

# Schroeder Center for Health Policy at the College of William & Mary

## Fall 2013 Newsletter



*Greetings from the Schroeder Center for Health Policy!*

During the summer and fall of 2013, the Schroeder Center's faculty affiliates, staff, and students have continued their research and analysis of timely health policy issues and disseminated their findings through various venues. We are pleased to summarize these health policy activities.

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## Schroeder Center Collaborates with Literacy for Life



The Schroeder Center for Health Policy recently received two awards related to the Health Education and Literacy (HEAL) Program at Literacy for Life.

One award was made to a team led by Dr. Jennifer Mellor, director of the Schroeder Center, and including Dr. Bruce Britton, a faculty member at Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS), and Joan Peterson, Executive Director of Literacy for Life. The team was awarded a Round 1 Collaborative Grant to design an intervention to improve health literacy training for medical professionals. Work on

the project will be completed in the fall and will result in the development of an intervention that combines Literacy for Life's HEAL program, eight classes targeted at low-literate adults to increase their knowledge of healthcare topics, and EVMS's family medicine clerkship, a program that trains medical students to work with underserved populations.

The Schroeder Center for Health Policy also received an award from Literacy for Life to provide evaluation consulting related to the HEAL program. Schroeder Center staff will provide evidence-based recommendations on evaluation methods, including proposed changes to instruments that HEAL currently uses to assess its outcome on participants, data analysis, and the evaluation design that can help identify long-term HEAL program impacts.

## W&M/EVMS Retreat Features Schroeder Center Affiliates

The second faculty retreat for researchers and educators from W&M and Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) took place on Friday, October 11, 2013 at the EVMS campus in Norfolk. The event provided another opportunity for faculty from both institutions to interact with each other and with representatives from Sentara Healthcare and to discuss potential research and educational collaborations. More than 80 participants attended the event.

The keynote address was given by Dr. Karen Remley, the former Virginia Commissioner of Health and the founding director of the M. Foscue Brock Institute for Community and Global Health at EVMS. Dr. Remley spoke about the potential benefits from collaboration by all three institutions (W&M, EVMS, and Sentara), and she encouraged attendees to envision the ways that collaboration might improve health in the Commonwealth of Virginia and in the southeastern region of the state. Dr. Remley described various improvements in population health that have taken place, as well as some of the lingering challenges that remain, such as the recent rise in preventable safe-sleep deaths and in rates of maternal mortality. She challenged participants to examine and carry out research to improve these outcomes. Dr. Remley also suggested that researchers in the audience consider applying for new funding available from PCORI, the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, created under the Affordable Care Act. These grants are geared toward research in which the community is able to play an integral role. She pointed specifically to the PCORI funding associated with improving healthcare systems, communication and dissemination research, and addressing disparities.

Several W&M faculty also played key roles in the day's events. Dr. Danielle Dallaire of the W&M Psychology Department and the Neuroscience Program and Dr. Scott Ickes of the W&M Kinesiology and Health Sciences Department both participated in a panel presentation on pediatric research. Dr. Dallaire discussed her research on pregnancy in the context of incarceration. She detailed the objectives of the W&M Healthy Beginnings Project that seeks to provide pregnancy tests for incarcerated women of childbearing age, as well as prenatal vitamins and counseling for mothers-to-be serving their sentences. Dr. Ickes presented his research on the maternal capacities hypothesis, which examines the influence of maternal agency on children's nutrition and growth. Dallaire and Ickes are both Schroeder Center faculty affiliates. The research they presented was funded in part by the Schroeder Center Small Grants Program.

Finally, Dr. Jennifer Mellor, director of the Schroeder Center for Health Policy and W&M's point-person for the EVMS initiative, closed out the retreat by describing a second round of grant funding for collaborative research. Up to three additional grants of up to \$20,000 each are available to teams of W&M and EVMS faculty. Applications are due November 15, 2013.

## New Schroeder Center Faculty Affiliate



The Schroeder Center for Health Policy is pleased to welcome Dr. John Parman, Assistant Professor of Economics, as a new faculty affiliate. Dr. Parman received his Ph.D. in economics from Northwestern University. His research focuses on American economic history and the relationships between health, family structure, community characteristics, and educational and occupational outcomes. His current projects include investigating how health shocks lead families to redistribute resources among children and how historical segregation influenced racial gaps in health and socioeconomic status. As part of his research, Dr. Parman created a dataset on city level morbidity and mortality between 1918 and 1925, which is available for use by other researchers. The Schroeder Center looks forward to working with Dr. Parman on his health research.

## Schroeder Center Faculty Publish Health Policy Studies

Schroeder Center faculty affiliates recently published two new studies in leading health journals.

- “Do Changes in Hospital Outpatient Payments Affect the Setting of Care?” by Daifeng He and Jennifer Mellor. *Health Services Research*. 48(5): 1593-1616, 2013.
- “Recession Depression: Mental Health Effects of the 2008 Stock Market Crash” by Melissa McInerney, Jennifer Mellor, and Lauren Hersch Nicholas. *Journal of Health Economics*. 32(6): 1090-1104, 2013.

## Schroeder Center Faculty Present Their Policy Research

Schroeder Center faculty affiliates presented their research at conferences and meetings around the country.

- **Lauren Hersch Nicholas** (Johns Hopkins), **Melissa McInerney** (W&M), and **Jennifer Mellor** (W&M). “Do Effects of Rising State Unemployment Rates on Health and Health Behaviors Differ by Race and Ethnicity? Evidence from the Health and Retirement Study.” Annual Fall Research Conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM). Washington, D.C. November 2013.
- **Christine Jensen**. “Enhancing Family and Professional Caregiver Well-Being: A Psychoeducational Skills Training Program.” Annual Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America. New Orleans, LA. November 2013.
- **Tracy Johnson-Hall** (W&M). “The Role of Regulatory Inspections and Compliance Findings in Food Product Recall Timing.” Annual Meeting of the Decision Sciences Institute. Baltimore, MD. November 2013.
- **Melissa McInerney** (W&M). “The Medicaid Buy-In and the Employment and Earnings of Social Security Disability Insurance Beneficiaries: Evidence from the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey.” Annual Fall Research Conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM). Washington, D.C. November 2013.
- **Carrie Dolan** (W&M). “Does Location Matter? Proximity to Development Finance for Testing and Testing for HIV.” AidData 3.0 Launch. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, D.C. October 2013.
- **Daifeng He** (W&M). “Does Labor Force Participation Reduce Informal Caregiving?” Annual Southeastern Health Economics Study Group Conference. Baltimore, MD. October 2013.
- **Daifeng He** (W&M) and **Jennifer Mellor** (W&M). “Do Changes in Hospital Outpatient Payments Affect the Setting of Care?” Annual Research Meeting of AcademyHealth. Baltimore, MD. June 2013.

## Staff Spotlight: Bethany Welstead, M.P.H.



**Bethany Welstead** recently joined the Schroeder Center staff as a new health policy analyst. Bethany earned her M.P.H. in epidemiology from Emory University, after receiving her B.S. in health sciences and B.A. in economics from Furman University. Bethany’s previous work included projects with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Georgia Institute of Technology, and Van Meter Pediatric Endocrinology. Bethany’s responsibilities at the Schroeder Center include providing evaluation services to such programs as the School Health Initiative Program (SHIP) and the Health Education and Literacy (HEAL) program. Welstead also provides key research support to affiliated Schroeder Center faculty members.

## Recipients: Health Policy Awards for Student Scholarship

Earlier this year, the Schroeder Center provided awards to four W&M students under the Center's new Health Policy Awards for Student Scholarship Program. The following students won awards by writing outstanding briefing memos:

- **Ryan Buckland** (B.A., Public Policy, 2013) won 1st place for his memo, "Geriatrician Shortage – Loan Forgiveness Grant Program to Close the Gap Between Geriatrician Supply and Demand and Ensure Cost-Effective, Quality Care for the Nation's Elderly."
- **Irina Calos** (M.P.P., Public Policy, 2014) received 2nd place for her memo, "Sequestration Effects on Cancer Medication Funding."
- **Amber Will** (M.P.P. and J.D., Public Policy and Law, 2016) tied for 3rd place, writing a policy memo on "Access to Birth Control: Worthwhile Endeavor."
- **Jordan Bowman** (M.P.P. and J.D., Public Policy and Law, 2014), another 3rd place winner, wrote "Insure the Uninsured: Implementing the ACA's Medicaid Expansion and Maximizing Take-up Rates."

## W&M Students Conduct Health Policy Research

Through the generous contributions of Cliff and Lois Schroeder, the Schroeder Center supports both graduate and undergraduate study in health policy through two separate W&M programs.

**Graduate Fellowships.** Each year, the Schroeder Center awards fellowships to graduate M.P.P. students in W&M's Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy who have exceptionally strong academic backgrounds and who plan to pursue careers in health. This year's recipients are:

- **Ashley Gray**, a second year M.P.P. student, graduated in 2010 from Vanderbilt University with a B.A. in English, Philosophy, and Public Policy. Ashley's undergraduate thesis evaluated whether district-level physical education programs in West Virginia successfully reduced childhood obesity levels across the state. As a graduate student, Ashley is evaluating the benefits of services offered to breast cancer survivors by Beyond Boobs!, a non-profit organization providing support for premenopausal women.
- **Emily Uselton**, a first year M.P.P. student, graduated in 2008 from Xavier University with a B.S.B.A. in Accounting and Finance. Prior to pursuing her graduate degree, Emily worked as a certified public accountant at Crowe Horwarth, LLP and as Director of Relationship Accounting for Health Care REIT, Inc., a S&P 500 company that invests in the full spectrum of health care real estate, including medical office buildings and acute care (skilled nursing) and seniors' housing (assisted living).

**Undergraduate Research Assistant Program.** Every semester, the Schroeder Center offers W&M undergraduates the opportunity to gain valuable research experience in paid assistantships supervised by faculty members. This fall, three talented undergraduates are working with faculty in the Departments of Economics and Government and the Mason School of Business.

- **Leonymae Aumentado**, Economics (2015), is working with Economics Professor John Parman on a project entitled "Segregation, Access to Health Care and Racial Disparities in Health."
- **Taylor Feenstra**, Public Policy/Psychology (2014), is working with Government Professor Jaime Settle on a project that examines the microfoundations of public opinion on the health care reform effort resulting in the Affordable Care Act.
- **Thomas Sanders**, Government (2014), is working with Mason School of Business Professor Tracy Johnson-Hall on a project that studies the effect of agency inspections and compliance findings on recalls of food regulated by the Food & Drug Administration.