either CNAs, certified pharmacy technicians, rehab aides, EMTs or EKG technicians," she writes. "They can work in their respective fields while going to college, which makes them that much more qualified for post-graduate training programs."

Maria T. Currier, M.S.N. '83, J.D. '88, a partner in the Business Law Section of Holland and Knight's Miami office, a co-leader of the firm's Healthcare & Life Sciences Industry Team, and general counsel for the South Florida Hospital & Healthcare Association, was featured in a Law360 Q&A about COVID-19. Read the interview at <https://tinyurl.com/y3y3r0rr>.

Martha S. Bryan, M.S.N. '86, Ph.D. '96, a retired professor of nursing (Miami Dade College, 1996 Endowed Chair), has published the novel *Looking for Flowers Among the Bees*, about a single mother returning to college and learning the complicated world of hospital nursing.

Deanne Donato, B.S.N. '88, and husband, Daniel Donato, an alumnus of the Miller School of Medicine, are proud to share that their 'Cane health care legacy continues with son Zachary, who started the M.D.-M.P.H. program at the Miller School.

Diann Cruz Fernandez, B.S.N. '89, M.S.N. '94, is excited to announce that her son Mark started at UM this fall as a nursing major. Her husband Frank and another son, Matthew, are also proud 'Canes.

1990s & 2000s

Fran Civiletti-Downs, B.S.N. '00, was appointed as a nurse consultant to the U.S. Department of Labor, Division of Energy, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, Washington, D.C.

Jacquelyn R. Hedman, B.S.N. '01, is a board certified psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner. She works in an outpatient clinic in Grovetown, Georgia.

Lillian Basadre, M.S.N. '05, works as a medical science liaison for Sanofi-Genzyme, supporting multiple myeloma and tumor lysis syndrome.

LeAnne Young, B.S.N. '05, was elected to a two-year term as treasurer of the Society of Trauma Nurses. She is the trauma program director for Memorial Hospital of South Bend and Elkhart General Hospital in Indiana.

Roxan M. Simpson, B.S.N. '06, earned her M.P.H. from UC Berkeley last December and has been accepted into Johns Hopkins University's Doctor of Public Health program.

Laura Traini-Mongelli, B.S.N. '07, M.S.N. '15, D.N.P. '17, director of advanced practice practitioners in the Miller School of Medicine Department of Medicine, reports that she works on the COVID-19 frontlines at UHealth Tower with many fellow 'Canes.

2010s & 2020s

Vada Parke, B.S.N. '11, reports that after graduation she traveled the world, earned an M.S.N. degree, APRN certification in gerontology, and a nurse practitioner mental health certificate. Her four children are Kaden (11), Kai (8), Kace (4), and Vintage (1).

Lila De Tantillo, B.S.N. '13, M.S.N. '19, Ph.D. '19, is coauthor of "Transforming graduate nursing education during an era of social distancing: Tools from the field," published in the September 2020 issue of *Nurse Education Today*, <https://bit.ly/327UpxD>.

Catherine Lopez, B.S.N. '13, a NICU nurse at South Miami Hospital for the past six years, is currently working at a COVID-19 swab site.

Maikel Valdes Oliva, M.S.N. '15, D.N.P. '19, director of nursing satellites for Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center and a clinical faculty member at SONHS, recently brought a dream to life that began with his doctoral scholarly project, "Implementation of a Fast Track Area within a Comprehensive Treatment Unit to Reduce Patient Wait Times." "A year later," he writes, "we have expanded and officially opened the Fast Track Infusion Unit at Sylvester's oncology comprehensive treatment unit

in Kendall. Patients and staff love the unit." Designated "fast track" areas, where lower acuity patients are rapidly seen, have been shown to decrease patient wait times, shorten overall length of stay, and increase patient satisfaction. Improved revenue and workflow efficiency are also expected.

Carlos A. Larrauri, M.S.N. '17, was elected to the NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) board of directors for a second three-year term and is in law school at the University of Michigan. "I hope to combine my nursing expertise with legal education and training to advocate for much-needed mental health care reform," he writes.

Brittney Ellis, B.S.N. '19, M.S.H.I. '20, award-winning track and field competitor, is one of just 21 women across eight sports awarded a National Collegiate Athletic Association 2019-2020 Postgraduate Scholarship. The ACC nominated her for the 2020 NCAA Woman of the Year Award.

Kyra Freeman, B.S.P.H. '19, an M.P.H. candidate at the University of Michigan, was a Sutter Health 2020 Summer Administrative Healthcare intern at Sutter Solano Medical Center in Vallejo, California.

Kemika Lundy, B.S.N. '20, relocated to Georgia for a position in the acute care residency at Northside Hospital Forsyth, where she will be working in post-op.

Mercy Perez, B.S.N. '20, was offered her dream position as a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit nurse at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg, Florida. Her position, which began in September, is attached to a year-long nurse residency program.

Herveline Saintil, B.S.N. '20, passed her NCLEX-RN exam and joined the nurse residency program at Memorial Regional Hospital in Hollywood, Florida, this past September.

Sending a big SONHS shout-out to all summer M.S.N. graduates. Congratulations, 'Canes!

Please submit your class note, including your name, UM degree(s), and year(s) of graduation, to sonhs@miami.edu.

From Scholarship to Leadership

By Maya Bell



Courtesy of Mayra Arana

health care to prevent disease, not just treat it," she recalls.

At Nicklaus, Arana is already making a hospital-wide impact. Last year, she was selected to help create, pilot, and launch a new position of admission, discharge, and transfer nurse. "It was definitely a growth opportunity," she says. "Every day I go to work I am still fine-tuning the role to see how it can be even more effective for the flow of care for our patients and their parents."

Since helping to safely improve the hospital's throughput processes for patients and staff alike, Arana has cross-trained two colleagues for the position. "I'm super-thankful the nurse leadership team trusted me in carrying out this vision in being the first ADT nurse," she says, noting that her master's program taught her to think more holistically about the hospital system and disease management.

Arana has known she wanted to be a nurse since high school, when she began volunteering as a bedside buddy for the young patients at Nicklaus. "I loved the role of the nurse," she says. "How you know the most about the patient. How you integrate the whole family. How you address lifestyle issues. How you can connect them to resources that will improve their health."

As a nurse practitioner, Arana hopes to continue doing all of that, on a scale beyond the walls of one hospital. "My goal is to work with vulnerable populations across South Florida on health promotion and disease prevention," she says. "Right now, too many people seek health care only when they're acutely ill. I want to help change the paradigm. I want them to have preventative care to stay healthy."

Mayra Arana, B.S.N. '16, M.S.N. '20, was at work, in her third year as a pediatric nurse, when she received news that sent her bolting from Miami's Nicklaus Children's Hospital in tears. When a concerned security guard followed her outside, she tried to assure him they were tears of joy.

"I was crying so much I could barely get the words out. The email said I was getting the scholarship for my master's degree," recalls Arana, the U.S.-born daughter of Peruvian immigrants who completed the School of Nursing and Health Studies' one-year Family Nurse Practitioner program this past August.

"It was such a blessing, a sign I was on the right track," adds Arana, a first-generation college student. "I really wanted to go back to school, to grow, to learn more, to be a leader in health promotion."

Arana's scholarship from SONHS, supported by a federal grant for students from disadvantaged backgrounds,

covered most of her tuition. She earned her undergraduate nursing degree from SONHS debt-free, too. "I was a little bit of a nerd in high school, so I got a Bill Gates Scholarship," she says of the full-tuition award given to just 300 outstanding minority students from low-income households each year.

Throughout her master's program, Arana continued working part-time at Nicklaus, which enabled her to keep contributing to her parents' household. "They sacrificed a lot to give me the opportunities I've had," says Arana, who in middle school remained in Miami with relatives when her parents and older brothers were deported to their Peruvian homeland.

Those were difficult days, but summer trips to visit her family led to her calling. While in Peru, Arana and her mother volunteered for organizations that provided food and health screenings to people living without everyday necessities, like clean water. "It taught me the importance of having access to

Leading Lactation Support

By Robin Shear



In nursing school, P.I. is an abbreviation for practice immersion. However, P.I. could also describe the investigative prowess D.N.P. student Giselle Garcia-Rivero demonstrated during her time in the Mailman Center for Child Development’s Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program at the Miller School of Medicine.

“It’s so important to have D.N.P.s like Giselle,” says SONHS Assistant Professor of Clinical Kenya Snowden, the school’s LEND faculty liaison. “We tell our students, you are going to be the ones advocating for change, and you have to do it in an informed way.”

For her LEND advocacy project, Garcia-Rivero had just four weeks to identify a systems-level health issue, research it, and present an evidence-based intervention. As a board-certified pediatric nurse practitioner and the mother of two young children, Garcia-Rivero immediately latched on to the topic of breastfeeding.

“All of the studies identified that in the United States we have almost 80 percent

of moms initiating breastfeeding, which is awesome,” says Garcia-Rivero. “But when you look at them three, six months down the road, the exclusive breastfeeding statistics are not even 20 percent.” Among Black mothers, in particular, those numbers are lower.

Garcia-Rivero dug deeper into the literature to understand why so many moms stop breastfeeding despite pediatric and governmental recommendations. “Across the board,” she explains, “one of the most influential factors for successful, prolonged breastfeeding is support, having that person who can educate you and talk you through it, because as natural as lactation seems, it’s not actually an intuitive process.”

More data led to more questions. “In the hospital, you have lactation consultants who are nurses, so that’s probably why you have a high initiation rate,” she says. “But once you go home, how do you access this care?” Additionally, despite numerous local and government initiatives promoting breastfeeding and the Affordable Care Act’s mandate for health plans to cover “comprehensive breastfeeding support,” why aren’t women continuing to breastfeed in higher numbers in this country?

Garcia-Rivero uncovered a sobering answer. Though internationally board certified, lactation specialists have no national or state licensure available to them, which means health plans, including Medicaid, won’t reimburse their services. “Health plans only cover services by in-network, licensed professionals,” she explains.

“That’s the big loophole.” Furthermore, at an average hourly rate of \$100, it’s a big out-of-pocket expense for parents.

“Giselle was incredible to work with,” says LEND project mentor Cynthia Lebron, an assistant professor at SONHS. “She called insurance companies, did lots of research, and found the biggest barrier was licensure. The significance of this project is huge.”

Garcia-Rivero, who recently presented at Grand Rounds at the Mailman Center, is not the first to discover the problem. Four states have moved to provide statewide licensure for lactation consultation. But in Florida, she notes, organizations like the Florida Breastfeeding Coalition and Florida Lactation Consultants Association need help pushing for change.

“I want to raise awareness and continue working on this by contributing to statewide efforts to enact licensure and present further research that will support our case,” says Garcia-Rivero. “In layman’s terms, it’s cheaper to pay for lactation support than for formula and illness. We know lactation provides health benefits and helps prevent complications like ear infections, eczema, allergies, GI issues, obesity—endless issues would be mitigated if we were able to increase breastfeeding rates.”

Ironically, Garcia-Rivero says she personally received brand new breast pumps, just two years apart, after each of her deliveries, covered by insurance at up to \$400 apiece. “You get a pump, but no guidance,” she says. “Even more important than the pump is the support. It’s the initial one to two weeks that make or break it. If you have support in that vulnerable period of establishing breast milk supply, you make it. You can fly after that.”



Spring Awards and Commencement

These past several months Zoom-ed by here at the School of Nursing and Health Studies. In true Hurricane spirit, there was a ton of strength and resilience on display. Along the way there were many firsts, too, including our inaugural Facebook Live Spring Awards Ceremony. In case you missed it in May, here are (some of) those grads. As of press time, UM had set in-person Spring, Summer, and Fall commencement for December 10 and 11.



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