



*Welcome from...*

## **Marja M. Hurley, M.D.**

*Professor of Medicine and Orthopaedic Surgery  
Associate Dean & Director  
Health Career Opportunity Programs  
University of Connecticut Health Center*

This year has been another eventful and successful year for the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs (HCOP). The department is an integral part of the Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine and Graduate educational community at the UConn Health Center. The Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine and the Biomedical Graduate Program are actively committed to the recruitment, retention and graduation of diverse graduate, medical, and dental students who are capable of providing culturally competent health care.

The department continues to support currently enrolled medical, dental and graduate students of diverse backgrounds and has expanded its programs for middle, high school and college students to realize their dreams of becoming health professionals. The Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative (Aetna HPPI) Programs and activities are designed, coordinated and implemented through this department. They have proven to be top-notch because the participants in the programs have successfully completed their undergraduate degrees have actualized their goals of entering medical, dental and graduate school. It is for this reason that the programs and activities sponsored through HCOP are recognized as a national model. To date, we have accomplished our goals and continue to develop new programs and fine-tune existing ones.

Early exposure to the various fields in the biomedical sciences will ultimately increase the diverse pool of students who pursue careers in the health professions. Therefore, I am delighted to specifically highlight

the newest initiative with the University of Connecticut School of Engineering Bridge Program expanding our Aetna HPPI Pre-College Enrichment Program for students interested in biomedical engineering.

We had 196 middle school, high school and college students participating in our 2012 summer programs sponsored by the department through the Aetna HPPI. During the academic year 2012-2013, we anticipate approximately 780 students participating in our after-school, partner high schools, Aetna HPPI Saturday Academy and college programs.

This year all graduating seniors participating in the high school Aetna HPPI Saturday Academy were accepted into college. Congratulations to all these students for their hard work. We also offer special congratulations to the HCOP scholars in this year (2012) graduating classes of the School of Medicine and School of Dental Medicine. In the School of Medicine, 18% of the graduating class are HCOP scholars, while 13% of the graduating class in the School of Dental Medicine are HCOP Scholars.

I would like to thank our entire faculty, staff and students at the Health Center and partner institutions for their dedication and support. I would also like to thank all of our funders for their continued financial support of our programs. A special recognition goes to the legislators of the State of Connecticut who have provided Aetna HPPI with state funds to support some of our existing programmatic initiatives.

Read about the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative and Pipeline programs at:

[www.hcop.uchc.edu](http://www.hcop.uchc.edu)



*A note from...*

## **Granville Wrensford, Ph.D., C.R.A.**

*Assistant Dean & Associate Director  
Health Career Opportunity Programs  
University of Connecticut Health Center*

The year has been very exciting with the many programs and activities that HCOP sponsors. Interest among students, parents and educators alike has been increasing. We have visited many middle and high schools as well as colleges and universities throughout the state of Connecticut. We have also visited a few colleges in Rhode Island and Georgia.

This past year, we added the following two new schools to the Great Explorations program: Medical Professions and Teacher Preparation Academy and Dr. Frank T. Simpson-Waverly School. We held discussions with some additional middle schools that are interested in our Great Explorations middle school program, and we hope to add a few more during the next academic year. We also held discussions with several organizations that are interested in collaborating with the department.

We continue to provide access and exposure to the health careers and health professionals by hosting visits to the UConn Health Center facilities. Last December, the department sponsored a conference for participants of the UConn Storrs Upward Bound program. A group of sixty 8th grade students from the Medical Professions and Teacher Preparatory Academy spent the day here at the Health Center interacting with various health professionals. HCOP also facilitated the visits of several college students from the UConn West Hartford campus. The students toured the simulation facility here at the Health Center.

We interacted with numerous students during recruitment and informational sessions. It pleases me to see such a large number of students excited about the health sciences and careers in the health professions. I am grateful to the many individuals who have contributed to the success of the programs.

During the past year, HCOP has added a new staff member – Anastasia Rollins. I would like to welcome her to the department.

As we prepare for another year, I must acknowledge the parents, guardians and students of the programs for their firm commitment. A special thank you to the HCOP staff, faculty and other professionals here at the Health Center and the larger community who have volunteered their time to mentor and interact with the participants in our programs, and Dr. Manard of the Greater Hartford campus, Dr. Mun Choi, Joy Erickson, and Mary Ann Ruud at the Storrs campus for their invaluable help.

## Congratulations to...

*Sherry-Ann Brown, M.D., Ph.D.*

Physician, Medical Student, Mentor



Dr. Sherry-Ann Brown completed her undergraduate studies at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT, where she received a B.A./M.A. in Physics. Dr. Brown graduated from the combined M.D./Ph.D. program at the University of Connecticut Health Center in May 2012. She is currently completing her Internal Medicine Residency and Cardiology Subspecialty Fellowship, with Postdoctoral Research at the Mayo Clinic for the 'Internal Medicine – Clinician Investigator' track.

Dr. Brown's first contact with HCOP took place during one of Dr. Marja M. Hurley's recruitment visit to Wesleyan University. Dr. Brown had the opportunity to speak to Dr. Hurley not only at Wesleyan University but also on her admissions interview day at the UConn Health Center. While attending medical school, Dr. Brown mentored HCOP students in the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Academy. She also mentored students during the Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Conferences and the 2010 Upward Bound Conference. In 2012, Dr. Brown received the Health Career Opportunity Programs Bridge Mentoring Award. Her contributions to the HCOP programs are above and beyond expectations.

While attending medical school, Dr. Brown volunteered at the UConn student-run free clinics. She also helped run the Wellness Center in Hartford for the uninsured and underinsured. At the Mayo Clinic, she hopes to have the opportunity to work in the refugee clinics and volunteer at the Good Samaritan Hospital. Serving the underserved will continue to be a focus of her career, including a commitment to increase access not only to health services, but also to technology and the fruits of biomedical science research.

When asked whom she wishes to recognize as the most influential people who contributed to making her dream a reality, Dr. Brown responded: "Dr. Marja M. Hurley, Dr. Dominick Cinti, Dr. Barbara Kream, Dr. Leslie Loew, Dr. Lynn Kosowicz, Dr. Yvonne Grimm-Jorgensen, Dr. David Henderson, Dr. Dan Henry, Dr. Peter Schulman, and all those who I have not named, I can't begin to list all the people who have believed in me and offered support and encouragement in various ways over the years."

She would like to express gratitude to all faculty, staff, students and friends at the Health Center and the surrounding community, to her family and her church, who have supported her over the years, inspired her, and allowed her to inspire them. Most of all, to God, for creating her, placing His gifts inside her and walking

with her throughout her life to help her use those gifts to the best of her ability to serve others.

She leaves the following words of advice and encouragement to the younger generation of students interested in the health professions: "Seek to determine the passion of your heart, and pursue it. Consider the calling on your life, and have faith that you will see it unfold."

*Amoah Yeboah-Korang, M.D., M.P.H.*

Physician, Medical Student, Mentor



Dr. Amoah Yeboah-Korang graduated from Lowell High School in Massachusetts in 2001. He fondly remembers his high school counselor and history teacher as his pillars of success during his high school years, not to mention the fun he had while on the varsity soccer and track team. As the youngest of four children, Dr. Yeboah-Korang realized the importance of studying and working hard because his family was unable to guarantee him financial support.

Dr. Yeboah-Korang received a full scholarship to the University of Massachusetts where he majored in Biology. He completed his undergraduate career in 2004, and a year later he finished his Masters in Biology. He then enrolled at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine as a M.D./M.P.H. student. He graduated with his M.D./M.P.H. in May 2012. Dr. Yeboah-Korang would like to specialize in either Primary Care or Gastroenterology. He would also like to work with patients, teach, and continue to do research. "I'm hoping to work with people from all backgrounds, but I'll be a strong advocate for underserved and marginal [communities]," he says.

Dr. Yeboah-Korang became involved with HCOP when he was interviewed for admissions at the UConn School of Medicine and had the opportunity to meet Dr. Marja M. Hurley. While pursuing his doctoral degree, Dr. Yeboah-Korang mentored HCOP students in the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Academy and participants in the Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Conference. In terms of his time with HCOP, Dr. Yeboah-Korang states, "my best experience has been getting to share my knowledge and life experiences as a mentor in the Aetna HPPI Academy and learning from the high school students." His advice to the younger generation of students interested in the health professions is "It is important to have short and long term goals. Focus most of your time and energy working to reach those goals and a lot of doors will open for you. Above all, you have to enjoy what you are doing or find

something else that makes you happy.”

Dr. Yeboah-Korang recognizes Dr. Fortinsky, and Dr. Henderson for their support and encouragement along his journey. He would like to express his gratitude to all his teachers and preceptors for all they have taught him and continuously inspiring him to become a better doctor.

*Marcus Moss, D.M.D.*

*Dentist, Dental Student, Mentor*



Dr. Marcus Moss was born and raised in Kansas City, Missouri. He graduated from Forest Lake Academy in Apopka, Florida. In 2008, Dr. Moss graduated from Oakwood University with a Bachelor of Science in Biology, matriculating at the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine Class of 2012. For the next two years Dr. Moss will be completing his Pediatric Residency at the University of Birmingham, Alabama.

Prior to his matriculation in the summer of 2008, Dr. Moss participated in the Medical/Dental Preparatory Program, basic medical science track, sponsored by the Health Career Opportunity Programs (HCOP). His involvement with HCOP continued as he worked intimately for several years during dental school as a mentor with the students of the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Academy.

Dr. Moss stated he had many great HCOP experiences, but if he had to pick one he would say mentoring the Junior Doctors Academy students after his first year of dental school. He recalls this fond memory as one of many great HCOP experiences because it reminded him of kids beginning their journey towards becoming doctors and allowed him to see the amazing potential that youth possess. He also stated he enjoyed speaking with students in the Jumpstart Academy and the college students interested in dentistry. When asked what words of advice and encouragement he would leave to the younger generations of students interested in the health professions, Dr. Moss responded: “Never stop pushing and don’t forget, if God’s plan includes you becoming a health care professional and changing lives, don’t give up. Don’t forget those that paved the way and those who are still finding their way, pursuing the path that you’re on.”

The individuals Dr. Moss would like to recognize as the most influential people that helped him make his dream a reality are his parents, brothers, his primary school teachers, and Dr. Benjamin Carson. He credits his parents/brothers for always pushing him, encouraging him and not allowing him to give up when times got rough. His primary school teachers, especially Mrs. Small and Bryant at V. Lindsay SDA School in Kansas City, KS were always

pushing him towards his dreams and reminding him daily that his goals however ambitious were attainable. Dr. Moss stated the following about Dr. Benjamin Carson “although he doesn’t realize it, his story in the book *Gifted Hands* impacted the way I viewed myself/situation growing up and showed the blueprint of what it takes to become a doctor.” Dr. Moss also indicated that the book explained the demands/commitment and also the impact one can make on their community as a health care professional, especially as an African American health professional.

Dr. Moss would like to express gratitude to Dr. Arteaga for her steadiness and words of encouragement along the way. He would like to thank all his professors, staff, receptionists, etc. for pushing, inspiring, and expecting success.

## *A Pipeline Student*

### **Aetna HPPI Academy Student Now a UConn Student**



**Kristen Springer**

Kristen Springer, a 2010 Aetna HPPI Academy graduate and a participant in the Pre-College Enrichment Program and College Enrichment Program, is now a rising Junior at the University of Connecticut. She is majoring in physiology and neurobiology. During the 2011 HCOP Aetna HPPI Summer Enrichment Programs Closing Ceremony, she delivered a message of hope and encouragement to the students.

Kristen is a Connecticut native who graduated from Metropolitan Learning Center in Bloomfield. While in high school, she earned several awards and certifications including: AP Scholar, MLC CAPT Scholar, Honors of Distinction and High Honors. She participated in the Race for the Cure, Walk Against Hunger, and Math Counts Club. She also managed to find enough time in her busy schedule to volunteer at the Food Share Inc. Kristen’s goal is to become a physician. She indicated that HCOP has been preparing her to help her fulfill her dream.



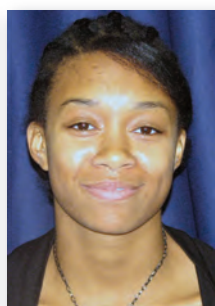
## 2012 Scholarship Recipients

### John and Valerie Rowe Scholarship

Each year, HCOP provides scholarships in the form of book awards to students from the Aetna HPPI Academy who will enroll as freshmen at the University of Connecticut. The 2012 John and Valerie Rowe Book Award recipients were announced at the May 9, 2012 Closing Ceremony of the Aetna HPPI Academy. They are Stephanie Figueroa, Shanicka Reynolds, and Danielle White. All recipients participated in numerous high school programs sponsored by HCOP.



Stephanie Figueroa



Shanicka Reynolds



Danielle White

## Community Award Recipients

HCOP is also proud of our students who received various awards. **Ilva Llakmani** and **Stacy-Ann Wright** are recipients of The Jacob L. and Lewis Fox Foundation Scholarship. **Danielle White** was awarded the Town of Bloomfield Citizen's Scholarship and the Amy Karran Scholarship. **Jasmine Scott** received awards from the following funds: Day Pitney LLP Scholarship Fund, Danial Clark Perkins Fund, and the Alice M. Neenan Memorial Scholarship Fund. **Stephanie Figueroa** received a Capitol Grant. **Julian Rose** and **Shanicka Reynolds** were awarded the Rowe Scholars award from the University of Connecticut. Hearty congratulations to all!

## Colgate-Palmolive/Hispanic Dental Association Student Recognition Award



Stephanie Stoddart (picture at right), a HCOP scholar and a fourth year student of the University of Connecticut Health Center, School of Dental Medicine (Class of 2013), received the 2012 Colgate-Palmolive Hispanic Dental Association Student Recognition Award (one of only two awarded) at the first Multi-Cultural Oral Health Summit. The award recognizes graduating students who are members of the Hispanic Dental Association and who help to promote and improve the overall quality of oral health for the Hispanic population. Congratulations to Stephanie!

## Friends of the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs Boake L. Plessy, Ph.D. Scholarship Fund



Dr. Boake Plessy

In honor of Dr. Boake Plessy's contributions, the UConn Health Center has established a scholarship fund that will be used to support educational enhancement for students who participated in Aetna HPPI Academy and are planning to continue their education at the post-secondary level. The Friends of the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs – Boake L. Plessy, Ph.D. Scholarship was awarded to Axie Farquharson on May 9, 2012 at the Academic Year Recognition Closing Ceremony. Axie is currently attending the University of Connecticut, Storrs campus.



Axie Farquharson

To contribute to these funds, or for more information about philanthropy to support the Health Career Opportunity Programs at the UConn Health Center, please call Dina Plapler, Vice President for Development, at 860-679-1122.

## Health Career Opportunity Programs Medical/Dental Student 2012 Bridge Mentoring Award



Dr. Brown



Dr. Merritt



Dr. Scatola

HCOP recognized one dental student and two medical students for their continued participation and involvement with the Aetna HPPI Programs with the Bridge Mentoring Award. The 2012 recipients were: Sherry-Ann Brown, M.D./Ph.D. who will be completing an Internal Medicine Residency Program at the Mayo School of Graduate Education in Rochester, Minnesota; Jantraveus Merritt, D.M.D. who will be completing an Orthodontic Dental Residency at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington; and Andrew Scatola, M.D., who will be completing an Internal Medicine Residency at the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington, Connecticut.

## Enrichment Day at Aetna



This summer, the Great Explorations students had the opportunity to visit the Aetna headquarters in Hartford. The students were very excited to learn Aetna's history while touring the building. They also interacted

with several Aetna employees. The following presenters spoke to the students about their roll at Aetna and their journey in the healthcare field: Giorelly Prado, MPC Analytics Operations Project Manager, Joanne Chiulli, Chief Nursing Officer, and Dr. Wayne S. Rawlins, Chief Medical Officer.

A special thank you to Brenda Pabon, Christopher Montross, and Sharon Dalton for organizing the event.



## Aetna HPPI Academy



The Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Academy (Aetna HPPI Academy) is designed to provide educational opportunities which may not be available to a number of Connecticut high school students.

The purpose of the Aetna HPPI Academy is to provide access and preparation to students interested in health professions who come from backgrounds where they are the first in their family to earn a four-year degree, come from modest family means, and/or are from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in healthcare. Students participating in the Aetna HPPI Academy are generally recruited from the Hartford area schools and have chosen to pursue careers in the health professions. The Aetna HPPI Academy students aspire to become physicians, dentists, bio-medical research scientists, pharmacists, and/or nurses.

## Enrichment Programs...

### Great Explorations



The Great Explorations Program is an after-school program designed to provide extracurricular activities in math, science, and language arts to 7th and 8th grade middle school students. Students partici-

pating in the Great Explorations Program are currently enrolled in one of eight Hartford public middle schools: Bellizzi, Greater Hartford Academy of Mathematics and Science, Jumokey Academy, Kennelly, Medical Professions and Teacher Preparation Academy, Naylor, Sport and Medical Sciences Academy, and Simpson Waverly School. Great Explorations also offers a four-week summer academic enrichment program for approximately 35 rising 7th and 8th grade participants. The program is held at the Greater Hartford Academy of Mathematics and Science. Students receive instruction in math, science, and language arts.

The Aetna HPPI Academy has two major components: the summer program and the academic year program. Both components are offered at the University of Connecticut Greater Hartford campus. The summer and academic year programs are designed to advance students' academic skill levels in math, science and language arts. The programs promote personal growth through extracurricular experiences designed to help students develop the skills necessary to succeed in the Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the American College Test (ACT).

### **Congratulations to the eighteen Senior Doctors Academy graduates listed below who are all college bound.**

- **Moniroth Chhean** – Wesleyan University
- **Precious Exum** – Saint Joseph University
- **Lorena Falla** – University of Connecticut
- **Axie Farquharson** – University of Connecticut
- **Stephanie Figueroa** – University of Connecticut
- **JaQuelle Grant** – Northern Iowa Community College
- **Aundray Hewitt** – University of Connecticut
- **Jamar Johnson** – Central Connecticut State University
- **Zania Johnson** – University of Connecticut
- **Caritta Kwarko** – University of Connecticut
- **Mishka Marsh** – Central Connecticut State University
- **Patri-Ann Morgan** – Capitol Community College
- **Shanicka Reynolds** – University of Connecticut
- **Jasmine Scott** – University of Texas
- **Ornella Tempo** – University of Connecticut
- **Danielle White** – University of Connecticut
- **Andrea Wimberly** – University of Connecticut
- **Stacy-Ann Wright** – Howard University

### **Congratulations to our Mentors and Past Program Participants - University of Connecticut Health Center Medical and Dental School 2012 Graduates**

- **Cynthia Armand, M.D.**
- **Sherry-Ann Brown, M.D./Ph.D.**
- **Ugonna Ijeoma, M.D.**
- **Paula Lucuara Revelo, M.D.**
- **Marcus Moss, D.M.D.**
- **Lauren Elizabeth Rosen, M.D.**
- **Martine Saint-Cyr, M.D.**
- **Edgar Salas, D.M.D.**
- **Andrew Scatola, M.D.**
- **Lakeshia Thomas, D.M.D.**
- **Amoah Yeboah-Korang, M.D./M.P.H.**

### **High School Mini Medical/Dental School Seminar Series**



The High School Mini Medical/Dental School Seminar Series offers eight to ten weekly lectures and demonstrations presented by faculty members of the University of Connecticut Schools of Medicine and

Dental Medicine. Topics include molecular biology, pharmacology, cardiology, oncology, and dental medicine. Participants are eleventh and twelfth grade students who are in state residents and selected by their school guidance counselors or science teachers. All students have shown a strong interest in pursuing careers in medicine, dental medicine and the biological sciences. Sessions are also broadcast live to high schools throughout the State of Connecticut. For more information contact Anastasia Rollins at 860-679-3484 or [rollins@uchc.edu](mailto:rollins@uchc.edu).



## College Science Partnership

More than 100 students from Sport and Medical Sciences Academy participated in the 2011-2012 College Science Partnership Series sponsored by the Health Career Opportunity Programs. Under the leadership of Dr. Kathy Martin (Molecular Biological Sciences Department at Central Connecticut State University), students participated in five biology and chemistry labs at Central Connecticut State University. The students also visited the UConn Health Center and interacted with various health professionals.

## Epidemiology

The Epidemiology Program, a series of five programs, was held for seniors from Sport and Medical Sciences Academy (SMSA) to introduce basic concepts and terminology used in the study of epidemiology. Under the direction of Dr. Scott Wetstone and Dr. Richard Stevens, the program provided an introduction to general epidemiology as well as descriptive, applied, and analytical epidemiology and screening. Thirteen 11th and 12th graders attended sessions at the University of Connecticut Health Center on four occasions and Dr. Scott Wetstone and Dr. Richard Stevens visited SMSA on one occasion.

## Teens as Teachers



The University of Connecticut School of Medicine, Principles of Clinical Medicine course (PCM) is the clinical training component for medical students. The course helps students prepare for the clinical aspects of medicine by training them in history taking, physical examination, utilization of community resources and community collaboration for improved patient care.

Part of the course involves training on adolescent health. Medical students learn about the importance and specialized aspects of the adolescent history, and practice their skills with real teens recruited from the Sport and Medical Sciences

Academy and CREC - Medical Professions and Teacher Preparation Academy, who act as patient instructors. The medical students then receive feedback on their performance from the adolescent patient instructors. The participating adolescents are given health education workshops and training, and are invited to the Health Center for lunch and a tour.

## High School Student Research Apprentice Program



Sixteen students had the opportunity to be a part of a research team and learn laboratory techniques in the 2012 HSSRAP Summer Program. As part of the 2012 program, eight students commuted

daily to Central Connecticut State University and eight students commuted daily to UConn Health Center for their research project. At the end of the summer, each student gave oral and poster presentations of their research results during a special research symposium.

## Pre-College Enrichment Program



The Pre-College Enrichment Program is a six-week residential enrichment program for incoming students at the University of Connecticut Storrs campus.

Designed to provide solid development of scientific, mathematical, communications, problem-solving, and test-taking skills, it is intended to enhance the college preparedness of freshmen students. It allowed the students to experience life on a college campus prior to their matriculation in the fall. Students can participate in either the academic (academic courses) or a research track (completion of a research project). This past summer, 14 students participated in an academic track in collaboration with the University of Connecticut School of Engineering Bridge Program at Storrs. All participants also engaged in numerous enrichment activities at the Health Center.



## College Enrichment Program



The College Enrichment Program is designed for rising college sophomores. The program's curriculum focuses on critical math and science skills

needed for success. A total of six students are selected annually to participate in this program. The program is held at the University of Connecticut Storrs campus. In addition to academic preparation, students participate in weekly enrichment lectures at the Health Center.

## Medical/Dental Preparatory Program



Medical/Dental Preparatory Program students are selected from various universities throughout the country to work on academic skills as well as

preparation for the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) or the Dental Admissions Test (DAT). A total of 40 college students participated in academic classes, guest lecturers, test taking strategies, and other enrichment activities at the UConn Health Center during the six-week summer program.

## Summer Research Fellowship Program



The Summer Research Fellowship Program is a nine-week research enrichment experience designed for college sophomores, juniors, seniors,

and recent graduates who are interested in a career in medicine, dental medicine or biomedical research and for applicants who have completed some college coursework in biology and chemistry (preferably through organic chemistry). In the summer of 2012 a total of ten students participated in the program. A faculty sponsor is identified for each student. Faculty develops and makes available suitable project descriptions. The student contacts his/her faculty sponsor in April or May and develops a research protocol. Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) students are encouraged to apply. Students devote approximately 30 hours per week on a research project and 10 hours per week of clinical experience.

## Health Disparities Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program



The Health Disparities Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program is a seven-week clinical enrichment experience designed for rising college sophomores, juniors,

seniors or recent graduates. In the summer of 2012 ten students participated in the program. The program is designed to provide the following: clinical research and enrichment experiences, an introduction to health disparities across cultures, principles of clinical medicine, public health research and interventions, an overview of cultural definitions, public health issues, and discussions of specific techniques for working with diverse populations in community settings.

## Parental Seminar Series

The Parental Seminar Series is designed for parents or guardians of scholars enrolled in the Aetna HPPI Academy. Guest speakers are from the Health Center and the University of Connecticut. The University of Connecticut Greater Hartford campus hosts the event. Topics are chosen based on the interest of the parents or guardians. Each fall, participants complete a survey indicating topics and areas of interest. The topics are divided into two general areas: health related topics and college admissions topics.

## College Lecture Series

The Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative offers a series of lectures from different health care providers at the University of Connecticut Greater Hartford campus and Storrs campus. The lecture series is geared towards students with an interest in health professions.

This past academic year, speakers included: Dr. Sherry-Ann Brown, 2012 UConn School of Medicine graduate; Dr. Biree Andemariam, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Director, Adult Sickle Cell Center Lea Center for Hematologic Disorders, and the Carole and Ray Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center; Dr. Mina Mina, Professor and Chair, Division of Pediatric Dentistry, Department of Craniofacial Sciences, Director of Skeletal, Craniofacial and Oral Biology Graduate Program; Dr. Richard Zeff, Professor, Department of Immunology, Assistant Dean of Admissions, School of Medicine; Dr. Edward Thibodeau, Associate Dean, Dental Admissions; Dr. Carol Pilbeam, Professor of Medicine and Orthopaedics, Director, M.D./Ph.D. Combined Degree Program; Dr. Marja M. Hurley, Professor of Medicine and Orthopaedic Surgery, Associate Dean and Director, Health Career Opportunity Programs; and Dr. Granville Wrensford, Assistant Dean and Associate Director, HCOP.

For additional information, please contact Marlyn Davila at 860-679-4522 or [davila@uchc.edu](mailto:davila@uchc.edu).

## Expanding the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative: Pre-College Enrichment Program Partnering with the University of Connecticut School of Engineering Bridge Program



This year HCOP's Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Pre-College Enrichment Program (PCEP) formed a partnership with the University of Connecticut School

of Engineering Bridge Program. Like the PCEP the Bridge Program is a summer pre-college residential event that prepares incoming freshmen students for the rigors of college life. This year the PCEP students and the Bridge students took the same academic classes for a period of five weeks while residing on the Storrs campus. The students also engaged in many other activities such as advising sessions, team building

exercises and social events to help introduce them to varied social settings. The PCEP students also visited the UConn Health Center on Fridays and interacted with various Health Center personnel. With this partnership, the number of Aetna HPPI participants enrolled at any UConn campus totals 136 students. These participants are from the newly formed PCEP/Bridge Program, College Enrichment Program, Medical/Dental Preparatory Program, Summer Research Fellowship Program, Health Disparities Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program, and the Post Baccalaureate Program.

## 2011 Upward Bound Conference



The Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs held its annual Upward Bound Conference on Saturday, December

10, 2011 at the University of Connecticut Health Center. The conference is held annually for students in the Upward Bound Program from the UConn Storrs campus.

A total of 33 high school students participated in various health related activities. Ninth and tenth grade students listened to presentations from Keshia Ashe, a fourth year biomedical research student, who spoke about discovery in research and her path to graduate research. Ms. Ashe conducts research towards her Ph.D. in the laboratories of Dr. Cato Laurencin.

While the ninth and tenth graders were interacting with Ms. Ashe, the eleventh and twelfth grade participants were busy conducting dental forensics on a "crash scene" led by Dr. Michael Goupil. A team of dental students guided the participants in a series of activities that enabled them to identify "crash victims" through dental forensics.

The conference concluded with a panel of Health Center medical, dental, and graduate students answering participants' questions.



## 2012 Bridge Conference

The 2012 annual Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Conference was held on Saturday, April 14, with approximately 130 high school and college students participating. The students were from diverse backgrounds. They were brought together with UConn Health Center faculty, staff, medical, dental and graduate students to interact in a series of activities to raise awareness about health and biomedical science careers and the admissions process for medical, dental, and graduate schools. HCOP, the University of Connecticut Chapter of the Student National Medical Association, Student National Dental Association and the Hispanic Student Dental Association Chapters sponsored the conference. The Jack and Valerie Rowe Health Professions Scholars Program Fund also supported the conference.

Enrichment activities for high school students included presentations on preparing for a career in the health professions, biomedical engineering and surgery by Dr. Cato Laurencin and dentistry by Dr. Flavio Uribe. Led by a group of medical students, the high school students also participated in some hands-on activities such as recording blood pressure and surgical suturing. Students also had the opportunity to interact with the founders of the Many Mentors organization. College students who participated in enrichment seminars learned about the admissions process for graduate, medical and dental programs offered at the University of Connecticut Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine.

The college students participated in a mock admissions process where they served as potential Admissions Committee evaluators. Student participants ranked prospective applicants based on their academic profiles, letters of recommendation and DAT/MCAT scores. Led by facilitators, the participants engaged in discussions and activities similar to the admissions committees at the Health Center. This process helped the students better understand what admissions committees are looking for in qualified candidates.

For a third consecutive year in a row, the Dental Impressions Program for college students interested in dental medicine was held. This program consisted of a series of information sessions specifically related to dentistry, in addition to several hands on activities such as taking dental impressions and touring the dental labs at the Health Center. Approximately 20 college students participated in this component of the conference.

Both the high school and college students also heard personal anecdotes from students currently enrolled at the University of Connecticut Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine and the Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences. The medical, dental and graduate students shared their progression through their respective health professions school and allowed the high school and college students to ask questions. This was a very informative dialog for all participants.



## Speakers for the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Conference, Academic Year and Summer Closing Ceremonies

### *Alumna Nicole Taylor, M.D.*



On April 14, 2012, Nicole Taylor, M.D. was the keynote speaker for the Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Program Conference. Dr. Taylor was born in Jamaica, the eighth of ten children, and attended elementary school there before coming to the United States to complete her education in Hartford, where she attended Hartford Public High School. She graduated from Central Connecticut State University, May of 1995. During col-

lege, Dr. Taylor was a participant in the Scholars Training Academy, now known as the Pre College Enrichment Program and College Enrichment Program, during the summer of 1992, and the Medical/Dental Preparatory Program during the summer of 1993. She matriculated at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine receiving her Doctorate in Medicine, May of 1999. During medical school, Dr. Taylor was very active in community service projects and was the founder of the Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Program. She completed a residency in Pediatrics at the University of Florida College of Medicine in Jacksonville, Florida. During residency, Dr. Taylor developed and implemented a Legal Aid Clinic in an inner city pediatric public clinic in conjunction with Jacksonville Legal Aid. Services included legal assistance to parents of the clinic patients including housing and insurance issues. Upon completion of her residency, Dr. Taylor joined the staff of Jacksonville Pediatric Associates, where she is still on staff. Currently, she is the pediatrician for the Noah's Ark Outreach Program for new and expecting mothers in an underserved area in Jacksonville and teaches pediatrics to advanced nursing students from Jacksonville University Advanced Nursing Program. Dr. Taylor's pediatric interests include Adolescent Medicine and Community Outreach. She resides in Jacksonville with her husband and their two children, and in her spare time, enjoys reading, spending time with her family, and volunteering in her children's schools.

### *Alumnus Damian Findlay, D.M.D., M.D.*



On July 27, 2012, Damian Henry St. James Findlay, D.M.D., M.D. was the Alumnus Speaker giving welcoming remarks for the closing ceremonies to the Great Explorations, Jumpstart, Junior Doctors Academy, Senior Doctors Academy, High School Student Research Apprentice Program, Pre College Enrichment Program, College Enrichment Program, Medical/Dental Preparatory Program, Summer Research Fellowship Program, and Health Disparities Clinical

Summer Research Fellowship Programs. Dr. Findlay was born in Kingston, Jamaica and at an early age, his parents migrated to Tuskegee, Alabama. As a student at St. Jude High School, Dr. Findlay attended the Association of Minority Health Professions Schools Biomedical Symposium in Atlanta, Georgia and this initial experience led him to consider a career in healthcare. He graduated cum laude from Tuskegee University in 1999 with a B.S. in biology. Prior to matriculating at the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine, Dr. Findlay participated in the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Medical/Dental Preparatory DAT Prep Program in 2000 and the BMS Program in 2001. As a student at the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine, he was an active member of the Student National Dental Association and the Hispanic Student Dental Association where he served as president and vice president. Dr. Findlay was a member of the Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Program. His commitment to serving the under-served led him on two dental mission trips. The first was to Iquitos, Peru in 2004. In September 2005, he accompanied Dr. Richard Topazian, Professor Emeritus and former Chairman of the University of Connecticut Health Center Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Program, to Riobamba, Ecuador. In 2006, Dr. Findlay was awarded the Doctor of Dental Medicine Degree from the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine and received the prestigious Richard G. Topazian Service Award and The Bridge to the Future Science Mentorship Award. After receiving his dental degree, Dr. Findlay spent two years as a General Dentistry Resident at Saint Francis Hospital in Hartford, Connecticut. It was during this time period that Dr. Findlay was featured in the Hartford Courant for his dedication to treating patients who cannot afford health care in an article entitled "Filling the Dental Gap". In July of 2008, Dr. Findlay began a six-year residency program in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. In May of 2011, he was awarded the Doctor of Medicine Degree from Mount Sinai School of Medicine where he was also inducted into the prestigious Gold Humanism Honor Society. Dr. Findlay is currently in the fifth year of his residency program and resides in Harlem, New York.

## Academic Year 2011-2012 Closing Ceremony Keynote Speaker- Hartford City Council President Shawn Wooden



On Wednesday, May 9, 2012, Hartford, Connecticut City Council President Shawn Wooden was the Keynote Speaker for the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Programs Academic Year Closing Ceremony, which include the Jumpstart Program, Junior Doctors Academy, Senior Doctors Academy and Sport and Medical Sciences Academy. Council President Wooden was born and raised in North Hartford. He grad-

uated from Manchester High School in 1987. With the help of a scholarship, Council President Wooden was able to attend Trinity College and graduated in 1991. After working in city and state government, he continued his education, receiving a law degree from New York University School of Law in 1997. In addition to serving as City Council President, he is a partner at Day Pitney LLP, a Hartford law firm. Council President Wooden ran for City Council because he believes that, "as a united city, we can turn problems into solutions and challenges into opportunities". Since then, Council President Wooden has worked with non-profit organizations, labor unions, business leaders, and community activists. The Connecticut Law Tribune has presented him with its "Community Contributions Award." Additionally, Council President Wooden was named one of "Twenty-Five Investment Professionals to Watch" by Pensions and Investments Magazine, and one of Hartford County's "Forty Under 40" business leaders by Hartford Business Journal. He was also presented with the "Alumni Medal of Excellence" by Trinity College and named one of the state's 100 most influential blacks by the Connecticut NAACP. Today, as City Council President, he is dedicated to working with the Mayor, his colleagues on the Council, and community members throughout the city to unite Hartford behind our shared vision of opportunity and prosperity for all. Council President Wooden and his wife Biree live in the West End of Hartford with their two young sons.

## Summer 2012 Closing Ceremony Keynote Speaker – Dr. Mun Choi Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs University of Connecticut



On July 27, 2012, Mun Choi, Ph.D. served as the keynote speaker for the closing ceremonies for the Great Explorations, Jumpstart, Junior Doctors Academy, Senior Doctors Academy, High School Student Research Apprenticeship Program, Pre College Enrichment Program, College Enrichment Program, Medical/Dental Preparatory Program, Summer Research Fellowship Program, and Health Disparities Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Programs. Dr. Choi

received his B.S. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1987 and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering from Princeton University in 1989 and 1992, respectively. He was a National Research Council Post-Doctoral Fellow at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) from 1992 to 1993. Dr. Choi is the Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs of the University of Connecticut, a position he took on June 1, 2012. In 2008, prior to his receiving the Interim Provost appointment, Dr. Choi joined the University of Connecticut as Dean of Engineering and Professor of Mechanical Engineering. His current research effort is focused on advancing the understanding of sooting and radiation on droplet combustion and soot diagnostic techniques. Dr. Choi's research is funded by various Federal and industrial sponsors. He has worked closely with National Institute of Technology and Sandia researchers to measure optical and physical properties of soot produced from various-scale flames. These studies have improved the ability to accurately interpret non-intrusive diagnostic data and the calculation of radiative heat transfer from flames and fires. In addition, Dr. Choi's work on spherically symmetric droplet combustion (which can be produced in microgravity facilities) represents an ideal platform to study diffusion flames. This work has significantly improved the understanding of the influence of sooting and radiation on droplet burning behavior and its impact on the combustion efficiency and the environment. His NASA project on fire safety was performed aboard the International Space Station in 2009 and 2011. During Dr. Choi's academic career, he has developed numerous outreach and educational programs including a National Science Foundation (NSF), IGERT, Department of Education GAANN Fellowships, and NSF Research Experiences for Teachers. Among his teaching and research awards are the SAE Teetor Award and the University of Illinois Foundation Scholar Award. In 2007, Dr. Choi was elected President of the International Pi Tau Sigma Mechanical Engineering Honor Society. He is an elected member of the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering and in 2011 was appointed by Governor Dannel Malloy to serve on the Board of Directors of the reconstituted Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority. Dr. Choi is married with three children.



## Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Conference







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UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH CENTER FRIENDS OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CAREERS OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

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## **Dates to Remember**

### **April 13, 2013**

Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Conference

### **May 7, 2013**

Aetna HPPI Academy Closing Ceremony

### **June 17, 2013**

Start of the Aetna HPPI Summer Academy

## **Application Deadlines**

### **February 2013**

Health Disparities Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program

High School Mini Medical/Dental School Seminar Series

High School Student Research Apprenticeship Program

Medical/Dental Preparatory Program

Summer Research Fellowship Program

### **April 2013**

Aetna HPPI Academy

Aetna HPPI Great Explorations

College Enrichment Program

Pre-College Academic Enrichment Program

Pre-College Research Program

## **We Welcome Your Comments**

Please feel free to provide Marlyn Davila with your suggestions, ideas and comments for the next issue of the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Pipeline. You can contact Marlyn at (860) 679-4522 or [davila@uchc.edu](mailto:davila@uchc.edu).



## **If you would like more information about the University of Connecticut Health Center's Pipeline Programs...**

- Great Explorations Middle School Program, 6th- 8th grades
- Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Academy 6-week Summer and 20-week Academic Year Programs, 9th-12th grades
- Bulkeley High School, 9th-12th grades
- Sport and Medical Sciences Academy, 9th-12th grades
- High School Summer Research Apprenticeship Program, 11th-12th grades
- High School Mini Medical/Dental School Seminar Series, 11th-12th grades
- Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Program, 9th-16th grades
- Pre-College Enrichment Program, 13th grade
- Health Disparities Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program, 13th-16th grades
- College Enrichment Program, 13th-14th grades
- Medical/Dental Preparatory Program, 13th- 15th grades
- Summer Research Fellowship Program, 15th- 16th grades
- Post Baccalaureate Program, post-16th grades
- BS/DMD Joint Degree Program, 13th-16th grades

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**See the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs website at:**

**[www.hcop.uchc.edu](http://www.hcop.uchc.edu)**



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