UAB, DHR undertake overhaul of mental health-care services

A new centralized mental health-care-management system for children and their families is accepting applications from providers in four counties. This first-of-its-kind program has been developed by UAB’s Department of Psychology and the Alabama Department of Human Resources to increase account-ability of mental health-care providers statewide and improve the quality of care.

As the need for mental health services increases, additional safeguards to protect Alabama’s most vulnerable children are needed, says Psychologist Fred Biasini, Ph.D., especially given the proliferation of non-accredited online degrees and identity theft. He says the new Alabama Mental Health Management System will provide the checks and balances needed.

“The system will help us ensure that effective and appropriate services are available,” Biasini says. “We want to prevent people who provide services to children and their families served by DHR from being verified and a fair reimbursement rate established, the number of qualified providers of mental health-care services may increase. Then, if we can develop a standard-of-care system, we really can improve the quality of mental health services children receive,” he says.

Biasini says if provider credentials can be verified and a fair reimbursement rate established, the number of qualified providers of mental health-care services may increase. “Then, if we can develop a standard-of-care system, we really can improve the quality of mental health services children receive,” he says.

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Improving quality of life

The credentials and competencies of the 1,433 mental health-care providers across the state have not been verified and are based largely on information provided in applications, letters of interest and flyers announcing the availability of services. DHR survey information reveals that 4,275 children were receiving some form of state-sponsored psychological counsel- ing and an additional 1,219 children had a psychological assessment. In some cases the providers claim to offer psychological services but are not trained or qualified to provide these services or licensed as psychologists.

Psychology also has been working with the state on another endeavor — Project Heroes — in which it evaluates high-risk children. UAB staff has reviewed many psychological assessments, some of which have not met the standard the state pre-fers.

“We’ve read documents where the thera-pist actually seemed angry at the child and even reflected in their notes that they thought the child was evil, that’s not part of appropriate and quality mental health services,” Biasini says. “If we can filter out those kinds of individuals and get appropriately trained child mental health-care professionals to see those kids we possibly can make headway in helping them adjust to the trauma they’ve experi- enced.”

Biasini and DHR Commissioner Page Walley stress that the program, which is modeled after one used by the Georgia Department of Human Resources and

Phase I of Campus Green to be completed by June 30

The UAB Campus Green is nearing completion and the target date is June 30, says Susan Zumbado, project manager.

“By June 30 Phase I should be com- plete, with the exception of the trees.”

Zumbado says. “’The landscape architect and our grounds department advised us to wait until the fall to plant the trees. That will increase their chance of survival especially if we have another dry sum- mer.”

The Green will comprise the blocks bor- dered by University Boulevard to the north, 16th Street to the east, 14th Street to the West and 10th Avenue to the south. It will be divided into two parcels.

The North Green, which is 340 feet long and 240 feet wide, will include a stage. The South Green, a 320-foot square of green space, will have sidewalks with pedestrian lighting, decorative architectural landscape elements and trees; other features include a formal garden and cor-nor plazas with planters.

“We’re very excited about what the UAB campus atmosphere will be like,” Zumbado says. “All concrete bands should be complete by June 6.”

Some unforeseen utility and grading issues at University Boulevard — includ-ing relocation of storm sewer and power boxes — slowed the construction of the sidewalk at the west corner of the walkway.

Phase I of the Campus Green project should be complete by June 1 with the exception of the trees, which will be plant- ed in the fall. Workers recently began laying the brick for the sidewalks in the Green.
New race and ethnicity categories available for self-identification

As an educational institution and federal contractor, UAB is required to compile and provide a count of employees by job category, race, ethnicity and gender to the federal government on an annual basis. Recently the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission revised the race and ethnic categories by which the institution reports applicants and employees. As a result, the Office of Human Resources is offering employees the opportunity to voluntarily and confidentially “re-identify” their race or ethnicity with these new options beginning June 1.

A new racial category of Two or More Races will now be available for use. The category Asian or Pacific Islander has been separated into two new categories, Asian and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Also, the category Black has been changed to Black or African American and the category Hispanic to Hispanic or Latino.

To self-identify using the new categories, employees may either make the change directly by accessing the Oracle HR and Finance self-service application at www.uab.edu/adminsystems or complete a new paper form created for this purpose and deliver it to their department administrator – or send it to HR Records Administration (AB 254) – for the change to be made within the HR system. The paper form can be accessed on the HR Website under Affirmative Action EO and Compliance at www.uab.edu/hrmrecords/self_id_form08.

For additional information, contact HR Records Administration at 934-4408.

The Walk UAB! Challenge to take first steps June 2

UAB is enticing employees and students to increase their daily physical activity with a nine-week Walk UAB! Challenge.

Go to www.uab.edu/walkuabchallenge for step-by-step instructions on how to pre-register. Pre-registration is available on the American Heart Association Web site at www.mystartonline.org/ beginning May 26. The first 2,500 participants must pick up a registration packet on June 2 at one of the eight coordinating sites across campus. Registration and packet pickup will be June 2 at each of the eight coordinating sites around campus. The eight sites and pickup times are:

- UAB Eat Right Program — Time TBA
- Eye Foundation Hospital — Time TBA
- UAB Hospital — West Pavilion Annex 7-9 a.m., 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 4-6 p.m.
- UAB Highlands — Time TBA
- The Kirklin Clinic — Time TBA
- The Campus Recreation Center — 7-9 a.m., 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 4-6 p.m.
- Transportation Service Remote 1 Bus Stop — 6-8 a.m. and 4-6 p.m.
- UAB University — West Pavilion Annex 7-9 a.m., 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 4-6 p.m.

The registration packets include a pedometer, which participants will use to log the number of steps they take each day. The registration packets can be accessed on the www.mystartonline.org/ Web site. Participants should log their steps each day and increase their steps toward a minimal physically active goal of 10,000 steps a day or more to gain even greater health benefits.

Prizes will be awarded to participants. To be eligible, walkers must record the number of steps into the AHA database by 9 a.m. on Wednesday of each week beginning June 11.

Identical weekly prizes will be awarded for each of the eight sites, and every three weeks there will be an additional combined drawing from all of the combined sites for an iPod Shuffle.

Five $100 gas cards and one $500 airfare voucher are the grand prizes to be awarded Aug. 8 in a drawing during an “I DID IT” celebration at Bartow Arena.

Sponsors for the event include VIVA Health, the American Heart Association, CommuteSmart and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama.

Contact M.J. Tucker at 975-5134, mtucker@uabmc.edu or e-mail UABWellness@uab.edu for more information.

Four Health System administrators named as ACHE fellows

Four administrators from the UAB Health System have been named fellows by the American College of Healthcare Executives. Marilyn M. Henry, Joseph S. Watson, Anthony W. Patterson and Louis H. Dunne are now among a select group of 7,500 health-care executives who have achieved this high standard of professional development.

ACHE is an international professional society of more than 30,000 health-care executives who are leaders in a variety of health-care settings. Candidates must fulfill multiple requirements to obtain fellow status, including passing a comprehensive examination, meeting academic and experiential criteria, earning continuing education credits and demonstrating professional and community involvement. Fellows are also committed to ongoing professional development and undergo recertification every three years.

OGCA offers training for new e-Report

OGCA will hold training sessions to help end users find the information they need and to ensure a smoother transition to the new online e-Report. Training will be held in the Continuing Education Center computer lab beginning May 22.

Register online at http://main.uab.edu/show.asp?urik=90265 for one of 12 sessions. The WebEIS will be obsolete by June 30; everyone who uses it to look up grants and contracts information should read more about training.

Register now for ADVANCE symposium

Gender equity expert Virginia Valian is the keynote speaker for the UAB ADVANCE symposium — Accelerating the Advancement of Women — to be held at the DoubleTree Hotel June 3. UAB ADVANCE works to improve visibility and recruitment of women in the schools of Natural Sciences & Mathematics, Social & Behavioral Sciences and Engineering. There is no charge to attend, but participants should register online by May 29 at main.uab.edu/sites/ADVANCE/symposium.

Medical student Greg Bourgeois (left), and doctors Jennifer Cafardi (center) and Raj Varma were among the seven UAB participants promoting sun safety awareness at the recent Regions Charity Golf Classic. The group handed out sunscreen samples and educational materials and offered to apply sunscreen to those who needed it as part of the “Play Safe in the Sun” campaign. Statistics show that one in 5 people will acquire non-melanoma skin cancer and approximately one in 70 will get a melanoma. Physicians participating at the Regions Classic in addition to Cafardi and Varma were Conway Huang, Kristin Haushalter, Elise Lirette and Michelle Marks. Visit www.womensderm.org/ for more information.

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What ‘dose’ of exercise do overweight children need?

Olivia Thomas, Ph.D., is conducting a pilot study to develop exercise programs for overweight African-American youths that can change their body composition and enable them to live healthier lives.

“Fit Club at the Y” is a 12-week study for children ages 10-12 funded by the Charles Barkley Health Disparities Research Award.

“There have been several large behavior-intervention trials designed to reduce obesity in children through increased physical activity,” says Thomas, assistant professor in Epidemiology. “Even though these trials were very well designed, the impact of these studies on body composition has been limited.”

There are recommendations about how much exercise all children should have each day, but the type and amount of exercise needed for an already obese child has not been established, she says.

“We’ve really put the cart before the horse in terms of establishing how much exercise overweight children need to actually change their body composition,” Thomas says.

“We thought we needed to go back to the drawing board and start with an efficacy trial that’s closely monitored and controlled. We want to see the impact of an exercise program when we’re controlling the dose and measuring total physical activity.”

Overweight children at risk

Until now, no one has established a dose-response relationship between physical activity and obesity in children. U.S. Department of Agriculture dietary guidelines suggest that children should get at least an hour of moderately intensive physical activity every day, but there are no data available showing that this dose of exercise is effective for managing body weight in children.

According to the National Center for Health Statistics in 2006, about 34 percent of children ages 6-19 are overweight; about half of those are considered obese, up from 11 percent in 1994.

Rates are highest among African-American adolescents. Statistics from 2002 show that almost 24 percent of black girls and boys ages 12-19 were obese.

Research shows that overweight children are at a higher risk for health problems that plague overweight adults, including hypertension, breathing disorders, sleep problems and bone-and-joint complications. They also are at greater risk for developing heart disease and some forms of cancer.

“Fit Club at the Y” will randomize 15 participants into three groups. One group will be the control; the two exercise groups will walk for 25 minutes or 90 minutes of supervised, moderate-intensity activity.

Those randomized to one of the two exercise groups will be carefully monitored for five days a week for 12 weeks at the Western Area Family Branch of the YMCA in Birmingham.

The study is for children who are overweight, but otherwise healthy. They should not have health issues related to diabetes, hypertension or asthma or be taking medications that would interfere with their body composition.

Children participating in the study also should not have participated in an exercise or dietary program for weight loss.

Prescription for exercise

Thomas and Jana Wallace, project coordinator, will create an exercise prescription for each child enrolled in the study.

Participants will spend one night in the General Clinical Research Center so their resting energy expenditure can be measured. They also will have their body composition measured, undergo a fitness test to determine their target heart rate range and give blood samples to test their lipid and insulin levels.

Children will be wearing heart-rate monitors that show their activity levels during the supervised exercise sessions. They also will have a variety of exercise options at their disposal.

UAB faculty answer ‘Why I serve on the QL Committee…’

UAB’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), sets goals for student learning and outlines steps the university will take to reach them.

Faculty are essential to ensuring students develop the core QEP competencies — effective communication skills, breadth and depth of knowledge, experience with problem-solving and the ability to make informed, ethical decisions and be prepared for responsible citizenship in the community, nation and world. These strengths are essential for success in work and life as is being quantitatively literate.

Faculty who serve on the Quantitative Literacy Committee were asked to share their classroom experiences with the UAB Reporter to illustrate “Why I Serve on the QL Committee” during the coming weeks.

Philosophy Professor Scott Arnold, Ph.D., begins the series today.

To apply for QL designation for courses and become more active in QL efforts on campus, visit http://main.uab.edu/Sites/DOE/QEP or contact committee Chair Ed Cook, Ph.D., at escook@uab.edu

Basic quantitative reasoning essential

For UAB to continue to be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, it has been necessary to identify specific areas where we think that the educational experience at UAB could be improved. Quantitative literacy is one such area.

An anecdote illustrates: In my introductory-level Contemporary Moral Issues class, I asked students the following question: “Suppose that Alabama has a lower murder rate than New York. Further suppose that Alabama has the death penalty and New York does not. Why is it a mistake to infer that having the death penalty causes Alabama to have a lower murder rate?”

What I wanted students to say was that there might be other factors involved in explaining the difference in murder rates, such as the percentage of people living in urban areas, the average age of the respective populations, etc.

Instead, what I got — and from more than one student — was this: “There are more people living in New York than in Alabama.” The fact that these students could not distinguish between the number of murders and the murder rate indicated to me that students have not been taught basic quantitative reasoning. Quantitative literacy includes reasoning-involving numbers, but it is much broader than that. It includes almost any form of reasoning and thus can show up in diverse fields. In philosophy, it includes symbolic logic, but we also expose our students to it in proofs for the existence of God, for example.

The QL Committee seeks to develop ways to ensure that our students are exposed to and acquire a level of competence about reasoning, especially reasoning involving numbers.

— Scott Arnold, professor of philosophy

May 26, 2008 UAB Reporter 3
Call for submissions begins for '08 Conner Prize for ideas

UAB faculty are encouraged to submit essays for the Conner Prize in the history of ideas by Wednesday, Sept. 17. The term “history of ideas” is to be interpreted liberally, as including a broad range of interdisciplinary concerns.

The prize carries an award of $250. An original and three copies of each essay must be submitted to Claire Peele, Ph.D., interim associate provost for Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs, UAB Room 374, Administration Building; Contact Peel at 4-5513 or peelc@uab.edu for more information. The prize will be awarded in November, 2008, provided that three or more entries are received. If fewer than three entries are submitted, the prize will be awarded the following fall or at any succeeding fall when sufficient entries are received. Published and unpublished essays may be submitted; published essays should have appeared no earlier than August 2007. All entries should be submitted in a form “suitable for publication,” i.e., including standard footnotes and references. The entries will be reviewed anonymously by a panel of judges; therefore, the author’s name should not appear anywhere in the essay. Each submission must be accompanied by a cover sheet identifying the author.

The Conner Prize is named for Frederick W. Conner, who served as vice president for Academic Affairs at the University of Florida, dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at The University of Alabama and dean of the School of Arts & Humanities at UAB.

Mental Health

CONTINUED from page 1

in a pre-Hurricane Katrina program in Louisiana, in an effort not to reduce the amount of funding for mental health services for children. DHR already has allocated $9.8 million for services this year. “This is strictly an effort to make the mental health services for children as good as they can be so they improve the quality of their lives long term,” Basinski says.

Thorough examination of providers follows

The first phase of the program is beginning in Jefferson, St. Clair, Walker and Mobile counties and will launch in the rest of the state during the course of the next year. Providers are required to reap- ply to confirm their licenses and educational attainment are legitimate, and criminal background checks will be conducted by Employment Screening Services, which is working with UAB.

“Deadline is working with UAB, which is working with children. Albert Tousson, manager of the High Resolution Imaging Facility, is May’s Employee of the Month. If you know someone who should be Employee of the Month, send nominations to Jason Turner at jturn@uab.edu.

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UMMC-STUDIO

Healthy girls 10-17 years old needed for a research study of an investigational herpes vaccine. Compensation. Confidential. Dr. Rivera 4-9283.

Healthy men & women 55-90 are needed for a memory-loss study. If you are HIV+ and have been taking HAART for at least 1 year, you may qualify to participate in a study to determine the relationship between neurologic function and HIV-associated neuropathy. R. Rainbouu 4-2088/402-455.

Healthy adults aged 60-75 needed for a study to examine training to improve muscle function and mobility. Subjects will exercise 2-3 days per week for 8 weeks and undergo testing on balance, strength, walking speed, and bone density; blood and muscle analyses; and quality of life surveys. Compensation, 4-9983.

Do you have high blood pressure? Are you age 30-65 and on no more than 2 blood pressure medications? You may participate in a study that will provide you with new medications, blood pressure checks, physical exam and reimbursement for time and travel. Compensation. 4-9283.

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Smokers & ex-smokers: Are you 40 years of age or older and have a history of heart disease or stroke? You may qualify to participate in a study involving computerized monitoring, risk factor assessment, and laboratory testing. You will receive compensation for travel and time. Compensation, 4-9983.


Caregiver study. Caregivers of adults with TBI who have no family members to help them are wanted. Career study participants may be eligible for out-patient treatment at no cost to improve the use of the arm affected by the stroke. No medication involved. Adailen Dejado 4-6777/5-5263.

Healthy men & women 58 & older in good physical health & diagnosed with mild-moderate dementia are needed. Have you been diagnosed with dementia? This study will help determine the safety and tolerability of an investigational drug for memory loss. Eligible participants will receive no-cost medical treatment, blood pressure checks, physical exam, and reimbursement for time and travel. Compensation. 4-9283.

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B. Earl Sailer Jr.; Dr. T. Michael Harrington, or Dr. Fred R. Decker.

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Remember: We are here for YOU, our patients. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.
FACES of UAB

REBECCA BACH, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
PAPER CLIP JEWELRY MAKER

What is the most rewarding part of your work at UAB?
Watching my students discover that they are scholars and writers. It is always exciting to see students move from a position where they unquestioningly accept an authority's words to one where they can generate well-founded opinions of their own. I also love seeing students start to believe they can use language powerfully and beautifully.

How did you begin making jewelry?
My high school had a fully equipped jewelry studio, and I learned to use the tools. I like making jewelry because I could give it as gifts and because I like fashion and design. Today I make earrings, necklaces and brooches.

Why paper clips?
I have always loved industrial design — perhaps because I am from Manhattan — and paper clips are miniature classics of industrial design. I find them inherently beautiful with their curves and angles. I love office supplies because they are so often connected with paper, the material aspect of books, my favorite objects.

Where do you get your clips?
I find them at office supply stores and paper stores all over the country. It is weird and interesting that stores in different neighborhoods and cities have different kinds of paper clips.

What inspires your pieces?
Looking at the clips and playing with them in my studio are the main sources of my designs. I also look at a lot of art and design in museums, galleries and the media. Ideas often come to me in my dreams or when I am thinking about something entirely different, and then I can’t wait to go into my studio and start playing.