

# Jackson Heart Study News

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*September,*

## From the JHS Director

The journey from idea to reality can be an arduous one, characterized by sweat, tears and joy. The JHS team has carried the *idea* of a novel study of CV disease among African-Americans from the realm of ideas to the living *reality* of a new, exciting venture in American medical research. I thank and congratulate you all for being a part of this accomplishment. Day 1 of the JHS examination is [today] Tuesday, 9/26/00. This is a happy occasion. However, we must remember in the midst of our joy, that we have a charge to keep. We are serving a population in need. We must continue to bring our best talents and our most positive energies to the task of improving health through research, capacity building and education. And we must maintain and encourage an atmosphere of collegiality and respect for everyone on the team.

Finally, we must never forget whom we work for. I do not mean NHLBI, Jackson State, Tougaloo or UMC. We work for the African-American community. And, by extension, we work for all those who will eventually benefit from the better understanding of CV disease that the JHS will help foster.

It is the spirit of service to the human family and the elimination of disparities in health that we embark the Jackson Heart Study examinations upon.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Desk of the JHS Director

	Page
1	
NHLBI August 2000 Report	1-
2	
JHS Exam Center Update	2-
4	
JHS Undergraduate Training Center Update	4-
7	
JHS Coordinating Center Update	7-

8
NHLBI Field Site
8-9
Announcements
9

## National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) August 2000 Report

The NHLBI staff of the National Institutes of Health, Jackson Heart Study (JHS) investigators and Howard University (HU) are exploring collaborative opportunities for genetic research in the JHS. We welcome this important collaboration and value the HU investigators' experience. Several areas for collaboration and involvement of the HU investigators include genetic study design and protocol development, community involvement in genetics, data analysis and publication and training. We look forward to building a strong relationship that will ultimately benefit the African-American community.

Cheryl Nelson from NHLBI-Bethesda conducted a JHS site visit in early September. During her visit she met the newest members of the JHS family, Dr. Daniel Sarpong, Mrs. Donna Antoine-Lavigne, Mrs. Dwan Thomas and the recruitment/clinic staff. Among other activities and discussions, she participated in the JHS pilot test.

**NHLBI News and Press Releases: Excerpts of Other Studies of Interest**  
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/new/index.htm>

### Large Blood Pressure Benefit From Reduced Dietary Sodium: DASH

DASH stands for "Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension". Findings from this NHLBI-supported clinical study were presented at the American Society of Hypertension (ASH) which showed that the lower the amount of sodium in the diet, the lower the blood pressure, for both those with and

without hypertension. The lowest sodium level tested, which produced the lowest blood pressure, was well below the currently recommended intake of 2,400 milligrams a day. Moreover, the effects of reducing sodium occurred with both a diet similar to what many Americans eat and the "DASH diet," which is rich in vegetables, fruits, and low-fat dairy foods and low in saturated fat, total fat, and cholesterol. The greatest blood pressure reduction occurred with the DASH diet at the lowest intake of dietary sodium. The blood pressure reduction occurred in men and women in African-Americans and others.

*NHLBI August 2000 Report Continued Page 2*  
*NHLBI August 2000 Report Continued from Page 1*

## **Systolic Blood Pressure, Deaths, and Treatment Guidelines**

Current guidelines for the prevention and treatment of high blood pressure acknowledge the critically important relationship between systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure and cardiovascular risk. 'This relationship is strong, continuous, graded (and)... predictive...for those with and without coronary heart disease,' notes the Sixth Report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure (JNC VI). The JNC VI was prepared by a multi disciplinary expert panel that reviewed all of the available evidence from not only clinical trials but also from observational studies, basic research, and epidemiological studies - including all of the Framingham data. The totality of evidence found a clear linear relationship between systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure and deaths.

Hypertension, which affects about 50 million Americans, continues to be a major public health issue. Untreated hypertension can damage the kidneys and lead to stroke, heart attack, and heart failure. Treating hypertension can reduce the risk for these conditions. The guidelines state that the presence of other risk factors for coronary heart disease and the presence of atherosclerosis must be considered when deciding whom and how to treat. Each patient must be carefully evaluated and physicians must use their best judgment to make individualized treatment decisions.

## **Treating Hypertension in the Patient with Type 2 Diabetes**

A new clinical advisory issued by the National High Blood Pressure Education Program (NHBPEP) recommends that physicians pursue a more aggressive treatment approach to lower the blood pressure of patients who have both hypertension and diabetes. The NHBPEP is coordinated by the NHLBI of National Institutes of Health.

Both diabetes and hypertension are independent risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD). The advisory indicates that the coexistence of these conditions in a patient imposes a need for a significantly lower goal blood pressure (135/80 mm Hg) than the goal blood pressure recommended for a patient with hypertension who does not have diabetes

(140/90 mm Hg). Over 5 million Americans have type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. Uncontrolled hypertension leads to stroke, heart and kidney failure. It is clear that the combination of these two CVD risk factors has important public health implications.

NHLBI issued a clinical advisory to draw attention to the problem of high systolic blood pressure. This new report is part of a series of clinical advisories being issued by NHLBI to raise health professional and consumer awareness of the health dangers posed by high blood pressure. Systolic blood pressure is now recognized to be the most important indicator of heart disease risk in adults age 60 and older.

Page 2  
Page 2

The authors of the new advisory note results from several studies showing that efforts to lower high blood pressure in patients with type 2 diabetes produce dramatic results (fewer diabetes-related strokes, fewer cases of small blood vessel damage due to diabetes, and fewer diabetes-related deaths).

## **Surgeon General David Satcher to Help Launch Innovative Heart Disease Prevention Program**

**Hearts N' Parks**, an innovative community-based initiative that teaches people of all ages how to incorporate heart-healthy eating and physical activity into their lives, was launched at a special event in the Washington, DC area. The heart-healthy program included cooking demonstrations, race walking and tennis clinics, jump rope demonstration, blood pressure screening, and a seniors' group concert. Hearts N' Parks is co-sponsored by the NHLBI of the NIH, and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

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## **JHS Exam Center Update**

The Exam Center (EC) has been a beehive of activity in recent months. The investigators and staff have focused their effort on completing protocols, moving existing staff to the newly developed space, hiring the recruitment and clinic staff, and ordering the equipment and furnishings needed for the clinic.

We are very excited about the staff that Sonja Fuqua, Director of Recruitment and Dwan Thomas, Clinic Manager, have brought to the Jackson Heart Study. To provide support to the recruitment staff is **Lendora Love-Frith**, Administrative Secretary. She joined the JHS EC Recruitment Department in September. Len transferred from the School of Health Related Professions, Department of

Cytotechnology at UMC. She brings over 20 years of administrative skills and experience. Len received her certification in Intensive Clerical Training from Hinds Junior College and was attracted to the JHS because of the positive research it offers to the African- American community.

### Meet the JHS Recruiters...

The Jackson Heart Study recruiters are anxious to meet you! As we proceed with the pre-pilot and pilot for the study, you may expect one of them to knock on your door soon.

**Keisha Jones** comes to us from the Research Department at UMMC. She earned a B.S. in Psychology from the University of Southern Mississippi.

*EC Update Continued Page 3*

*EC Update Continued from Page 2*

**Makeaba Latiker** joins us from one of our collaborative institutions, Tougaloo College. She holds a B.A. degree in Sociology from Tougaloo and has completed her course work for a Master's degree in Sociology/Criminal Justice at JSU.

**Zebbie Johnson** transferred from UMMC's Nursing Administration Office. She has a B.S. degree in Social Work from JSU. She has all requirements except thesis defense for a Master's degree in Sociology.

**Clara Funches** worked for the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services prior to joining the JHS. Clara holds a B. S. degree in Psychology from JSU.

**Sababu Rashid** is a native Jacksonian who holds a B.A. degree in Special Education from JSU. Sababu has been an active participant in one of the focus groups that brought forth the concerns of the community about "research".

Each recruiter brings something special to the Jackson Heart Study. They are eager to meet with you to give you an opportunity to live a day in the life of a participant. We all can help establish a "Legacy of Health" and ensure the success of the JHS by completing the home induction interview and examination when the recruiter calls upon us.

### Meet the JHS Clinic Staff...

**Dwan Siggers Thomas** joined the Jackson Heart Study in May as the Clinic Manager. A Certified Family Nurse Practitioner, Dwan earned both B.S. and M.S. degrees in Nursing from the University of Mississippi. She brings to the JHS over eight years of nursing experience. As a graduate student, Dwan participated in research projects that included the ARIC Study and JHS Participant Recruitment and

Retention Survey. As you will see, Dwan has been very busy recruiting a very talented and experienced staff for the clinic!

**Demetrius Bliss**, Laboratory Tech, joined the Exam Center staff in July. Demetrius brings to the JHS over 25 years of health care experience that includes extensive phlebotomy and ECG skills. She was attracted to study because of the unending opportunities for professional growth and interactions with new people.

**Cora Champion**, Vascular Technologist, joined the Exam Center staff in August as one of the four imaging technicians. Cora transferred from the University of Mississippi Medical Center's Utilization Review Department where she served as a LPN. Cora initially joined the Medical Center's staff in April 1971 at the Heart Station. It was this job that fueled Cora's fascination for the heart and this fascination fuels the excitement that she exemplifies in being a part of such a historic study.

Page 3

Page 3

**Kathy Cousin**, Laboratory Tech, joined the Exam Center staff in July. Having worked six years on a cardiac step-down unit at an area hospital, she brings to the JHS varied experiences and skills. Kathy attended Moore Career College where she received her certification as a nursing assistant.

**Tara Harding**, Registered Diagnostic Cardiac Sonographer, joined the Exam Center staff in August. She received her training in sonography from the Stanford and Brown Institute in Ohio. She brings to the JHS combined experiences and skills with both carotid ultrasounds and echocardiography.

**Patricia Hayes**, LPN II, joined the Exam Center staff in July after transferring from UMC's hospital. Patricia brings to the JHS over ten years of experience as a nurse. She received her nursing training from Holmes Community College.

**Sarah McGee**, Registered Diagnostic Cardiac Sonographer, joined the Exam Center staff in July. Sarah brings to the JHS over sixteen years of varied cardiology experience, which includes skills in performing not only echos, but also EKG's, holter monitoring, stress tests and cardiac catheterizations.

**Celestine Moore**, LPN, joined the Exam Center staff in July. She brings to the JHS over twenty-two years of diversified nursing experience. She received her nursing education from Hinds Junior College where she also acquired her certification as a clerk typist. Celestine eagerly welcomes

the opportunity to mold history and impact the lives of millions of African Americans.

**Rosemary Willis-Jones**, RN, joined the Exam Center staff in July. Employed at UMC since 1987, she brings to the JHS an expansive intensive care nursing background. Rosemary received her nursing education at Hinds Community College. She readily admits that she was drawn to the JHS because of the impact it will have on the future health care of Mississippi's African-Americans as well as those nationwide.

**Melanie Bradley**, Registered Diagnostic Cardiac Sonographer, joined the Exam Center in late August. Melanie transferred from the Medical Center's Cardiology Services where she assisted in the training of the cardiology fellows in echocardiography. She holds a B.A. degree in Sociology from the University of New Orleans and was the first cardiac sonographer at UMC to receive her registry from the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers, the most recognized nation-wide registry. She is experienced in both adult and pediatric echocardiography, as well as pharmaceutical stress echoes, transesophageal

*EC Update Continued Page 4*

*EC Update Continued from Page 3*

echocardiography, holter monitoring and EKG's. Melanie began her cardiovascular career in 1987 and has trained at West Jefferson Medical Center in New Orleans; St. John Mercy Hospital in St. Louis Missouri; Mayo Clinic in Rochester Minnesota; and Ochsner Clinic in New Orleans.

**Sylvia Barker**, Registered Medical Laboratory Technician (ASCP), joined the Exam Center staff in September. Sylvia attended Laredo Jr. College in Laredo, Texas where she received her Associate of Science and Arts Degree. She has maintained certification with the American Society of Clinical Pathology since 1976. She has worked as a MLT in Mississippi at various hospitals and reference laboratories for over 17 years. She eagerly joins the new team and offers great insight for cultural diversity.

**Olivia Rahaim**, Registered Dietitian, joined the Exam Center staff in September. She received her B.S. degree in Dietetics and a M.S. degree in Health Promotion Administration from Mississippi State University. Olivia is excited about this opportunity, and she will be working with the Diet and Physical Activity substudy.

### **Team of ARIC Participants Collaborate with the Jackson Heart Study**

ARIC participants are already coming together to

make sure that members of the Jackson community are willing to join the JHS family. Calling themselves the Council of Elders (COE), this group of eight ARIC participants will be

working with EC Recruitment and Retention staff to ensure that the community has first-hand information about taking part in this research. The name, Council of Elders, reflects the important role of elder members of the JHS family in bringing new members into the study. **We are pleased to introduce this very important group...**

**Mrs. Margie Cunningham** has been with ARIC since 1989. She retired from Jackson State University in 1982 after 33 years of service. She was an Assistant Professor in the School of Business, Department of Business Education.

**Mr. William Harkless** retired from the Mississippi Employment Security Commission in 1998. Both he and his wife have been with ARIC since 1990.

Working with transportation assistance is **Mr. Percy Hobson**. He has been with ARIC since '87 and is a retired truck driver.

**George and Margaree Johnson** have been with ARIC since the beginning (1987). Mr Johnson was maintenance supervisor at the Eastover Bank Building. Mrs.

Page 4

Page 4

Johnson is a retired registered nurse. She donned her white uniform at both University of Mississippi Medical Center and the Jackson Health Center.

**Mrs. Evelyn Jones** is also a retired registered nurse. She served as the Chief of Health Facilities Licensing and Certification in the Michigan Department of Public Health.

**Dr. William White** is the Associate Dean of the School of Science and Technology at Jackson State University. He has been with ARIC since 1987.

**Mrs. Ruby Winters**, Mrs. Evelyn Jones' sister, is the third registered nurse on the COE. She retired from UMMC in '87 after over 30 years. She has been with ARIC for years.

In preparation for the JHS, the Council has participated in the hiring and training of the recruiters that will be going to the homes of potential JHS participants. Additionally, the Council is organizing many volunteer activities to help assure participation in the study. We look forward to their continued support and involvement.

# JHS Undergraduate Training Center Update (UTC)

If summer 2000 is any indication of things to come, then surely we will have another banner year at Tougaloo College; and more importantly, successful results from the initiatives and programs associated with our role as a partner in the Jackson Heart Study. The responsibilities of the Undergraduate Training Center have truly become more evident to our immediate constituencies such as students, trustees, faculty, staff and our associates in the public health arena, but the community-at-large is more aware of this critical study and the impact it will have on our citizenry. That is just a small portion of our good news.

Regretfully, I must at this time reflect on the tremendous loss of one of our colleagues at the end of last year. As many of you may be aware, Dr. Bam D. Mehrotra died suddenly in November 1999 after suffering a heart attack. The death of this pioneering contributor to the Heart Study Partnership and its subsequent programs at Tougaloo touched all of us. He had spent more than 30 years of his life teaching, and serving as an administrator and mentor in the Natural Sciences Division. He also held a teaching and service position with the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Dr. Mehrotra was JHS Principal Investigator for Tougaloo and Director of the JHS Undergraduate Training Center. Under his leadership, we witnessed the planning stages; the

*UTC Update Continued Page 5*

*UTC Update Continued from Page 4*

establishment and implementation of the six-week epidemiology course; the JHS Summer Outreach Program for High School Students; and the selection of the first Jackson Heart Study Scholars. He also exemplified this kind of dedication, leadership and vision in his scholarship and service at the College; and in his involvement in civic and community affairs, both in Mississippi and across the nation. He surely will be missed, but his legacy will remain with us, and in the hearts of the many students whose lives he touched.

Additionally, we are proud to acknowledge the awarding of the first Bam D. Mehrotra Scholarship during Honors Day 2000 held in April this year. This Scholarship was established last December to pay tribute to Dr. Mehrotra's legacy here at Tougaloo and beyond its boundaries.

A new year also brought the challenge of locating a new director for the JHS UTC at Tougaloo. Asoka Srinivasan, Ph.D., Biology Department Chair and longtime Tougaloo professor and administrator in the Natural Science's Division, was appointed to the position. His

impressive credentials include extensive academic, research and administrative experience in the Natural Sciences Division at Tougaloo; the B.S. from the University of Mysore, India; the Ph.D. in Entomology from the University of California-Berkeley; and the MBA from Millsaps College in Jackson, MS. He has been actively involved in numerous research projects over the years with the National Science Foundation and the Agricultural Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. In 1970, he was named a Faculty Fellow at Harvard University.

Dr. Srinivasan has also served as a trail blazing director, educator and mentor with two of our most successful programs for young aspiring scientists, the Minority High School Research Apprentice Program and the Minority Biomedical Research Support Program (MBRS). I am indeed pleased that, at such short notice, Dr. Srinivasan humbly accepted this appointment for such a critical position in the Jackson Heart Study Partnership.

Our first Jackson Heart Study Scholars selected October '99 have just completed a dynamic year of classes, including introductions to public health and epidemiology, biostatistics, and research methods. Their activities included attending Tougaloo and JHS colloquia and mentoring high school students during the summer outreach initiatives. Again, we congratulate Fanisha Wynne, Michond Cooper, Kimberly Walker, Coretta Cohran and Jana Davis.

In April, Tougaloo was indeed honored to welcome Dr. Neil Powe to the campus and our community as a JHS visiting professor. Faculty, staff and students enjoyed the healthy exchange of ideas and recommendations for retention

and recruitment of minority medical students and related issues. Dr. Powe, a noted epidemiologist and expert in cardiovascular health, is Director of the Welch Center for Prevention, Epidemiology and Clinical Research at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD.

While the College prepared for another triumphant Commencement weekend, Dr. Herman Taylor and other colleagues were planning one of the most significant health conferences in the nation. Thanks to Dr. Taylor's vision and leadership, the Jackson Heart Study surely gleaned extensive national and global attention through the Capacity Building for Research in Minority Health Conference in early May. This event enabled us to showcase some of the progress and programs at the College, particularly the ongoing work of the UTC and our long-term partnership with Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. One of the key themes of the

conference was collaboration between large research intensive universities and historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). A few years ago, The Tougaloo/Brown Relationship, now more than 30 years old, was cited as a national model for building partnerships to increase the number of minorities in research and public health. Some of the key factors leading to this designation were longevity, mutual benefits for faculty and students, and overall success in graduating well-equipped students to pursue degrees in research and medicine.

I hope you will join us in extending high praises to the more than 15% of the graduating class of 2000, who received their degrees in May and are now headed off to medical schools and highly acclaimed research programs throughout the country. As I conclude, thanks again to the assistance of staff and leadership of the JHS partnering institutions who helped make Tougaloo's Summer Outreach for High School Students (June) and the Six-Week Epidemiology Course (July), two more excellent achievements for the College and the citizens of our community. I can not say too often how the initiatives associated with our role as the UTC in the unprecedented Jackson Heart Study further strengthens our capacity as a global and national resource. Thus, Tougaloo can continue to focus on its mission to build, not just a college, but a foundation for the future.

Joe A. Lee, Ph.D.  
President  
Tougaloo College

#### **Report from the JHS UTC**

UTC is pleased to announce that it has relocated its office to Sarah Dickey Hall on the Tougaloo College campus. This

*UTC Update Continued Page 6*

*UTC Update Continued from Page 5*

facility has four offices for the UTC staff, a classroom which can seat about 20 students, a computer lab which will house 12 computers, and a seminar/conference room that can accommodate about 12 people. We are also pleased to introduce the following UTC staff to you:

**Dr. Asoka Srinivasan**, Principal Investigator (PI), Professor of Biology and a 30-year veteran at Tougaloo College was named in January to replace Dr. Mehrotra as PI. Dr. Srinivasan is also the Director of the Minority Biomedical Research Support (MBRS) Program and is involved in the study of the reproductive physiology of insects.

**Dr. Luenda Charles**, Co-PI, joined the UTC staff in May. She has a PhD in Epidemiology from University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. In addition to teaching the course in epidemiology/public health this fall, she will coordinate the work of the JHS Scholars. She has been busy this summer exploring internship placements for the JHS Scholars during the summer in the Jackson area.

**Dr. Nimr Fahmy**, Co-Investigator and Associate Professor of Mathematics, teaches the biostatistics course, maintains all the computer hardware, software and the database for UTC student participants, including the evaluation forms. He is working with Dr. Michael Andrew to develop data sets from the ARIC data for use in the biostatistics course. He also helped to coordinate the six-day epidemiology course during the summer.

**Dr. Hussain Al-Fahdli**, Co-Investigator and Associate Professor of Sociology, teaches the research methods course. He is currently enrolled in the public health and epidemiology courses to gain the necessary background to not only teach the course but also to help the JHS Scholars in their research projects. He along with Dr. Charles attended the 2-day Workshop on Clinical Trials conducted by the UMC in July.

**Ms. Beverly Kelly**, UTC Program Assistant, played a crucial role in maintaining continuity of the program during the two-month period following the death of Dr. Mehrotra and the appointment of Dr. Srinivasan. Beverly had a key role in recruiting students for the high school outreach course. She visited 25 area schools and her efforts were reflected in the large number of applications received this year for the four-week high school outreach course.

**Roderick Jordan**, Sample Coordinator, joined the UTC staff in August. Roderick earned his B.S. degree from Jackson State University (JSU) in May '00. He is currently

enrolled at JSU in the Masters of Public Health Program with his concentration in Health Care Administration. He expects to

Page 6  
Page 6

graduate in May 2002.

**Gary A. Wynter**, Sample Coordinator, joined the UTC staff in August also. Gary has a B.A. degree in Psychology from JSU and is currently attending JSU, pursuing his M.S., ED in Guidance and Counseling. He expects to graduate in May 2001.

### **High School Outreach Program --“Investigations in Life Sciences Course”**

This course was offered for the second time this summer from June 5-30, 2000 and 36 area high school students participated. Beverly Kelly recruited students at 25 area high schools to insure a good application pool from which eligible students were selected. The UTC staff also hosted a dinner for the area high school science teachers. As a result of our efforts we recruited 75 well-qualified applicants from which 36 were selected. All the instructors who taught in the program last year were of the opinion that this group of students was more diligent, motivated, and hard working than last year's recruits. Of the 36 students 1 was a 12<sup>th</sup> grader, 10 were 11<sup>th</sup> graders, 18 were 10<sup>th</sup> graders and 7 were 9<sup>th</sup> graders from 16 different schools. During the middle of the session, a dinner was hosted for the students and their parents to encourage them to send their children back to next summer's program. The parents were informed regarding the significance of the Jackson Heart Study.

### **Six-Day Epidemiology Course**

This course was offered for the third time this summer, July 10-15. It was again taught by Professor Moyses Szklo of Johns Hopkins University, ably assisted by two of his graduate students Ms. Michelle Tarvar-Carr and Dr. Alafia Samuels. There were 29 students enrolled in this course, 25 females and 4 males; 9 of them were from out of state. Thanks to the wonderful job done by Dr. Szklo and his assistants, this program was very well received.

### **JHS Scholars**

Coretta Cohran, Michond Cooper, Jana Davis, Kimberly Walker and Fanisha Wynne were selected in October 1999 to be the first JHS Scholars. These students were mentored during the 1999-2000 academic year by Dr. Gail

Hughes. During the summer they served as tutors in the High School Outreach Program and also worked with Dr. Fahmy to learn the details of using the ARIC data. They will continue as JHS Scholars this year. We will be selecting 10 additional JHS Scholars this fall primarily from the new first year class.

*UTC Update Continued Page 7*

*UTC Update Continued from Page 6*

### **Plans for 2000-01**

We will continue to offer the epidemiology/public health and the biostatistics courses and also develop the research methods course. In the very near future we will install the computers in the UTC computer laboratory.

We have requested approval to develop a strategic plan for the three High School Outreach Programs. This plan will help us to set clear goals for each of the three programs and also to coordinate the summer course content with the high school curriculum. Such a plan will greatly enhance the usefulness of the summer courses to the students. We are also working on developing a course in medicine, technology and ethics. This is in the early stages of planning, and we hope to submit a proposal to NHLBI for approval before the end of September.

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## **JHS Coordinating Center (CC) Update**

We are pleased to introduce the newest additions to the JSU CC staff. **Daniel Sarpong, Ph.D.** joined the JHS as biostatistician on August 1. His professional credentials include a B.Sc. (Hons.) Degree, a MS in mathematics and a Ph.D. in biometry (Major: biostatistics and Minor: epidemiology). During the last 12 years he taught and conducted research at Dillard University (Assistant Professor of Mathematics) and Xavier University (Assistant and then Associate Professor of Biostatistics in the College of Pharmacy).

Dr. Sarpong also worked and consulted with a community-based organization federally-funded to participate in an HIV/AIDS and Substance Abuse Demonstration Project. His research publications in the past have been diverse. In the past three years his focus has been on the application of pharmacoeconomics/health economics and outcomes research to health problems that disproportionately affect underrepresented and underserved populations.

Originally from Ghana, Dr. Sarpong relocated to Jackson from New Orleans, LA where he lived for the past 15 years. He is married and has two boys. His role and participation in a number of community organizations, some of international caliber, is indicative of his strong belief in service and community. As a professional and motivational speaker, an educator and researcher, he believes in investing in the

Page 7  
Page 7

intellectual and social development of our children because they are the wisdom of our nation. Acting, speaking, listening to music, dancing, reading positive and motivational materials, and working with the needy are his hobbies. Dr. Sarpong's remark about JHS is that he is excited about being a part of the Jackson Heart Study and it is his fervent desire and goal to intellectually and passionately make a significant contribution to its mission and goals.

**Ms. Donna Antoine-LaVigne**, joined the Jackson Heart Study in July, 2000, as the Community Mobilization Outreach Coordinator. A Pass Christian, Mississippi native, Donna refers to Jackson as her second home, having lived in Jackson for thirty years. Previously with the JSU School of Allied Health Sciences as a Senior Visiting Instructor of Health Care Administration, Donna states that she is prepared for the challenge of fast-tracking the community mobilization component of the Jackson Heart Study. Donna is a graduate of Jackson State University, where she earned her B.A. in Sociology and M.S.Ed. in Counseling. She received the Master of Public Health degree in 1980 from the University of California, Berkeley, CA. Returning to Mississippi in 1980, she was instrumental in developing the Division of Children and Youth Services for the MS Department of Mental Health. In 1989 Donna served as a consultant to the Mississippi Department of Health where she developed the State HIV/AIDS Care and Services Plan. Her career in health and human services has spanned approximately twenty-five years. Many of those years have been and continue to be devoted to working towards improving the quality of life in targeted communities professionally and as a volunteer. Additionally, Donna has practiced as a mental health clinician; served as a consultant/contractor/reviewer to numerous organizations (state and federal agencies) which includes American Medical Response; The MS Departments of Health, Human Services and Rehabilitation Services; Region IV Head Start Programs, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (OSAP); presently Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP). She is a former Vice President of the Jackson Branch NAACP, a member of The Jackson Chapter of Links, Inc., former United Way Volunteer, and Children's Health Insurance Program advocate. Donna is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the area of

Health Care Administration. In her leisure time, she enjoys foreign travel, reading, swimming and shopping. Donna has one son Sean, whom she describes as the "eternal joy" of her life.

## CC Overview

The Jackson Heart Study Coordinating Center (Jackson State University-JSU) is one of three contributing partners to the JHS effort. Because of JSU's major role in

*CC Update Continued Page 8*

*CC Update Continued from Page 7*

the Jackson Heart Study, credible African-American representation is provided at a local level. The CC also has the responsibility of providing on-going updates of the purpose, process and results of the JHS and proactively providing various preventive health-related information to the community. Another important goal of the CC is to assist medical professionals in their understanding, diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular disease in African-Americans. The study results will be processed as efficiently as possible and provided to the medical community with the intent of identifying why African-Americans have such a high risk of cardiovascular disease.

The specific objectives of the JSU Coordinating Center, its goals and objectives are to develop community and business partnerships with the intent of supporting JHS and its mission to efficiently process, edit, archive, and protect all information collected on the individual participants in the JHS. In collaborating with the JHS Examination Center the CC will insure the integrity and confidentiality of the data and the persons participating in the study. The CC will provide computer equipment and software for all JHS efforts to collect and maintain the electronic data files for the JHS. Another objective of the Coordinating Center is to participate in the process of summarizing the findings of the JHS by providing statistical analyses of the JHS data files and to participate in the authorship of scientific reports. The CC will insure that the JHS results are presented in a manner that is enlightening to the African-American community with the intent of improving the quality of life and health among African-Americans nationwide.

## Other CC News

The CC is featuring the artwork of Cyrus Webb, a local artist in the corridor of the JHS Administrative Office.

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, the American Public Health Association accepted six (6) abstracts submitted by the CC,

four of which were submitted by Dr. Clifton Addison, Statistical Programmer, Jackson State University entitled:

"Dietary Practices of African-American High School Students in Mississippi", "Tobacco Use by African-American High School Students in Mississippi", "Profile of Physical Fitness and Physical Activity of African-Americans", and "Perceptions of Overweight Among African-American High School Students".

The manuscript submitted by Dr. Gail Hughes was entitled "The Effect of Oscillating Male Migration on Rural South African Women's Health: Implications for Sexually Transmitted Diseases".

Page 8

Page 8

Kwanza Williams' manuscript was entitled: "Using Innovative Communication Strategies to Educate Inaccessible African-American Males of CVD Risk Factors".

## Research Forum

The Jackson Heart Study Research Forum welcomes participation. The Forum, an informal monthly meeting, is held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month in the Conference Room at the Jackson Heart Study Office in the Jackson Medical Mall, 350 West Woodrow Wilson Drive, Jackson. The Forum is a nuts-and-bolts session with the following format:

1. A "Journal Club" style review of a paper focusing on ARIC in order to better understand what has been done with the data base already and where the opportunities for further development are.
2. A review of approved manuscript proposals and status reports.
3. A discussion of "How-to Issues" from the most basic research tools and concepts to basic clinical issues, identifying barriers to getting the work done and demystifying the research/publication process and creating a nurturing, non-intimidating atmosphere for those at various levels of development of their skills. In other words, THERE ARE NO "DUMB QUESTIONS". All questions are encouraged. Every one is an expert at something; everyone is a novice at something as well.
4. An open discussion/brainstorming.

## NHLBI Field Site

Last February we were very pleased to welcome Dr. Evelyn Walker as Medical Officer for the NHLBI Jackson Field Site. Her arrival has effectively doubled our staff size and our potential for contributing to the JHS. As a matter of introduction, she is a family physician who had practiced in the Jackson area for ten years prior to joining the JHS. One of her desired roles in the study is to provide a source of linkage with the community (both lay and medical) using health education/awareness as an avenue. She is married to Royal Walker and they have two daughters, Kristina and Kandace. Evelyn's interests include spending time with her daughters and husband, sewing, cooking and decorating. She is a life-long resident of Mississippi, born and raised in the delta. Her higher education commenced with the 1978 Health Sciences Summer Program at Tougaloo College, continued

*NHLBI Field Site Continued Page 9*

*NHLBI Field Site Continued from Page 8*

with graduation from Delta State University and the University of Mississippi School of Medicine. She completed a family medicine residency at UMC as well. Her career has previously involved delivering health care in the Hinds County Health Department, Jackson-Hinds Comprehensive Health Center, MEA Clinics and the UMC Primary Care Clinics. Prior research involvement includes serving as a principal investigator for one of the ALLHAT Vanguard sites at the Jackson-Hinds Comprehensive Health Center. Evelyn has a sincere interest in contributing to the betterment of health conditions of the underserved and sees her involvement in the JHS as a unique opportunity to provide such a contribution.

She developed a health education plan that describes how the NHLBI Field Site staff could be involved in health education efforts. Community Mobilization staff are currently revising earlier drafts to develop an integrated overall JHS Health Education Plan. Communication has been established with Dr. Greg Morosco in NHLBI's Office of Prevention, Education, and Control who will be providing useful health education resource materials in this effort. The field site members have been involved in providing health-related presentations to the community including several to health center staff and within the faith community.

We were very fortunate to have Ms. Valerie Robinson join us this summer through a college student program supported by NHLBI. She is a recent Tougaloo College graduate who plans to pursue a MPH degree in epidemiology at Mercer University this fall. She has been extremely helpful to a number of JHS investigators and staff and provided valuable assistance with a wide variety of

projects. We wish her the very best in her graduate education and future career.

## Announcements

**Jackson Cardiovascular-Renal Meeting 2000  
November 8-11, 2000, Jackson, Mississippi**

The Center for Excellence in Cardiovascular-Renal Research of the University of Mississippi Medical Center invites you to participate in an international meeting of basic science, clinical, and epidemiology researchers. Meeting topics include physiological genomics, vascular pathophysiology, hypertension, heart failure, stroke, kidney disease, and cardiovascular disease in African-Americans. The meeting will feature state-of-the-art lectures, "Hot Topics" papers, and poster sessions led by international experts in cardiovascular and kidney research. Investigators in all areas of cardiovascular-renal research are encouraged to submit abstracts. The meeting is endorsed by The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, The Council for High Blood Pressure Research, American Heart Association, The American Society

Page 9  
Page 9

of Hypertension and The American Physiological Society. The full program can be found at <http://cecr.umsmed.edu>.

For more information, contact:

Meeting Secretariat, Kathy Brailey.

Fax: 601-984-1817

email: [kbrailey@physiology.umsmed.edu](mailto:kbrailey@physiology.umsmed.edu)

### Research Training Appointments

The JHS has formed a subcommittee to develop guidelines to allow individuals to participate as interns with the study. The appointments will be for level ranging from high school to doctoral students, to post-doctoral and visiting scholars. Currently, appointments are likely to not be financially compensated, but students at any of the three collaborating institutions may be able to get course credit through the appropriate academic procedures. The subcommittee Chair is Dr. Mary Lou Gutierrez-Mohamed, Assistant Professor of Public Health at the Jackson State University School of Allied Health Sciences, and Co-Investigator of the JHS Coordinating Center.

The committee will meet every first Thursday of the month from 10-11 a.m. at the JSU School of Allied Health Sciences, beginning September 7<sup>th</sup>. Investigators and faculty at the collaborating institutions who have time to provide

opportunities for research should contact Dr. Mohamed at [mmohamed@mail1.jsums.edu](mailto:mmohamed@mail1.jsums.edu), (601) 364-1197.

The appointments should allow for mentors to get needed research assistance, but also provide a formal opportunity for interns to gain knowledge and hands-on research experience. The research appointments will be initiated by investigators/faculty/staff who have a specific project. A request should be submitted to the Chair of the RTA Committee specifying the academic level of intern, length of training appointment, scope of project, learning objectives with the responsibilities outlined and work hours of the intern, preceptor and research appointments through the JHS Web Page and the academic institutions. The role of the committee will be as follows:

- 1) to develop guidelines and make recommendations to the JHS Steering Committee;
- 2) to facilitate placement of interns in research training appointments;
- 3) to develop standardized training manuals for all levels;
- 4) to ensure that all interns are provided instruction on the conduct of ethical research;
- 5) to develop and submit proposals for training grants.



