

MIND • MATTERS



Desi Sims, PRI research assistant, talks with a youth enrolled in Delta PROMISE.

Delta PROMISE Provides Intervention for Teens at Risk

Driving west into the Arkansas side of the Mississippi Delta, the lush green fields of rice, soybeans, and cotton might prompt a visitor to comment on their beauty. However, the richness of the land is a sharp contrast to the poverty, unemployment, teen pregnancy, substance use, drop-out rates and homelessness faced daily by teenagers like Marco, Justin, Davis and Dwayne.* These young men live in Helena-West Helena and are enrolled in a new federally funded program called "Delta PROMISE."

Delta PROMISE (Positive Reinforcement of Minors to Increase Self Esteem) is a collaborative effort between the UAMS Psychiatric Research Institute and Counseling Services of Eastern Arkansas. Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Delta PROMISE began providing substance use treatment services to adolescents in Lee and Phillips counties in March. The program is designed to divert youth and their caregivers to positive activities, while decreasing

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PRI RESEARCH:

Contributing to a Knowledge-based Economy

In the last two decades the economy in the United States has undergone a shift from industrial to knowledge- and idea-based. A key factor in the success of a knowledge-based economy is the support of research and development which includes federal support for research. In fiscal year 2007, PRI had over \$10 million in direct costs from state, federal, and veteran's administration grants.

The essential component of obtaining grants and successfully operating research projects is the researchers and their staff. In the case of the PRI Center for Addiction Research, five Ph.D. researchers have been recruited in the past four years to our state in

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UAMS

**PSYCHIATRIC
RESEARCH INSTITUTE**
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES



G. Richard Smith, M.D.

Dear Friends of Psychiatry and the Psychiatric Research Institute,

In the summer issue, we celebrated the work we have all done to raise the money to build the PRI. In July, the PRI and the new UAMS hospital expansion held a joint topping out ceremony and celebration (see page 7). This was significant for two reasons.

First, the PRI will physically be connected to the hospital at its northeast corner. There will be many benefits to this in terms of food services, educational and research collaborations. Most importantly, our patients will be able to easily access the new hospital, its many services and the rest of campus.

Second, patient care will connect us with the new hospital. The opportunities for continuity of care that our proximity to the new hospital will offer will be unparalleled for psychiatric care in our state and much of the nation. With the opening of our new inpatient units, we will be accepting many patients who will initially be seen in the emergency room. For other patients who have physical health care needs in addition to emotional ones, patients and clinicians will be able to coordinate care with other UAMS providers.

I frequently hear stories of those who have some medical issue that needs immediate attention, then when that is improved, a mental health need arises. For example, after an elderly man who fell and broke his hip had surgery and physical rehabilitation, the family noticed some cognitive changes that our neuropsychologist identified and treated. A young adult who survived a car wreck also faced a battle with anxiety and substance abuse. A middle-aged woman who was to have months of chemotherapy also needed help for depression. We know that mental illnesses do not always occur in isolation, and our relationship with the hospital and the rest of campus can only improve care for our patients.

Since we do stand to benefit in so many ways from the other new construction on campus, I urge you to continue the momentum of giving that has enabled us to raise the money for the PRI and help support the new hospital in its fundraising campaign. You can get more information on page 3 of this issue.

I hope you enjoy the information in this issue on our grants and our researchers. They are able to do their work because of the support of each of you. Together we are putting in motion our mission of improving treatment for people with mental disorders and their families.

Best wishes,

G. Richard Smith, M.D.

Profiles on Three PRI Researchers

Catherine Stanger, Ph.D.

Moved to Little Rock from?
Vermont

Family: Married to Alan Budney, Ph.D., three kids: Kate, 8, attends Gibbs Magnet School; Charlie, 13, attends Dunbar Gifted and Talented International Studies Middle School; and Sarah, 15, attends the Arkansas School for Science, Mathematics and the Arts.

What has been surprising about living in Arkansas? Gardening in February!

How did you get interested in focusing on addiction research?

I am a child psychologist, trained in developmental psychopathology. I have always been primarily interested in externalizing problems, such as conduct problems, in children. Substance abuse can be conceptualized as a kind of conduct problem. And having a husband who is an addiction researcher didn't hurt.

My research assistants would say that I ...have high expectations.

What other passions do you have outside of work? I have a husband and three very busy children, ages 8 to 15 and a full-time job. That pretty much says it all.

What are your favorite things to do to relax? Reading, spending time with my children, gardening and exercise.

Three words that describe you?
Smart, loyal, kind.



Catherine Stanger, Ph.D.



Alan Budney, Ph.D.



Warren Bickel, Ph.D.

Alan Budney, Ph.D.

What are your favorite things to do to relax? Golf, theater, exercise, running, basketball, attending sports events, maybe gardening....not sure if gardening is relaxing or not.

How did you get interested in focusing on addiction research?

A wonderful professor, Barbara McCrady, provided me with the opportunity as I was searching for a meaningful area of study.

What other passions do you have outside of addiction research?

Golf, college football, going to the theater, attending and participating in kids' activities.

My research assistants would say that I....they can't believe I get anything done given my apparent disorganization and lack of awareness.

Three words to describe you?

Type A, Type B, Type C....

Warren Bickel, Ph.D.

Moved to Little Rock from? Richmond, Vermont

Family: Married to Rebecca Esch, Ph.D., three kids: Layla, 6, attends North Little Rock Montessori School; Corena, 15, attends Parkview Arts and Sciences Magnet High School; Keefer, 17, attends the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville.

What is your favorite thing to do to relax? Play guitar.

How did you get interested in focusing on addiction research?

When I was growing up and in college, I saw several people get caught up into addiction and wanted

to see what I could do to help by understanding the process that leads to addiction.

What other passions do you have outside of addiction research? Guitars, jazz, novel ideas and notions.

My research assistants would say that I....like a lot of data

Three words to describe you? Creative, intense and driven (in a relaxed sort of way).



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UAMS Faculty Honored for Teaching



Psychiatry faculty John Spollen, M.D. (left) and Puru Thapa, M.D. with the Dean of the College of Medicine, Debra Fiser, M.D.

UAMS Chancellor I. Dodd Wilson, M.D., recently recognized thirteen faculty members from four of UAMS' five colleges and the Graduate School for their teaching accomplishments. From the College of Medicine, two of the three awards were given to Department of Psychiatry faculty.

John Spollen, M.D., and **Puru Thapa, M.D., M.P.H.**, were both awarded the Chancellor's Faculty Teaching Award.

Spollen is an associate professor of psychiatry and vice chairman for education in the Department of Psychiatry. He joined the UAMS faculty in 1999. His passion in academics has always been medical student education. He has been the director or co-director of the psychiatry junior clerkship since 2000, lectures in the behavioral science course, is a small group leader for medical ethics, and recently became the director for the UAMS College of Medicine Teaching Skills Project.

Thapa is an assistant professor of psychiatry and training director of the Teaching Unit at the Arkansas State Hospital, where psychiatry residents and junior medical students train. His awards from students and residents include the College of Medicine's Golden Apple Award in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006, the Gold Sash Award in 2007, and Master Teacher Award in 2006, as well as the Department of Psychiatry's Outstanding Teaching in Residency Education in Psychiatry award in 2003 and 2005, and the Robert Shannon Award for Outstanding Contribution to Psychiatry Education in Arkansas. Thapa also was a finalist for the 2006 Humanism in Medicine Award by the Association of American Medical Colleges based on votes from students of the UAMS College of Medicine.

Current PRI Research Projects include:

General Mental Health Interventions

- CALM: Improving Primary Care Anxiety Outcomes
- Telemedicine-Based Collaborative Care to Reduce Rural Health Disparities

Child and Adolescent Treatment

- Responsible Fatherhood Initiative: Brief Parenting Intervention
- Delta Positive Reinforcement of Minors to Increase Self Esteem (see article page 1)
- Family-Based Contingency Management for Adolescent Alcohol Abuse

Addictions and Substance Use Treatment

- Rural Stimulant Use and Mental Health: Service and Outcomes
- Behavioral Treatment of Adolescent Marijuana Abuse
- Drug Discrimination in Methadone-Maintained Subjects
- Improving Combined Buprenorphine-Behavioral Treatment
- Disulfiram for Cocaine Abuse in Methadone-Maintained Patients
- Behavior Economics of Drug Choice
- Cost Effectiveness of Reducing Drug Treatment Barriers

Treatment for Veterans

- Psycho-Physiological Reactivity to Identify and Treat Veterans at Risk for PTSD
- Outreach Intervention for Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans to Promote the Use of Mental Health Services

The Economic Impact

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addition to several research project coordinators and assistants. In total, PRI has 30 scientists on faculty. The economic benefit for Arkansas is that highly educated people are hired and paid good salaries: a large portion of which is then spent in our community and state.

“All research contributes to the strength of our state and its people,” said Maria Haley, executive director of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. “Whether research focuses on products, or psychiatric issues and treatments, research increases our knowledge and understanding. Research grants play a significant role in bolstering our economic well-being by providing highly skilled, knowledge-based jobs for our citizens.”

According to a report released in 2004 by the Milken Institute entitled “Arkansas’ Position in the Knowledge-based Economy”, most of the value of a knowledge-based economy is in the human capital and where they reside. In 2004, Arkansas came in 49th for the percent of the adult population with a bachelor’s degree or greater. According to the Milken report, “If Arkansas is to participate in the knowledge-based economy, it must improve the quality of its workforce.”

Improving the quality and education level of the workforce also means improving per capita income. The Milken report says that “states succeeding in knowledge-based growth will push income per capita higher.” PRI is doing its part by making research and the scientists who conduct that research a priority.



“Research grants play a significant role in bolstering our economic well-being by providing highly skilled, knowledge-based jobs for our citizens.”

*– Maria Haley
Executive Director, Arkansas Economic
Development Commission*

Recently three important grants totaling almost \$5 million were awarded to researchers in the PRI Center for Addiction Research from the National Institutes of Health.

Catherine Stanger, Ph.D., and **Alan Budney, Ph.D.,** have two new grants to study adolescent substance abuse. One study focuses on marijuana use and the other targets alcohol use. Both individual and family-based treatment will be available through the studies and participation incentives are offered. Both projects are designed to find out how to make adolescent substance abuse treatment more effective.

Warren Bickel, Ph.D., has a new project focused on better understanding of relapse in people battling addictions. The study uses smokers to determine if there are ways to predict relapse using various measures, including one called delayed discounting. Hopefully, the information will show that there are ways to tailor treatments for individuals who respond to different types of reinforcement. The ultimate goal is to improve outcomes in the treatment of all types of addictions.

PRI has three divisions where research scientists work. The Division of Health Services Research has 22 faculty members focused on the development, implementation and dissemination of policy relevant to health services research. The Center for Addiction Research has five full-time researchers devoted to the assessment and treatment of addictions. The Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System is one of the largest VA medical centers in the country, with two major centers for mental health care research.

Delta PROMISE

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their reliance on substances and their participation in other high-risk behaviors.

The program is funded by a three-year, nearly \$900,000 grant from the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The program targets 12 – 18 year old, high-risk adolescents with mental health and substance abuse problems. “In many cases substance abusers begin using drugs at an early age, so this project gives us a chance to address that problem through early intervention,” said **Teresa Kramer, Ph.D.**, PRI associate director, associate professor and chief psychologist for the UAMS Department of Psychiatry and lead investigator for the project.

Home visits last month led by **Desi Sims**, PRI research assistant, longtime resident of Marianna and widely respected local pastor, revealed significant challenges. Some adolescents live in homes that do not have air conditioning and telephones. Sometimes there isn’t enough money for food or transportation, let alone leisure activities. Pastor Desi, as he is known to the kids, will tell you that Marco, Justin, Davis and Dwayne love a vigorous basketball game. Additional proof of the obstacles ahead is the local basketball court that has been dismantled due to previous incidents of violence, drug trafficking and gang-related activities.

An advisory board with representatives from local schools, churches, youth programs and child welfare meets quarterly to identify positive alternatives for participants and ways to reinforce

their ongoing involvement in the program. In addition, local companies have generously donated gift cards and products to reward youth who participate regularly, maintain sobriety, and excel in the program. The project uses positive reinforcement to promote positive behaviors such as avoiding drugs, staying in school and spending

more time with non substance-abusing peers and family.

** names have been changed to protect privacy*



For more information about Delta PROMISE contact Dr. Kramer at 501-686-5483 or psychiatry@uams.edu



Members of the Delta PROMISE program get a chance for constructive leisure activities.



Progress on the PRI building as of November 12, 2007.

UAMS Hospital and the PRI Mark Milestone with a “Double Topping Out”

On June 28, steel beams were raised to mark the high points of construction for both the hospital expansion and the adjacent Psychiatric Research Institute. The beams were signed by supporters and employees who were also on hand to watch the beams being raised to the top of both buildings.

Following the ceremony, employees were treated to lunch and entertainment at a street fair at the old entrance to Ward Tower and supporters gathered for a luncheon in their honor at the Country Club of Little Rock.



PRI employees Jan Waldrip, Tracie Hill, Karen Hare, Daniela Buhayevska and Lisa Smith volunteered at the PRI-sponsored popcorn booth at the street fair for employees following the topping out.



The final beam is raised for placement at the top of the PRI.



G. Richard Smith, M.D., director of PRI, addresses supporters and UAMS employees gathered for the topping out ceremony.



Don Munro and Lee Ronnel visit with Joanne Oliver, author of the inspirational book “Just Imagine It,” at a luncheon for supporters following the topping out ceremony.



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