



# The Schroeder Center for Health Policy

The Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy

## Winter 2012 Newsletter

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### Greetings and Happy New Year from the Schroeder Center for Health Policy!

Part of the Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy at the College of William & Mary, the Schroeder Center for Health Policy seeks to inform current decision makers on a broad array of public policies related to healthcare and public health. We also strive to educate future decision makers by creating opportunities for William & Mary graduate and undergraduate students to work in close association with faculty members on health policy research. We hope you enjoy reading about recent developments in this newsletter. For more information, please visit our website at [www.wm.edu/schroeder](http://www.wm.edu/schroeder).

*Jennifer M. Mellor, Ph.D., Director*

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### *New projects funded by the Russell Sage Foundation and the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation*

The Schroeder Center is pleased to announce a recent grant from the Russell Sage Foundation awarded to Melissa McInerney (W&M), Jennifer Mellor (W&M) and Lauren Hersch Nicholas (University of Michigan) to study the Consequences of The Great Recession on Health and Health-Related Outcomes. McInerney, Mellor, and Nicholas will use data from the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) to examine the effects of unemployment and wealth declines on health and health-related behaviors of Americans during recessions. This grant is funded by the Russell Sage Foundation's special initiative on the social and economic effects of the Great Recession.

In December, the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation (WCHF) awarded a grant to the Schroeder Center for a project entitled "Enhancing Health in the Historic Triangle through Data Interpretation, Data Sharing, and Practice Review." The goal of the project is to increase the abilities of local policymakers and other essential community stakeholders to use quantitative data from the Historic Triangle region and proven results from other settings to make decisions about policies, programs, and practices that affect the community's health.

WCHF is also funding the Schroeder Center's continued evaluation of Williamsburg-James City County's School Health Initiative Program (SHIP). Evaluation activities will provide WCHF and SHIP with information on the impact of SHIP's activities and with guidance on where to target resources more effectively.

## *Faculty to present health policy research*

William & Mary [faculty members](#) are actively engaged in scholarly research studies on various health policy issues. In the coming months, faculty members will present findings from their work in several different venues.

**February 24, 2012**, [AcademyHealth](#) Grantee Briefing, Washington, DC

- “Medicare Outpatient Prospective Payment System and Care Delivery Settings: Evidence from Florida” by [Daifeng He](#) (W&M) and [Jennifer Mellor](#) (W&M)

**March 21, 2012**

Presentation at [Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center](#), Richmond, VA

- “Recessions and Seniors’ Health, Health Behaviors, and Healthcare Use: Analysis of the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey” by [Melissa McInerney](#) (W&M) and [Jennifer Mellor](#) (W&M)

**May 3-5, 2012**

Annual Meeting, [Population Association of America](#), San Francisco, CA

- “Recession Depression: Physical and Mental Health Effects of the Stock Market Crash” by [Melissa McInerney](#) (W&M), [Jennifer Mellor](#) (W&M), and [Lauren Hersch Nicholas](#) (University of Michigan)

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## *Graduate students in Public Policy showcase research on the ACA*



In Fall 2011, three Public Policy graduate students, [Jeremie Amoroso](#), Tony Guth, and Lewis Woodard, completed a project related to the Basic Health Programs (BHP), an important but less well-known component of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Their report examined how optional state run BHPs might impact family health insurance coverage and healthcare use. The students conducted an in-depth analysis of data from the [Medical Expenditure Panel Survey](#) (MEPS) to determine whether BHPs could enable more families to have all members insured resulting in increased access and use of healthcare services. The project was prepared for their client, [Amerigroup](#) Corporation, a company devoted to improving access to healthcare while reducing costs to taxpayers. Jeremie, Tony, and Lewis presented their results to senior-level staff at Amerigroup Corporation headquarters in Virginia Beach, VA on December 16, 2011. [Read more...](#)

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## *William & Mary undergrads gain research experiences*

Every semester, the Schroeder Center for Health Policy offers several William & Mary students the chance to gain valuable research experiences in paid assistantships supervised by William & Mary faculty members. This past fall, six talented [undergraduate students](#) worked as research assistants to faculty members providing valuable support on various health policy research projects. Ryan, Amy and Mariel offer comments, below, on their research experiences with the Schroeder Center.

**Ryan Buckland**, a public policy major (Class of '13), worked with Professor Christine Jensen of the Thomas Jefferson Program and Director of the [Center for Excellence in Aging and Geriatric Health](#) (CEAGH). Ryan spent much of the semester

doing preliminary research on long-term care planning among childless adults and on chronic illness management among elderly populations. Ryan was pleased to see that his public policy courses at William & Mary enabled him to contribute meaningfully to his research at CEAGH. After graduation, he hopes to either enter the work force as a policy analyst or apply to graduate programs in health administration.

**Amy Filipek**, a dual major in economics and mathematics (Class of '12), worked with Professors Daifeng He and Jennifer Mellor of the Economics Department on a study about the Medicare Outpatient Prospective Payment system and its effects on inpatient utilization. Amy worked with hospital inpatient discharge data from the state of Florida using Stata software to construct measures of inpatient utilization by hospital. She says that her work during the semester helped her to develop better programming skills and taught her new econometric procedures. Amy hopes to continue her study of economics and looks forward to conducting her own scholarly research. "Nothing could have prepared me more for my future career goals than my job as a research assistant for the Schroeder Center," she says.

**Mariel Tavakoli**, a public policy major (Class of '13), worked with Professor John Parman of the Economics Department on a project that examines racial disparities in long-run health outcomes and the ways in which childhood household characteristics affect those health outcomes. Mariel spent much of the semester building a large database of individual-level data on occupation, age, diseases, and cause of death. She says that working with Professor Parman was a "valuable experience which helped her learn more about medical terminology and the practice and process of conducting research."

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## *Kudos*

Faculty affiliate Christine Jensen, recently received a grant from the [Virginia Center on Aging](#) to address staff training obstacles at long term care and emergency facilities. The grant is part of the Virginia Center on Aging Gerontology and Education Initiative.

Faculty affiliate Scott Ickes is a co-author of two recent publications in *Maternal and Child Nutrition* and the *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*. The first article is an "Examination of Barriers and Facilitators to Home-Based Supplemental Feeding with Ready-to-Use Food for Underweight Children in Western Uganda." The second investigates "Attitudes Towards Fruit and Vegetable Consumption and Farmers' Market Usage Among Low-Income North Carolinians."

Professor Chon Abraham collaborated with researchers at the Stevens Institute of Technology and the Portland Veteran Affairs Medical Center on a study entitled "Integrating Self-Service Kiosks into Healthcare Delivery Organizations." The study was presented at the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) in China December 2011.

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## *Spring W&M faculty data workshop*

The Schroeder Center is planning a spring workshop for William & Mary faculty on using the [Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey](#) (MCBS) Cost and Use databases to study healthcare use among the Medicare population. The MCBS databases provide a wealth of information on healthcare spending and utilization among Medicare beneficiaries which can be used in studies to better inform healthcare policy. For more information, email Jennifer Mellor at [jimmell@wm.edu](mailto:jimmell@wm.edu).

## *Health policy in the news*

The Schroeder Center seeks to provide timely information on current health policy issues that affect Virginians and all Americans. In this newsletter, we focus on health-related legislation introduced in the current Virginia General Assembly session and on the recent controversy over funding for new USDA school lunch and breakfast regulations.

The Virginia General Assembly's 2012 session convened on January 11, 2012 and will end in early March. As of January 24th, legislators introduced over 100 health-related bills. Schroeder Center Research Associate, Kelly Metcalf-Meese, is closely following the Virginia General Assembly and has compiled an informative list of selected health-related bills being considered by the General Assembly this legislative session. [Read more...](#)



In November 2011, [Congress halted the implementation of regulations](#) proposed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to improve the nutritional quality of food served in public schools. Elizabeth Vestal, Research Analyst at the Schroeder Center, answers questions about the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs and the recent controversy following Congress' decision to halt funding for the proposed regulations. [Read more...](#)

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## *Faculty spotlight: Scott Ickes, Ph.D.*

The Schroeder Center is pleased to welcome a new faculty affiliate, [Scott Ickes](#), Assistant Professor of Kinesiology and Health Sciences. Scott is a 2004 William & Mary graduate. He received his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and returns to William & Mary after also completing a postdoctoral fellowship at Cornell University where he studied maternal and child nutrition.

The Schroeder Center's current evaluation activities for Williamsburg-James City County's [School Health Initiative Program](#) (SHIP) include Scott's project, "Promoting parent engagement in school-based child nutrition and physical activity programs." The purpose of this study is to produce evidence-based recommendations for strategies to increase parental participation in SHIP activities, particularly among racial and ethnic minorities whose children are at increased risk for obesity. The project also provides several talented William & Mary students with an opportunity to participate in a research project that will inform local health policy.

Scott brings a unique set of skills and knowledge to the already accomplished cohort of Schroeder Center [faculty affiliates](#), and the Center looks forward to working with Scott on valuable and informative health policy research.

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