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**Women's Health E-Newsletter**  
**SPRING 2007**

**NEWS AT VCU**

**VCU Graduate Schools Ranked Among America's Best**

U.S. News and World Report of "America's Best Graduate Schools" rank the Virginia Commonwealth University graduate schools of the Arts, Social Work, Education and Nursing among the nation's best in the latest survey. ... Other VCU graduate programs ranked among the best in the nation are: Graphic Design, 4th; Painting and Drawing, 10th; Health Care Management, 4th; Rehabilitation Counseling, 13th; **and Women's Health, 18<sup>th</sup>**. A VCU news release is available at <http://www.news.vcu.edu/news.aspx?v=detail&nid=2005>

**VCU Health System Named A Top Company By The National Association for Female Executives**

The National Association for Female Executives, NAFE, has named the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System one of five top non-profits in the country. NAFE's annual Top Companies for Female Executives initiative names those in the vanguard of changing the face of executive suites and boardrooms across the country. A VCU news release is available online at <http://www.news.vcu.edu/news.aspx?v=detail&nid=1971>

**VCU Establishes a New, Multidisciplinary Clinical and Translational Research Center**

Virginia Commonwealth University has created the Center for Clinical and Translational Research to enhance the ability of researchers in science and medicine to work across campuses to create new therapies for fighting disease and get them to patients quickly. [Read more about the center at \*Inside VCU\*.](#)

**VCU Honorees Among Those Recognized as YWCA Outstanding Women Award Recipients**

Virginia Commonwealth University boasts two recipients of this year's YWCA of Richmond Outstanding Women Awards for 2007. The awards recognize achievement in 10 categories including arts, business, communications, education, health and science, human relations, government and politics, law, religion and volunteerism. [Read more about the recipients at \*VCU View\*.](#)

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual VCU Women's Health Fair** "Mind, Body & Spirit," took place Thursday, **March 1<sup>st</sup>** from 10 am - 2 pm at the VCU Student Commons. The purpose of the fair was to bring together university, and community organizations and individuals with an interest in women's health to provide education and information to the VCU faculty, students and staff regarding all aspects of women's health, integrating holistic health options with traditional providers and organizations.

The *Charlotte K. Roberts* Women's Health Resource Center staffed a booth at the health fair and distributed information on women's health topics including Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), nutrition, menopause, diabetes, heart disease in women, centering pregnancy, clinical trials at the VCU Mood Disorders Institute, and the services available at the Resource Center. For more information about the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual VCU Women's Health Fair, contact Stacy Baldwin, Community Health Information Specialist, at (804) 327-8857.

## COMMUNITY- BASED RESEARCH AWARDS

The Institute for Women's Health is pleased to announce \$86,000 in awards to the recipients of our first seed grant program that fosters excellence in community-based participatory research on women's health. We are very excited about the opportunity to work with nine VCU faculty and students on community-based research projects that will play a critical role toward the Institute's goal of bridging academia with pressing community needs and contributing to improving the health of women and girls in our community. We look forward to fostering new partnerships that promote a participatory, cooperative, and co-learning process for us as VCU researchers and for our community partners.

The Awardees include:

- ❖ Dr. Rosalie Corona – Psychology – Barriers & Supports to Teen Pregnancy Prevention among Latina Adolescents
- ❖ Dr. Lori Keyser Marcus – Psychiatry - Motivational Strategies to Help Bridge the Gap from Referral to Treatment for Substance Use and Depression
- ❖ Dr. Sarah Kye Price – Social Work - Women, Loss and Depression: Building Knowledge and Capacity for Community-informed Intervention Development
- ❖ Anh Bao Nguyen – Psychology - Khoe Man La Tot Hon Dep! (Health is Better Than Beauty!)
- ❖ Dr. Saba Masho - Epidemiology & Community Health - Access to Perinatal Care for Uninsured and Medicaid Ineligible Women
- ❖ Dr. Diane Langhorst – Social Work - Improving Employment Outcomes in Substance Dependent Women
- ❖ Sarah Meshberg- Cohen – Psychology - Expressive Writing as a Therapeutic Process
- ❖ Dr. Anika Alvanzo - Internal Medicine- Trauma-informed Addiction Therapy for Women in Outpatient Community-Based Substance Abuse Treatment

Demonstration Project:

- ❖ Dr. Judith Bradford - Wilder School - Engaging the Richmond Community to Improve Prenatal Care Access

As part of our efforts to engage the community in setting research priorities, the Institute will host a quarterly series of educational seminars with our seed grant awardees focused on educating VCU researchers, faculty and staff in the development of collaborative partnerships with our community. The seminars will be aimed at enhancing the relevance and value of clinical research by involving patients and community members and building on the strengths and resources within our community. The seminars will be open to all VCU Faculty, staff and community partners interested in community-based participatory research and will be lead by Judith Bradford, PhD, Institute Director of Community Based Research.

A VCU news release is available online at:

<http://www.news.vcu.edu/news.aspx?v=detail&nid=2027>

### **3rd Annual VCU Women's Health Research Day**

The VCU Institute for Women's Health sponsored the **Third Annual Women's Health Research Day on Wednesday, April 11, 2007**. The event included 53 poster presentations, from over twenty departments, over one third of which competed for the Elizabeth Fries Young Investigator Award. More than 185 faculty, staff and students attended the event, which included a keynote presentation by Carolyn Mazure, PhD, Yale University Director of Women's Health Research, Professor of Psychiatry, and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, School of Medicine. Dr. Mazure spoke on "Women's Health Research: Transforming Historical Lessons into New Scientific Applications." A Panel of VCU Women's Health Research Experts discussed "Tips and Strategies for Research Success" featured: Judy Bradford, PhD (Epidemiology & Community Health); Laura Siminoff, PhD (Social & Behavioral Health); and Elizabeth McGee, MD (OB/GYN). Viewing of women's health research posters and a reception followed presentation of The Elizabeth Fries Young Investigator Award and Community-Based Research Seed Grant Awards. Women's Health Research Day Co-Chairs were: Dr. Robert W. Downs, Jr., Professor of Medicine Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism and Dr. Joann Bodurtha, Professor of Human Genetics.

For more information see VCU news:

<http://www.news.vcu.edu/news.aspx?v=detail&nid=2029>

### **Elizabeth Fries Young Investigator Award**

Awarded for the graduate student, fellow, post-doc, or assistant professor whose research shows the most promise to improve women's health.

This year's recipient was **Sarah Joyner**, a cardiology fellow in the department of Internal Medicine. Sarah's collaborators were Michael C. Kontos, F. Philip Anderson, James L. Tatum, Joseph P. Ornato, and Robert L. Jesse. Representing 4 departments: Internal Medicine Division of Cardiology, Pathology, Radiology, and

Emergency Medicine. The poster title is: "**Higher Prevalence of Unstable Angina Compared to Non-ST Elevation MI in women is in Part Explained by Smaller MI Size.**"

Sarah received a certificate as well as a generous stipend donated by Liz Fries' husband, Dr. Viktor Bovbjerg, to cover the registration and travel costs for Sarah to present her work at a scientific conference. Poster # 21 [View abstract](#)

**Honorable Mention** recognition went to:

- ❑ **Antonio Abbate MD**, Internal Medicine, for "Reduced Post-Infarction Myocardial Apoptosis in Women: A Clue to Their Different Clinical Course." Poster # 1 [View abstract](#)
- ❑ **Juhi Shukla**, Physiology and OB/GYN, for "The Neutrophil Products, myeloperoxidase and Matrix Metalloproteinase 8, are Increased in systemic Vasculature of Preeclamptic Women. Poster # 43 [View abstract](#)

Abstracts are posted on the website:

[http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/research/research\\_day\\_2007.html](http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/research/research_day_2007.html)

## **WOMEN'S HEALTH NEWS**

### **Selected Essays from Not in My Family: Personal Essays about HIV/AIDS**

Around the world, women now make up more than half of all people living with HIV, the human immunodeficiency virus, and AIDS, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. In the U.S., more than 25 percent of new infections are in women. Women of color are especially impacted by the disease. HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death for African American women aged 25 to 34. While the impact of this epidemic on women has been devastating, many women with HIV and AIDS are living longer and stronger lives thanks to new treatments. Gill L. Robertson IV has taken action against HIV/AIDS by compiling a list of personal essays about HIV/AIDS. His desire to show how this epidemic has shaped our society evolved into his book *Not in My Family*. [Read these personal stories and how HIV and AIDS have affected millions.](#)

### **U.S. Centers to Launch Major Study of Anorexia**

A four-year study of anorexia nervosa by the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) will begin accepting patients May 1. Anorexia nervosa is a dangerous eating disorder that mostly affects teenage girls. "This is a psycho-physiological disorder characterized by an abnormal fear of becoming obese, a distorted self-image, a persistent unwillingness to eat, and severe weight loss. It is often accompanied by self-induced vomiting, excessive exercising, malnutrition, and other harmful physiological changes," Dr. Katherine Halmi, who will lead the New York-Presbyterian/Westchester team, said in a prepared statement. There is no proven treatment for the disorder. [Learn more about this study of anorexia nervosa at the U.S. department of Health and Human Services website.](#)

## **EKG Predicts Heart Risk in Postmenopausal Women**

Even minor abnormalities in electrocardiogram readings can predict if a seemingly healthy, postmenopausal woman is at risk of a heart attack or even death, a new study found. An electrocardiogram is a non-invasive test that measures the heart's electrical activity. It's sometimes referred to as an EKG or an ECG, and can be performed in a doctor's office. [Learn more about how an EKG may help detect heart problems in postmenopausal women.](#)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **How To Treat A Women: Strategies for Healthcare & Self-Care**

Institute for Women's Health presents an ongoing, year-round series of brown-bag seminars focused on women's health—for all healthcare professionals.

*Dates and Topics:*

- September 19, 2007: "Coping With Loss: Findig Our Way Through Grief"
- October 31, 2007: "Obesity and Weight Loss Strategies"

For more information, contact the Institute for Women's Health at (804) 827-3033 or view the *How To treat A Woman* flyer:

[www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/announcements/HTTW2007RollingDatesFlier.pdf](http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/announcements/HTTW2007RollingDatesFlier.pdf).

### **Women and Girls' Wellness Month**

April 2007 marks the sixth annual *Women & Girls' Wellness Month* in Virginia. It is a time when organizations around the state work to jointly raise awareness of the many issues that affect women and girls' well being and the importance of women and girls' wellness in Virginia. It also provides an opportunity to highlight the numerous groups and variety of programs that address the needs of women and girls in the Commonwealth. [Learn more about Women and Girls' Wellness month.](#)

### **National Women's Health Week**

The 8th annual National Women's Health Week will kick off on Mother's Day, May 13, 2007, and will be celebrated until May 19, 2007. National Women's Check-up Day will be Monday, May 14, 2007. The event encourages women to take simple steps for a longer, healthier, and happier life. The theme for National Women's Health Week 2007 is "It's Your Time: Pamper Your Mind, Body and Spirit." During the Week, families, communities, businesses, government, health organizations and other groups work together to:

- celebrate the extraordinary progress in women's health
- bring attention to and create understanding of women's health issues
- encourage women to get regular check-ups
- provide free or reduced screenings for women nationwide
- educate women about steps they can take to improve their physical and mental health and prevent disease

For more information about National Women's Health Week, [visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website.](#)

## **Women's Health Virginia: 10th Annual Conference on Women's Health**

This program will enlighten you about: the changing health of Virginia's women and girls; advances in medicine with a special focus on developments affecting women in the reproductive years, mid-life and beyond and confronting cancer; the growing problems of overweight, obesity and disordered eating in girls and women; social and cultural issues that affect women's health and more. June 15, 2007 -8-5 pm

**Location:** Doubletree Hotel, Charlottesville, VA

**Registration** (including lunch, materials, parking and continuing education credits) is \$65 until May 10 and \$75 after May 10, \$40 for students.

Visit the Women's Health Virginia [website](#) for more details and to [register](#) or call 434-220-4500.

## **UPCOMING CLASSES:**

### **Nutrition -Weight Loss – Walking**

Upcoming classes include "Lean 'N Easy Cholesterol Lowering Diet Class"; "First Step Program" (Four weeks long, begins April 30); Food and Fitness Weight loss Seminar (May 17, May 23, June 4, June 11); "Diabetic Dining Made easy" (First Wednesday morning of each month from 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. For class information call 327-8830). All classes at Stony Point Women's Health Center.

**Sign up** to receive the "Your Nutrition News" electronic newsletter. To subscribe, please email Mary-Jo Sawyer, Registered Dietician at [msawyer@mcvh-vcu.edu](mailto:msawyer@mcvh-vcu.edu) .

### **Family Life Education**

Classes include Maternity Tour/Healthy Beginnings, Breastfeeding Class, Car Seat Safety, Childbirth Preparation, Infant CPR, Newborn Parenting, and Sibling Class. All classes except for the Sibling Class are for adults only.

To register or for more information, call 828-7929.

### **Centering Pregnancy: A Model for Prenatal Care**

Groups made up of 10-12 women who will all have their babies at the same time. Discussion about pregnancy and how to care for the new baby and in each session moms will have some private time with a midwife, nurse, or doctor. Groups starting at Stony Point Women's Health Center. Contact Ellen Coffin at 628-3042 for more information.

## CURRENT WOMEN'S HEALTH CLINICAL TRIALS AT VCU

*Clinical trials offer individuals the opportunity to participate in research studies that are used to answer specific questions about the safety and efficacy of new medications, new therapies, or new ways of using known treatments. Individuals participate in clinical trials in order to play a more active role in their own health care, gain access to new research treatments before they are widely available, and help others by contributing to medical research in women's health.*

### VCU Mood Disorders Institute

Dr. Susan Kornstein is currently seeking participants for the following research studies:

#### *Decreased Sexual Desire Study*

Has a decrease in sexual desire come between you?

You're invited to see if you may qualify for a medical research study for women concerned about their decreased sexual desire. The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness and safety of an investigational medication for Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder (HSDD). Physicians right in your area are conducting the medical research study.

Qualified participants will receive study medication, medical exams, and lab tests at no charge. Financial compensation for time and travel may also be available.

#### Depression Study

Symptoms of Depression include:

- Feeling sad or depressed
- Loss of interest in activities you used to enjoy
- Feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, or guilt
- Sleeplessness or lack of energy

If you're experiencing these symptoms, are between the ages of 18 and 65 and medically stable, you may qualify to participate. This study is of an FDA approved medication for depression. Study-related research care is provided at no charge to you at our convenient off-campus location.

#### Depression in Peri-Post-Menopausal Women Study

If you are experiencing symptoms of depression and symptoms of menopause No menstrual period for at least 3 months, significant changes in the length of your menstrual cycle, changes in menstrual flow and are between the ages of 40 and 70 and medically stable you may qualify to participate.

#### Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder Study

Do you have severe premenstrual mood changes that disrupt your life at home and work? This study is of an investigational medication for PMDD. Qualified participants must be between the ages of 18 and 48, and not taking a hormonal contraceptive.

All of the above studies are being conducted at the VCU Mood Disorders Clinic. For more information, contact: Maggie Britton, RN, BSN, Clinical Research Coordinator, at **828-5639**.

## **VCU Program for Osteoporosis and Bone Health**

For information on current studies and recruitment contact:

Marian L. Sheppard, BSN, CCRC Research Nurse, Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism VCU Medical Center. Stony Point Office: Phone: 804-237-6620 or call (804) 828-8932 or visit

<http://www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/osteoporosis/index.html>.

## **Physician Supervised Study Recruiting Women**

You may qualify for this study if you:

Have eight (8) or fewer menstrual cycles per year

Are willing to take birth control pills for three (3) months and either Metformin or placebo

Between 18 and 45 years of age, in good health and non-diabetic

Four mornings of testing (over 3 months) are required and monetary compensation provided. For more information call Terre Williams at (804) 828-2663 or Manar Nazmy at (804) 827-0171

## **ABOUT US**

**VCU Institute for Women's Health National Center of Excellence (CoE)** is one of 20 National Centers of Excellence in Women's Health designated in 2003 by the Office on Women's Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The National Centers of Excellence serve as models for the Nation in providing innovative, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and integrated health care systems for women across the lifespan.

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**Charlotte K. Roberts Women's Health Resource Center (WHRC)** provides quality information on health and wellness including prevention, conditions, diseases, and treatments. Information and services are available to anyone at no cost. We are located next to Women's Health Center at Stony Point, and a Community Health Information Specialist is available from 9:30am – 2:30pm  
Stacy Baldwin, Phone: 804-327-8857 or email: [baldwinsm@vcu.edu](mailto:baldwinsm@vcu.edu)

[http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/community/resource\\_center.html](http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/community/resource_center.html)

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