

NEWSLETTER

August 2006

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Research Director Named Associate Professor

Dr. Allyson Hall, FCMU's Research Director since 2002, has been appointed as Associate Professor in the Department of Health Services Research, Management and Policy (HSRMP).

Latest Issue Brief

'Sickle Cell Disease Management' available online!

FCMU Research Assistant Receives Award for Excellence

Jingbo Yu, a doctoral student in HSRMP, received an Outstanding Research Award at the University of Florida 2006 College of Public Health and Health Professions (PHHP) Research Fair. Jingbo received \$500 in funding for conference travel which she used to present her poster at the AcademyHealth Annual Meeting in Seattle. Her poster is entitled "Health Insurance Coverage of Young Adults Aged 22-29 in Florida."

<http://fcmu.phhp.ufl.edu/>



FLORIDA HEALTH INSURANCE STUDY: FHIS Gives Florida a Unique Opportunity to Establish Evidence-Based Health Policy to Address Uninsurance

The Florida Health Insurance Study was first initiated almost 10 years ago. In 1997, the Florida Legislature issued a budget request assigning the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) the responsibility to manage a comprehensive study intended to address the problem of uninsurance in Florida. AHCA contracted with a group of researchers at UF¹ to conduct the 1999 FHIS study.

The initial project has evolved into a multi-year, multi-project series of studies directed toward specific elements of access, affordability and health insurance issues in Florida. After successful completion of the 1999 study, follow-up research in 2000 and an additional survey in Miami-Dade County (2003), funding became available through the State Planning Grant program from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to support the creation of the 2004 FHIS Study. Using 1999 findings as a baseline, researchers have been able to measure and better understand numerous changes in the health insurance circumstances of Floridians. For example, over the five year period the number of uninsured people in Florida rose by 700,000 from 2.1 to 2.8 million. Such evidence has proved valuable in the development of state policy. During the 2004 legislative session several initiatives were enacted that addressed uninsurance in Florida.²

¹ Department of Health Services Research, Management and Policy (HSRMP).

² Pooled purchasing arrangements for small businesses (25 or fewer employees); possibility of re-opening the state-sponsored "high risk" pool to provide health insurance to hard-to-insure persons; Florida's KidCare Program changes.

Phase II of FHIS 2004 was created to document and describe Florida's health care safety-net and its role in providing care for uninsured people.³ Because safety-net providers (especially Community Health Centers and County Health Departments) have been identified as critical resources for uninsured individuals, a primary goal of Phase II was to assess their ability to offer and manage limited benefit plans or other potential coverage options targeted to the uninsured population.

The assessment was carried out in three steps: (1) a survey of safety-net providers to document infrastructure and capacity; (2) focus groups with uninsured consumers to document attitudes, needs, and utilization of health services; (3) focus groups with safety-net providers to explore feasibility and interest in developing and implementing health insurance programs through community health clinics.

The survey revealed that although safety-net clinics regularly accept walk-ins, patient access is limited by currently available capacity. If capacity were to increase, greater access would result. Focus groups found that the uninsured are less concerned with health insurance than they are access to health services. Some safety net providers expressed a concern that a new low-cost health insurance product might actually increase the number of persons seeking care without increasing capacity, thus straining a safety-net that is already struggling with a high volume of patients.

³ The safety-net is the informal web of providers, clinics, and programs that offer health services to uninsured and other low income Americans.

Some of our
CURRENT RESEARCH

Medicaid Reform Evaluation

-Researchers from FCMU are collaborating on a comprehensive, multi-project study that will evaluate the implementation of Medicaid Reform and its ability to meet its stated goals.

"Use of Preventive Health Services Among Female Medicaid Beneficiaries with and without Physical Disabilities"

-The objective of this study is to examine receipt of preventive health services among female Medicaid beneficiaries with and without physical disability. It is hypothesized that, compared to other women, women with disability would be 1) less likely to receive physical exams and screening services; and 2) equally likely to receive vaccinations.

"Depression in Adolescence"

-This Medicaid claims-based study will describe prevalence of adolescent depression and which medications are being used to treat depression. Additionally, these data will be examined from pre- and post-enactment of a 'black box' warning (warning on drug that indicates possible link to suicide).

"Comparing the Incidence of Adverse Events Associated with Drug Treatments for ADD/ADHD"

-This retrospective cohort study will evaluate the safety of central nervous system stimulants and non stimulants used for the treatment of ADHD in Florida Medicaid beneficiaries.

The discussion that ensued centered on the possible development of a limited benefit plan, supported by a network of county health departments and community health centers. The benefit package would emphasize preventive services and could be made available in the general market, with a low premium and no subsidy. To learn more visit fcmu.php.ufl.edu and click 'Publications.'

**Center for Health Care
Racial Disparities Draws
\$100,000 in State Funding**

The Florida Center for Medicaid and the Uninsured will become home to a new research institute focused entirely on racial disparities in access to and provision of health care. State Representative Ed Jennings has worked closely with UF researchers in conceptualizing the center's purpose and mission and successfully secured funding for its creation in the 2006-2007 state budget.

The Center will be the first of its kind in Florida and is anticipated to be a strong base for interdisciplinary research at the University of Florida and cooperation among state universities. Research topics will include disparities in diabetes, cancer, hypertension, and overall access to care.

**Looking Back:
5th Annual Medicaid
Research Conference**

The 5th Annual Medicaid Research Conference was held on June 1-2 at the Doubletree Hotel in Tallahassee, Florida. The conference, entitled 'Patient Empowerment and Health Literacy,' successfully brought together the foremost health services researchers in the state with policymakers, advocates, and state agency staff in order to encourage dialogue between researchers and government officials

The annual meeting was first held in 2001 as an informal research workshop

at the University of Florida with little over thirty attendees. Each year, the conference has broadened its scope of speakers and attendees. This year's conference attracted almost two hundred attendees from all parts of the state as well as from Massachusetts, Maryland, and Washington DC. The conference drew almost \$30,000 in donor support from around the country. Primary sponsorship came from the Nemours Foundation, one of the nation's largest group practices for children and sponsor of ongoing research and education programs.

In keeping with the conference theme, "Patient Empowerment and Health Literacy," three keynote speakers were invited to Tallahassee:

Keynote speaker **Charles Milligan**, of the Center for Health Program Development and Management at the University of Maryland discussed his recently published Academy Health issue brief entitled, "*Turning Medicaid Beneficiaries into Purchasers of Health Care: Critical Success Factors for Medicaid Consumer-Directed Health Purchasing.*"



Charles Milligan explains Medicaid Consumer Directed Health Purchasing to conference attendees.⁵

Lok Wong, of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) spoke about *Health Care Disparities: Searching for Potential Solutions in Health Plans and Medical Practices.*

Neil Izenberg, founder of Kids-Health.org, a subsidiary of the Nemours Foundation, presented his website as a means to empower patients and families through free and accessible health education.

Because of the heightened interest and attendance, the conference was planned as a two day meeting with three concurrent breakout sessions scheduled for each day. General topics were: Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, Health Communication and Choice Counseling, and the Role and Application of Technology in Health Literacy. For further information, including access to speaker presentations, visit fcmu.php.ufl.edu.

FCMU Presentations at AcademyHealth Annual Meeting, Seattle WA

Three FCMU researchers attended the 2006 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting, June 25-27 in Seattle, Washington to present research findings from work conducted at the University of Florida. AcademyHealth is a professional society for health services researchers and health policy analysts.

Dr. Allyson Hall gave two talks during the weekend long conference. The first, "Medicaid Reform in Florida: Research Questions," described the basics of the reform effort and introduced the Medicaid Reform Evaluation (MRE) project. Her discussion focused on challenges the MRE research team will face in answering key questions about Florida's health care market and the efficacy of reform. In her talk, "Predictors of Breast Cancer Fatalism among Women," Hall shared findings of a project coauthored with Drs. Ellen Lopez and Amal Khoury. The research, also exhibited in the poster session, found that almost 1 in 3 women strongly agreed or agreed that breast cancer is a 'death sentence'.

Graduate assistant Cameron Schiller, MS, presented a project coauthored by Drs. Robert Weech-Maldonado and Allyson Hall. The objective of "Patient Experiences and Utilization in Medicaid Provider Sponsored Organizations" was to determine how patient experiences with care and utilization for three pilot programs within Medicaid compare to Medicaid Primary Care Case Management (PCCM). Generally, beneficiaries

in the pilot projects appear to have similar experiences to those in PCCM.

Jingbo Yu, MS, also a graduate assistant, presented a poster exhibit entitled "Health Insurance Coverage of Young Adults Aged 22-29 in Florida," based on data from the Florida Health Insurance Study.

Issues to Watch in Medicaid: 2005 Deficit Reduction Act and Proof of Citizenship

On February 8, 2006, President Bush signed the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA), which is expected to generate \$99 billion in federal entitlement reductions between 2006 and 2015. [The DRA reduces Medicaid spending at the state and federal level](#) and changes the way low-income beneficiaries access health care. Under DRA, premiums may be introduced, Medicaid children may be subject to cost sharing and some adults will have limited Medicaid benefits.

Beyond spending and benefit cutbacks, DRA introduces a new federal requirement, effective July 1, 2006, that all U.S. citizens and nationals applying for or renewing Medicaid coverage must provide documentation of their citizenship status.

Before DRA, state Medicaid programs were permitted to request applicants to provide a written statement to document citizenship status, under penalty of perjury. Under DRA, a written statement will not suffice as proof of citizenship. Although the Medicaid rules relating to immigrant eligibility have not changed, many are worried that the new policy could present obstacles that make it more difficult to obtain eligibility for citizens (i.e.: an African American born in the rural south who never received a birth certificate from his home birth).

Some states, such as New York, already required documentation prior to DRA and will serve as models to other states working to adapt to the new regulation.

Faculty Spotlight: FCMU Researcher



Dr. Frank Catalanotto has a strong interest in access to care, health disparities, and legislative issues related to dentistry and dental education. Dr. Catalanotto served as Dean of the UF College of Dentistry from 1995-2002, during which time his commitment to improve access to care and disparities, as well his academic interest in health care ethics and cultural competency led to the initiation of the UF Statewide Network for Community Health which provides community based education for dental students and residents, while increasing access to oral health care for the indigent and otherwise underserved.

Over the past several years, Catalanotto has worked in collaboration with faculty at FCMU to describe quality and access to dental services provided by the Florida dental Medicaid program. In a project entitled, "The Impact of Untreated Dental Disease on Healthcare Utilization and Cost for Children in Florida Medicaid" Catalanotto found the proportion of Medicaid children who do not have access to preventive care by measuring utilization of General Anesthesia (GA) in dental procedures. Previous research has shown the primary indication for the use of GA to be a significant amount of untreated dental caries.

Catalanotto's current research examines the effect of early preventive dental visits on subsequent use of dental services including treatment for dental caries. Using a five year data sample of dental and medical claims, the correlation between age and receipt of preventive dental services will be analyzed.

Dear Readers,

Established in 2000, the Florida Center for Medicaid and the Uninsured is dedicated to the improvement of health care in Florida through multi-disciplinary collaboration of academic and policy making experts. The primary mission of the Center is to foster and develop research and analysis on issues related to access to quality health care for Florida's low-income populations. Critical to the Center's mission is the timely dissemination of information to policy makers, providers, and health care advocates.

The **FCMU Newsletter** better enables us to disseminate findings and increase public access to our research. The newsletter contains announcements of upcoming events and changes within FCMU, as well as discussions of our most pertinent work, recent publications, and issues relevant to health care in Florida and the US. This newsletter is intended to make the Center more accessible to the public as we continue to establish ourselves as a resource for stakeholders in Florida's health care system.

We are pleased to send you the second edition of the **FCMU Newsletter**. Feel free to contact us with further comment or feedback.

Sincerely,
Robert G. Frank, PhD and Allyson Hall, PhD

CENTER STAFF

Director
Robert G. Frank, PhD

Director of Research
Allyson Hall, PhD

Research Program Manager
Heather Steingraber

Statistical Analyst
Jiany Zhang, PhD

Research Coordinator
Lisa R. Chacko, MPH

Office Assistant
Michele Romano

Student Assistants
Andrea Lee, MS
Jingbo Yu, MS
Cameron Schiller, MS
Zoë Swaine, MS



FCMU
University of Florida
P.O. Box 100227
Gainesville, FL 32610