



NOW

USF ranks first among Florida's baccalaureate nursing programs on licensure exam pass rate



USF College of Nursing graduates earned the highest passing rate of all baccalaureate programs in the state — 95.7 percent — on the exam required to practice as a nurse. Among Florida's 44 nursing degree programs, both associate and baccalaureate, nursing graduates from USF scored second highest in the state. All Florida nursing graduates averaged a passing rate of 82.4 percent on the 2004 Registered Nurse Licensure Examination (NCLEX), according to results reported Jan. 31 by the Florida Board of Nursing.

"I congratulate our students for their superlative performance on the NCLEX boards," said Patricia Burns, PhD, FAAN, dean of the College of Nursing. "The College's outstanding faculty, working with our community partners, has done a phenomenal job in preparing compassionate, ethical nurses with great critical thinking skills. The end result is that patients in the Tampa Bay region, where many of our graduates remain to practice, can expect the highest quality nursing care." Students who have completed their coursework are eligible to take the national licensing exam. The National Council for State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) reported that approximately 85 percent of the 82,719 people who took the exam nationwide in 2004 passed. Of the 117 USF nursing graduates who took the NCSBN NCLEX, 112 or 95.7 percent, passed.

HSC RESEARCH DAY

The promising research of 144 scientists was showcased Feb. 24 at the annual HSC Research Day, when posters of their work were displayed throughout the breezeways of HSC. The annual event draws from the Colleges of Medicine, Nursing and Public Health and includes research by faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students, and residents. Among them were (in photo on left) Patricia Kruk, PhD, (left) a judge for HSC Research Day, and Sungman Park, a graduate student.



The day was highlighted with a presentation by Patricia Grady, PhD, (in photo on right) director of the National Institute of Nursing Research, who spoke on the NIH's initiative to translate science to prevention, treatment and cure. She was the keynote speaker for the Roy H. Behnke, MD, Distinguished Lecture, now in its ninth year. Visit www.hsc.usf.edu/research to see a list of winners for this year's HSC Research Day.

HSC Now!

It's dynamic, it's sharp, and it's cutting edge!

"HSC Now" is the winning name for our newsletter. The "HSC Now" name and redesign capture the exciting changes underway at Health Sciences Center, as we steer toward national prominence in research, education and service.

Congratulations to Tracey Ryan, author of the winning name! Ryan, our program coordinator in Continuing Professional Education, gets dinner at the restaurant of her choice, Armani's. Thank you to everyone who participated in the contest -- we had close to 100 entries. There were many terrific ideas, some humorous, all showing the spirit of collaboration. Our new art director, Klaus Herdocia, designed how best to showcase the "HSC Now" name.

Next step: a web version of an integrated news site. "HSC Now" will mirror our new web page. The idea is to drive the printed and electronic news in tandem. So, stay tuned for the web launch!



Tracey Ryan

Photo by Eric Younghans

Stephen K. Klasko, MD, MBA
Stephen K. Klasko, MD, MBA
 Vice President for Health Sciences
 Dean, College of Medicine



USF President Judy Genshaft (left) was the guest of honor last month at the COM Pizza With Dean Klasko. The monthly gatherings, started by Dr. Klasko, offer an opportunity for medical students to hear current information about the college and university and have frank discussions about their concerns.

Photo by Eric Younghans

Dr. Anne Curtis to head USF Heart Services

Anne B. Curtis, MD, has been appointed director of the Division of Cardiology, CEO of Heart Services and professor of medicine at the University of South Florida College of Medicine. A specialist in the treatment of heart rhythm disorders, Dr. Curtis will begin full time at USF on April 18.

She was recruited from the University of Florida, where she has been director of Clinical Electrophysiology. Dr. Curtis is president-elect of the Heart Rhythm Society, the nation's premier resource for science, education and advocacy for heart rhythm disorders — a leading cause of sudden death.

"I'm delighted to announce that our first integrated clinical and research program, in heart health, will be led by Dr. Curtis, who is nationally recognized for her expertise in electrophysiology of the heart," said Stephen Klasko, MD, MBA, dean of the College of Medicine and vice president for Health Sciences. "I'm looking forward to transforming heart



Anne B. Curtis, MD

services into a model for the college, and to working closely with Dr. Curtis as she builds the cardiology division."

"Our vision of patient services is focused on quality, safety and the latest research," Dr. Curtis said. "With our hospital partners, USF can build heart services that will be a model for our students and a benefit to the health of our patients."

A native of Brooklyn, Dr. Curtis earned her medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City. She completed an internal medicine residency at Presbyterian Hospital in New York and fellowships in cardiovascular diseases and clinical cardiac

electrophysiology at Duke University Medical Center.

Dr. Curtis currently leads 14 clinical studies as a principal investigator or co-investigator, including trials of techniques and medical devices, such as defibrillators and pacemakers, to treat abnormal heart rhythms. She has authored 86 scientific papers and 70 book chapters or reviews.

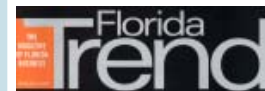
(((In the News)))



H. James Brownlee, MD, professor and chair of Family Medicine, spoke to *WFLA Newschannel 8* Feb. 15 about a federal study showing that flu shots did not decrease influenza death rates in the elderly. Dr. Brownlee said the study may signal the beginning of a change in public policy on flu vaccines.



Paul Sanberg, PhD, DSc, director of the Center for Aging and Brain repair spoke about a study showing for the first time signs of stem cells in the hearts of mice and humans after birth. His comments on the cardiac stem cell study appeared Feb. 9 in *HealthDay News*, *Forbes*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *myway.com*, *Yahoo Health*, *WCNC.com* and *Ch. 18* in Lexington, Ky.



Jacqueline Cattani, PhD, professor of public health and director of the USF Center of Biological Defense, was featured for a "Trendsetters" profile in the February 2005 issue of *Florida Trend*.



A disaster drill sponsored Jan. 27 by the **USF College of Nursing** in collaboration with Medical College of Georgia was covered by *Bay News 9*, *WB-38 News*, *Fox-13 News* and *WUSF-FM 89.7*. The simulations of biological, chemical and radioactive disasters were part of a National Disaster Life Support training course for health professionals.



A USF and Moffitt Cancer Center study of a new therapy for advanced melanoma was featured Jan. 24 on *Fox-13 News*. The study uses electroporation, a technology that delivers genes into cells with brief, controlled electrical pulses. **Adil Daud, MD**, professor of interdisciplinary oncology, and **Richard Heller, PhD**, professor of medical microbiology and immunology, were interviewed.

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--> www.hsc.usf.edu for complete list

Dr. Paul Wallach named vice dean for Educational Affairs



By Anne DeLotto Baier

Paul Wallach, MD, has been appointed vice dean for Educational Affairs for the USF Florida College of Medicine — a new position created by Stephen Klasko, MD, MBA, medical school dean and vice president for Health Sciences. Dr. Wallach, professor of internal medicine, has been associate dean for Curriculum and Medical Education at USF for the last three years. He will serve as one of three vice deans charged with helping Dr. Klasko implement the college's overarching missions of education, research and

clinical care. Recruitment continues for the two other vice deans — one for research and another for clinical affairs.

"Dr. Wallach has an excellent track record as a national leader in clinical education, and understands the importance of adequately preparing physicians to practice real world medicine in a new and changing health care system," Dr. Klasko said. "He will play a key role in moving forward our initiative to create one of the most innovative curricula in the country."

"The bottom line is optimal patient care," Dr. Wallach said. "Our goal is to help our students become the best physicians they can be so they can better serve their patients." Throughout his career as a physician-educator at the USF College of Medicine, Dr. Wallach has created several innovative programs designed to ensure the competency of graduates, emphasize integrated learning and promote an interdisciplinary approach to teaching clinical skills. Most recently, he worked with colleagues in the College of Nursing to modify the Objective Structured Clinical Examination

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First lady praises classroom intervention USF tracks program's success in curbing aggressive behavior

When Laura Bush visited an inner city Baltimore classroom earlier this month, she observed first-grade students playing a game that promotes good behavior as they worked on a reading assignment. The first lady's words of praise for the "Good Behavior Game" shined the national spotlight on a classroom management technique little known outside academic circles.

Turns out the game works — keeping the students from violent behavior long into adolescence. For more than a decade, researchers at the USF College of Public Health have tested this program's effectiveness in discouraging disruptive behaviors and increasing academic achievement. USF's C. Hendricks Brown, PhD, codirected the randomized study of the first-grade preventive intervention, collaborating with the American Institutes for Research (Sheppard Kellam), the City of Baltimore Public School System, and the Oregon Social Learning Center.

Dr. Brown and his colleagues found that the Good Behavior Game dramatically reduced aggressive behavior and helped children stay on task in the classroom, particularly boys who had begun first grade as highly aggressive.

In the "Good Behavior Game" students motivate their teammates to follow class rules and are rewarded with incentives like a little extra time at recess or verbal praise from the teacher. Rather than separating children who are disruptive from the rest of the class, Dr. Brown said, the teacher draws on the powerful influence of a students' peers to collectively reinforce positive behavior. "The intervention also was effective over the long term for the boys at highest risk — their rate of aggression was much lower in middle school, and even as far as young adulthood 14 years later," said Dr. Brown, a professor of epidemiology and biostatistics whose research focuses on preventing mental health problems in youth. "Their rates of criminal activity, delinquency and antisocial behaviors were much lower compared to aggressive boys who did not receive the intervention ... The Good Behavior Game also increases the likelihood that these high-risk males will complete high school.

"The experiment is unique because its rigorous scientific design was developed in partnership with the Baltimore schools and communities, and it demonstrates long-term benefit into adulthood of an intervention begun in first grade. It shows helping all children in a classroom benefits those at

most risk, without labeling or isolating the high-risk students." Dr. Brown said he hoped national attention drawn to the Good Behavior Game would spur other school districts across the country to adopt the program.

In the meantime, the USF team continues to develop advanced statistical methods to evaluate the long-term effects of other community-based prevention programs. Known as the Prevention Science and Methodology Group (PSMG), the researchers are currently testing several different approaches to reducing suicides in youth and examining the impact of school-based drug prevention programs in rural communities. The goal is to identify preventive strategies with a track record of improving the educational success and mental health of children and encourage wider use of these programs.

Dr. Brown, who came to USF from Johns Hopkins in 1990, has been funded for 18 years by the National Institutes of Mental Health and the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The other PSMG members are Getachew Dagne, Joe Brinales, Wei Wang, Sandeep Kasat, Rich Newel, Terri Singer, Peter Toyinbo, Sruthi Botha, Jing Guo and Frank Wang.



Lobbyists.

You don't have to be high-powered lobbyists to get more research and prevention funding for heart disease and stroke—just a cardiologist, a researcher or other healthcare provider who cares about saving lives.

Advocates with heart

USF cardiologist Douglas Schocken, MD, and his son, Derek, 12, appear on posters, distributed nationwide, to promote a recent grassroots lobbying campaign by the American Heart Association. The campaign encourages researchers and health care providers to advocate for increased funding to NIH and the CDC for cardiovascular research and prevention. Derek, 11, was born with a heart defect that was repaired when he was a toddler. During the last six years Derek has visited Capitol Hill and written letters to Congress to help support various bills to fight heart disease. He accompanied his father, AHA-funded researcher Dr. Schocken, to the organization's Annual Scientific Sessions this fall where he helped staff the Public Advocacy Section of the AHA booth.

Dr. Paul Wallach

(Continued from page 2)

(OSCE) so that medical and nursing students participate jointly in this education and evaluation exercise to learn diagnostic and clinical skills. As associate dean for Curriculum and Medical Education, Dr. Wallach has overseen reform and evaluation of undergraduate medical education. Under his leadership, the college recently updated its curriculum for medical students in the first and second years of pre-clinical studies. The college is preparing this spring to

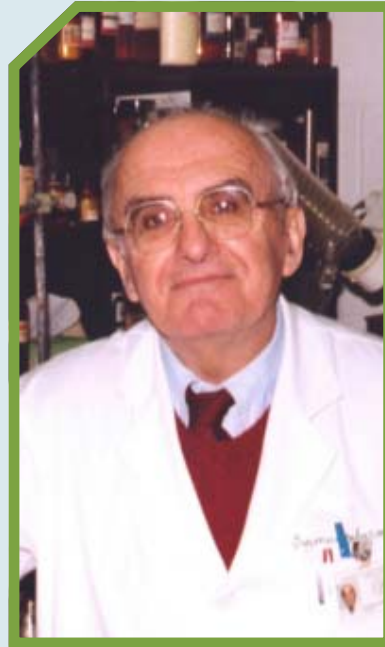
launch a new curriculum for its third and fourth-year students that is based on integrating all the specialties into a comprehensive view of being a physician.

“This curriculum reform has been an extremely collaborative process, with more than 100 faculty and students working together to develop an exciting and creative model for 21st century medical education,” Dr. Wallach said.

A 1984 graduate of the USF College of Medicine, Dr. Wallach joined the faculty after completing his residency in internal medicine here. He also completed a two-year faculty development fellowship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He served as director of medical student education for the Department of Internal Medicine before teaming with colleague Steven Specter, PhD, in 1997, to create and co-direct the Office of Curriculum and Medical Education. Dr. Wallach was associate dean for Clinical Education from 1998 to 2001.

Dr. Wallach has published in *Academic Medicine*, *Teaching and Learning in Medicine*, *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, *Archives of Internal Medicine*, *Journal of General Internal Medicine* and other journals. He is a reviewer for *Academic Medicine* and has presented abstracts at the AAMC and AMEE. He serves as a site visitor for the LCME and has been involved nationally with the National Board of Medical Examiners. The recipient of numerous outstanding teaching awards, Dr. Wallach received the Florida Medical Association’s Leadership in Medical Education Award in 1995. He has consistently been listed in the *Best Doctors of America*.

In memoriam:



USF researcher Alfredo Giner-Sorolla, PhD,

died Feb. 14 at his home in Vinaros, Spain. He was 86.

Dr. Giner-Sorolla came to USF in 1982, when he was associate professor for a one-year grant and returned in 1990 as a research associate in the Department of Internal Medicine. He remained for four years before returning to Spain when his health began to decline. Before joining USF, he retired from Sloan-Kettering Memorial Hospital in New York, where he helped develop agents for cancer chemotherapy.

At USF, he worked as an organic chemist, synthesizing immunomodulators. In addition to his work, Dr. Giner-Sorolla was best known for his courtly manners, urbanity, wit, wide interests and endearing eccentricities, said Ray Olsson, MD, professor in Internal Medicine and Pharmacology and Therapeutics, and holder of the Ed. C. Wright Chair of Cardiovascular Research.

Among Dr. Olsson’s fondest memories are Dr. Giner-Sorolla’s ability to discuss the arts and literature for hours (he authored eight books of either poetry or philosophy), his great knowledge of chemistry, his passion for astronomy, and the time he calculated the number of grains of sand on Earth, just for his own amusement.

USF study helps decode calcium signaling in immune system

By Anne DeLotto Baier

Calcium is vital for early development, immune responses and memory and learning, to name just a few functions.

Now, a researcher at USF, in collaboration with colleagues at Harvard University and the University of Hawaii, has published a paper in *Science* describing a new ion channel involved in calcium signaling in the immune system. The paper, “TRPM4 Regulates Calcium Oscillations After T Cell Activation,” appeared in the prestigious journal’s November 2004 issue. An editorial in the January issue of *Science* discusses the importance of the group’s work in helping to decode calcium signaling.

“TRPM4 is a key regulator of calcium oscillations crucial for the production of cytokines, which control the immune response,” said study co-author Henrique Cheng, DVM, PhD, a postdoctoral fellow at the USF Department of Pediatrics/All Children’s Hospital. “This is an important finding. By developing drugs that target TRPM4, we may be able to suppress or stimulate the immune system to treat disease such as HIV, arthritis, diabetes and many others.”

Dr. Cheng works in the St. Petersburg-based Cardiovascular and Diabetes Research

Laboratory headed by Ian Phillips, PhD, DSc, and Clare Zhang, PhD.

“Publication in world-class journal like *Science* is quite an achievement for a young post-doc,” said Dr. Phillips, vice president for USF research and a professor of physiology and biophysics. “Calcium is important in all cells, and therefore understanding how it is controlled has great medical significance for disease states where calcium imbalance is a critical factor such as heart disease, osteoporosis and diabetes.”

The researchers showed that inhibiting TRPM4 significantly impacts the calcium signals in immune cells known as T-cells and increases production of interleukin-2, a cytokine involved in boosting immunity and fighting infection.

Dr. Cheng plans to look next at the importance of TRPM4 in other systems, such as the heart and pancreas. “The ability of TRPM4 to control calcium signals in excitable and nonexcitable cells opens the door for many exciting discoveries in the years to come,” he said. “We know, for instance, that heart cells need calcium to contract, and insulin, a hormone secreted from the pancreas and involved in diabetes, is tightly regulated by calcium signals.”