



# The Schroeder Center for Health Policy

The Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy

## Spring 2012 Newsletter

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### *Onwards and upwards!*

In May, William & Mary celebrated the commencement of the Class of 2012. We at the Schroeder Center for Health Policy say goodbye and good luck to several graduating students who contributed significantly to health policy research during their time at the College:

**Jeremie Amoroso**, a Master of Public Policy (MPP) graduate and a Schroeder Center Graduate Research Fellow, has accepted employment with New Health Analytics, a Richmond-based healthcare data and software corporation founded by Schroeder Center faculty affiliate, Lou Rossiter, Ph.D.

**Robin Downing**, a Schroeder Center research assistant who contributed to a research project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, will be working at Deloitte Consulting in Washington, DC. Robin was an economics major.

**Amy Filipek**, a Schroeder Research Fellow from the summer of 2011 and an economics and math major, received a prestigious Regents Fellowship from the University of California, Berkeley. Amy will enter the Ph.D. program in Economics in fall 2012.

**Daniel Robinson**, a Schroeder Research Fellow from the summer of 2011 and a neuroscience and economics major will be working at Cornerstone Research in Washington, DC.

In addition, the past few months have brought exciting opportunities and important recognition to faculty members and students affiliated with the Schroeder Center for Health Policy:

**Carrie Dolan**, Research Professor of Public Policy, was recently admitted to the Ph.D. program in Healthcare Policy and Research at Virginia Commonwealth University. Carrie will begin her studies in the fall. She currently has a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree in Epidemiology from Tulane University. Carrie has been a significant contributor to Schroeder Center research over the past several years and has taught W&M undergraduate and graduate classes on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and epidemiology.

Under the leadership of Schroeder Center faculty affiliate, **Christine Jensen**, Ph.D., the Center for Excellence in Aging and Geriatric Health (CEAGH) was recently awarded the 2012 Best Practices Award from the Southern Gerontological Society for implementation of "Caring For You, Caring For Me" in Virginia. This 10-hour support and education program is intended for both families and professionals involved in elder care.



**Lou Rossiter**, Ph.D., Research Professor of the Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy, was appointed by Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources Bill Hazel to the Board of Directors of the new Virginia Center for Health Innovation. Lou Rossiter is former Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources. The new center focuses on conducting benchmarking research, convening and educating stakeholders, overseeing demonstrations and advancing the Virginia Health Innovation Network. Beth Bortz, a graduate of the Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy (MPP, Class of 1993), is the President and CEO of the Virginia Center for Health Innovation.

**Emily Grimes**, a candidate for the Master of Public Policy degree (Class of 2013) and a recent Schroeder Center Graduate Research Fellow, will spend the summer interning at the Richmond City Health District.

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### *Upcoming health policy research presentations*

In the coming weeks, Schroeder Center faculty affiliates and staff will present findings from several health policy research studies at various venues:

Professors Daifeng He, Melissa McInerney, and Jennifer Mellor will present several research papers at the American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon) conference in Minneapolis, MN from June 10-13, 2012. The biennial conferences of ASHEcon have become the premier health economics conferences in the U.S.:

**“Information Disclosure, Demand Rationing, and Price: Evidence from the Nursing Home Industry”**

Authors: Daifeng He, College of William & Mary and R. Tamara Konetzka, University of Chicago

**“Are Recessions Good for Workplace Safety?”**

Authors: Melissa McInerney, College of William & Mary and Kosali Simon, Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs

**“Recession Depression: Physical and Mental Health Effects of the Stock Market Crash”**

Authors: Melissa McInerney, College of William & Mary, Jennifer Mellor, College of William & Mary, and Lauren Hersch Nicholas, University of Michigan

In addition, Schroeder Center faculty and staff will discuss two recent studies on the local Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools’ School Health Initiative Program (SHIP). Findings will be presented to SHIP staff, school administrators, and the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation on June 20, 2012. Carrie Dolan and Scott Ickes, Ph.D., will present findings from the **Parent Involvement Study**, a study of parenting capacities for supporting healthy nutrition and physical activity habits for children. Jennifer Mellor, Ph.D., and Elizabeth Vestal will present results from the **2012 Survey of Elementary School Teachers**, a survey of teachers’ perceptions of the health of their students and their comfort with and use of SHIP resources.

Faculty affiliate, Christine Jensen, Ph.D., of the Center for Excellence in Aging and Geriatric Health, presented a paper at the Virginia Coalition for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (VCPEA) on May 31, 2012. Her presentation was entitled “Substance Use as a Risk Factor for Abuse.”

## New publications

The Schroeder Center has added new [fact sheets](#) on two issues related to the Medicaid program and a new policy brief on state and local policies to address healthy eating:

The U.S. is facing an estimated shortage of 130,600 physicians by 2025. Almost half of this shortage comes from a lack of primary care physicians, or doctors who practice internal medicine, family medicine, and pediatrics. This fact sheet describes the implications of this shortage for health outcomes, equity, and costs both nationwide and in Virginia. [Read more...](#)



In light of concerns about physician shortages, policy makers are considering increases to the reimbursement rates paid to physicians who treat Medicaid recipients. Reimbursement rates that are below the rates of private health insurers and Medicare are thought to contribute to lower levels of physician acceptance of Medicaid patients and to possibly reduce access to care among the low-income population. This fact sheet describes Medicaid reimbursement rates both nationally and in Virginia. [Read more...](#)

Increasing rates of obesity among Americans adults and children threaten the health of millions and significantly contribute to rising healthcare costs in the U.S. Policymakers continue to search for solutions to this health problem. This brief focuses specifically on **soda taxes**, restrictive **fast-food restaurant zoning**, and **healthy food enterprise initiatives** as obesity prevention policy options for states and local governments. [Read more...](#)

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## Undergraduates aid in community health research

Every semester, the Schroeder Center for Health Policy offers [William & Mary students](#) the chance to gain valuable research experiences in paid assistantships.

In recent months, two W&M undergraduates have played key roles in an ongoing community health project funded by the [Williamsburg Community Health Foundation](#). The goal of the project, entitled “Enhancing Health in the Historic Triangle,” is to increase the abilities of local policymakers and community organizations to use data and research in ways that can improve the health of residents in the Historic Triangle (comprised of James City County, Williamsburg, and York County).

During the spring 2012 semester, Rebecca Barber (Class of '15) helped researchers develop a questionnaire that was used to assess the data needs and use practices of local health and human services organizations. This summer, Joel White (Class of '13), is supporting researchers on the project by conducting data entry and completing background research.

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## Faculty spotlight: Melissa McInerney, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Economics and Schroeder Center faculty affiliate, [Melissa McInerney, Ph.D.](#), is one of five recipients of a [2012 Steven H. Sandell Grant](#). Sandell grants are prestigious awards made to scholars in the field of retirement income and disability insurance research. The Sandell Grant Program is sponsored by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College and is funded by the U.S. Social Security Administration.

Dr. McNerney's project, "The Medicaid Buy-In and the Employment, Earnings, and Out of Pocket Medical Expenditures of Social Security Disability Insurance Beneficiaries," will examine whether state implementation of a Medicaid Buy-In program increases employment and earnings and decreases out-of-pocket medical expenditures for Social Security Disability Insurance (DI) recipients. Medicaid Buy-In programs effectively lower the Medicaid eligibility requirements for disabled workers which could serve the policy goals of increasing workforce integration among Medicaid recipients and reducing financial burdens on the Disability Insurance program. Dr. McNerney's research will provide preliminary evidence as to whether these goals are being met by the Medicaid Buy-In program.

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### *Richmond's Food Policy Task Force*

Many residents of Richmond, Virginia are "food insecure," meaning that they lack access to affordable and nutritious food. Food insecure individuals and families often have poor diets which can lead to multiple health problems including diabetes, obesity, and heart disease. Richmond Mayor Dwight Jones identified food insecurity, especially among children, as a major problem that should be addressed within the City of Richmond and thus established the Richmond Food Policy Task Force.



Schroeder Center staff member Elizabeth Vestal participated on the Food Policy Task Force, comprised of a wide variety of community stakeholders including, among others, employees of the Richmond City Health District, Virginia Department of Health, Richmond Public Schools, Martin's Grocers, and various research and academic institutions.

The task force developed a comprehensive list of 35 recommendations that were voted on during a community forum that was held on April 4, 2012. The forum's top choices included creating a local food hub or "community kitchen" and increasing the use of locally grown fresh foods in schools. A report on the full list of recommendations is forthcoming and will be presented to the mayor and the city council in the weeks ahead.

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### *Health policy research funding opportunities*

Each quarter, the Schroeder Center for Health Policy distributes a list of funding opportunities. Included in this report are funding opportunities for research on health disparities (racial and ethnic), health technology, health costs, health care financing, the economics of aging, the influence of socioeconomic status on health, obesity, as well as diet and nutrition. The May 2012 health funding compilation includes over 80 grant possibilities. [Read more....](#)

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