

The Official USU Newsletter

the pulse

Volume 8, Issue 12 • August 5, 2013
www.usuhs.edu



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The Pulse is printed by USU's Duplicating Center.

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The Pulse is funded by the Department of Defense and published by the Uniformed Services University. It is authorized for members of the U.S. military services, USU alumni, faculty and staff. Contents of the Pulse are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the DoD or USU. Appearance of anything resembling advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the DoD, USU or Pulse staff members.

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Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the USU Office of External Affairs. The editor reserves the right to edit articles to conform to DoD policy and Associated Press style. All photos are DoD photos unless otherwise indicated.

The Pulse will be published bi-weekly on Mondays. The deadline for submissions is at 4 p.m. Tuesday prior to the publication date. Submissions can be sent to christine.creenan-jones@usuhs.edu or 301-295-3338.

New internship brings science-minded youth to USU

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

Adrienne Kehne has spent the past five weeks growing strains of yeast in petri dishes at the Uniformed Services University. Her yeast produces amyloid aggregates—fibers that accumulate and disrupt cellular machinery—to model neurodegeneration in the human body.

Like most research, the process is slow, but Kehne is hoping for a scientific breakthrough before she leaves USU in August...to finish high school.

Although Kehne is young, her ambition and scientific acuity resonate strongly. She's eager to learn and push new boundaries, along with the 14 other high school students participating in USU's Summer Research Training Program.

The formal internship was created in 2012 to give local students a hands-on experience in a biomedical laboratory. Participants also gain other fundamental skills at USU, including techniques for writing scientific papers and methods for developing hypothesis-driven research projects.

"My experience at USU has been incredible. I'm surrounded by smart, passionate people, who are willing to share their knowledge with me," Kehne said. "I love being part of this environment and knowing that I'm

contributing something important to science, even if it's in a small way."

The program is a way for the university to give back as well, according to the founding faculty members, Frank Shewmaker, PhD, Rachel Cox, PhD, John Wu, PhD, and Markos Koutmos, PhD. They created the internship to bridge ties with local neighborhoods and attract science-minded youth from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

"It's part of our responsibility to the community," Shewmaker said. "Our faculty has a lot to offer young scholars, and USRTP is a great way to reach out in a meaningful way."

As part of their internship, USRTP students must also develop and present a research poster, Aug. 15. The showcase will demonstrate the work they've completed at USU, and all members of the campus community are welcome to attend.

"We have some remarkable high school students at USU," Shewmaker said. "I'm certain the poster presentations will highlight their skills and creativity. I look forward to seeing their work."

Visit <http://www.usuhs.edu/rtp/> for more information about the poster presentations and the USRTP internship.



Photo by Thomas C. Balfour

On the cover

Frank Shewmaker, PhD, an assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacology at the Uniformed Services University, is mentoring Adrienne Kehne, a senior at Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, Md., and a member of USU's new Summer Research Training Program. Read more about the USRTP high school internship program on page 2.



Trivia Question #2 : Graduate School of Nursing 20th Anniversary



This nursing pathfinder said, "Civilian colleges of nursing can prepare nurses for the military, but they cannot prepare military nurses," while serving on a task force to study the feasibility of establishing a Graduate School of Nursing at the Uniformed Services University in 1989.

The GSN was formally established a few years later, and she became the school's first dean.

Can you name the charter dean of the Graduate School of Nursing? If so, e-mail your answer to Christine. Creenan-Jones@usuhs.edu. The first person to respond correctly wins a large coffee and doughnut courtesy of the USU Cafeteria.

Change of command becomes informal mini-reunion for USU alumni

The change of command ceremony at the U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory became an informal mini-reunion for Uniformed Services University graduates, June 14, as the leadership reigns were passed from one School of Medicine alum to another.

Army Col. (Dr.) John Smyrski, III, a class of '99 graduate, assumed command of USAARL from Army Col. (Dr.) Dana Renta, a class of '95 graduate, in a ceremony held at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker in Ala.

The USU connection continued with then-Army Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Joseph Carvalho, Jr., a class of '83 graduate and commanding general of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command. He presided over the ceremony and passed the unit colors from Renta to Smyrski, which signified USAARL's leadership change in traditional military fashion.

"We are delighted to welcome Col. Smyrski to the MRMC team," said Carvalho. "With a variety of combat aviation and medical corps assignments under his belt, as well as deployments to Haiti, Afghanistan and Iraq, I know he comes fully prepared for the mission at hand."

His preparation for a command-level position has taken shape through many different military assignments, both

before and after USU. Smyrski's career began at St. John's University in 1985, where he received an Army commission as a second lieutenant in the aviation branch at Fort Rucker. He went on to serve as the company executive officer of the 2nd Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade at Fort Bragg in N.C.; a force modernization officer for the 224th Military Intelligence Battalion at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Ga.; and his most recent assignment as the chief of clinical operations at the Pacific Regional Medical Command in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Besides recognizing Smyrski's achievements, Carvalho also highlighted the organization's strengths during the change of command ceremony.

"USAARL has a proud, 50-year history of supporting the ground and aviation communities," he said. "The work being done at (the organization) is improving Army systems and, most importantly, saving the lives of our warfighters."

The lab's work – done mostly by physicians, engineers, scientists, pilots and administrators – includes equipment testing and research to study environmental issues such as jetlag and fatigue.

Carvalho credits much of USAARL's success over the past

several years to Renta, who was commander when several important advancements were made, including binocular vision testers – which detect subtle impairments of visual performance and physiology in mild traumatic brain injuries, the aviation common helmet display – a new design standard for helmet-mounted displays, and the noise-immune stethoscope – which gives health care providers the ability to hear heart sounds in the noisy compartments of rotary-wing aircraft during high-speed flight.

"Col. Renta, you have done an amazing job honoring the call of duty, both day and night," Carvalho said. "I know I speak for many when I say that you will be missed as you move on to your new position."

The departure from USAARL was bittersweet for Renta as well.

"It was an incredible privilege and honor to serve as the commander of the USAARL," she said. "Their's is not an easy mission, yet the staff does it so well and makes it look so easy, and I'm extremely confident that John will take the unit from a great level to an even higher level."

Renta's new assignment is as the Installation Management Command surgeon at Fort Sam Houston in Texas.

New USU display highlights women in the Civil War

Courtesy of USU Archives staff

The archives at the Uniformed Services University installed a new exhibit on women in the Civil War called, "Nursing, Aid Societies, and Sanitary Service: The Role of Women in the Civil War."



The historical display highlights the vast Civil War era collections that are being housed at USU, including rare book and manuscript collections. Of particular note, are the quotations from memoirs written by

women about their role in the war and photos from that time.

The exhibit will be on display on the first floor of the James A. Zimble Learning Resource Center adjacent to the computer classroom through fall.

Photo courtesy of USU Archives Department

USU alumna makes huge strides for public health, military medicine

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor



Courtesy Photo

Victoria Davey, PhD

Dr. Victoria Davey, chief officer of Public Health at the Department of Veterans Affairs, works tirelessly to keep the nation's largest

integrated health care system moving on the cutting edge.

She does this by overseeing several major health programs and supervising hundreds of VA personnel. Her multidisciplinary team includes experts in infectious disease epidemiology, occupational health and health effects of military service.

Davey, a recognized leader in these fields, gained a lot of her expertise at the Uniformed Services University, where she earned both a Master of Public Health and a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science degree.

Besides a formal education, USU also gave Davey her first real exposure to military life. Most of her classmates were officers in the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force, and they taught Davey important lessons about military culture and medicine.

"I was still pretty young and new to my career when I earned my MPH, but I was surrounded by knowledgeable people whom I admired and respected very much. I'm very grateful for their mentorship and my USU experience," she said.

Both were launch pads for a highly successful career at top research laboratories, including a position at the National Institutes of Health, where Davey worked under the leadership of Dr. Anthony Fauci, a world-renowned HIV/AIDS researcher.

Davey's work at NIH was pioneering. Her team helped demystify a misunderstood, stigmatized disease while catalyzing new drug therapies that significantly prolonged life expectancies for people with HIV.

"I had the opportunity to work with all of the leading people in HIV/AIDS research. It was a really exciting, invigorating time in my professional life," she said.

The breakthroughs continued at Veterans Affairs. After 13 years at NIH, Davey accepted a VA leadership position, where she became immersed in a military environment once again.

Davey's focus at the VA was still on public health, but her scope

broadened significantly to eventually include every infectious disease impacting veteran populations across the globe, from hepatitis C and West Nile Virus to malaria and SARS.

"It's a great honor to work with veterans. I can't think of a more deserving population," she said. "I'm truly humbled to serve the people who've served our nation."

For Davey, better service for veterans meant going back to school. During her VA tenure, she completed a doctorate from USU's Graduate School of Nursing.

Her PhD coursework at USU was rigorous, but Davey excelled once again. As a student, she even conducted successful epidemiological modeling research to study the effects of deadly outbreaks. She also developed interventions to stem and prevent widespread infection.

Davey's research at USU was designed to improve health and wellness on a global scale. She takes the same broad approach at the VA, where her policies affect millions of veterans every day.

"Adopting good policies, ones that make a difference, is the best part of my job, hands down, because I know we're helping lots of people. That's what my work is all about," Davey said.

USU graduate receives AHA award

By Sharon Willis, managing editor and deputy vice president for External Affairs

Navy Capt. (Dr.) Maureen Padden (SoM '92), commanding officer of the Naval Hospital, Pensacola, Fla., was recently presented with the 2012 Federal Health Care Executive Award for Excellence by the American Hospital Association.

Padden received the award for using her extensive experience as a family physician, teacher and executive to dramatically transform the way primary care is delivered in the Navy medical department and

the Military Healthcare System. Padden's colleague, Navy Cmdr. Matthew Case, Naval Hospital, Camp Lejeune, N.C., received the 2012 Federal Health Care Executive Special Achievement Award for his significant contributions in combat and hospital-based assignments as the principal driving force behind improved operational health services support for U.S. and Coalition Forces in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.



Courtesy Photo

The AHA president and CEO Rich Umbdenstock said the two officers "exemplify dedication to excellence and service to their country and on behalf of the American Hospital Association," and thanked them "for the incredible work they do each day."

USU alumna returns for new purview into public health

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor



Courtesy photo

Navy Lt. Cmdr. (Dr.) Tammy Servies is a double alumna who earned both a Doctor of Medicine and Master of Public Health from the Uniformed Services University. The former flight surgeon has had many unique experiences throughout her medical career that recently led to a specialty change.

Eight years after she completed medical school, Navy Lt. Cmdr. (Dr.) Tammy Servies came back to the Uniformed Services University to explore new opportunities in medicine, and a master's in Public Health. The former flight surgeon became interested in a career change during a general surgery residency in 2008.

Servies didn't transition into a new discipline right away, though. She wanted to experience another unique side of military medicine first.

"I missed the public health and prevention aspects of flight surgery, but I also wanted to deploy," Servies said.

So she left the operating room to practice medicine on the grounds of an abandoned air base in the middle of a barren desert in Bahrain. Space and supplies were limited, but Servies improvised, even turning an old sleeping tent into a functional clinic.

"It was a great learning experience that I'll take with me as I advise future first-time medical deployers," she said.

The rewarding assignment also awakened a feeling of wanting to move medicine beyond patient care alone. Although she didn't know

it then, other experiences steered Servies in the public health direction as well.

A fire in California was one of them. It raged through San Diego County, burning more than 280,000 acres and killing 15 people in 2003. At the time, Servies was just beginning her career as a military physician. Still, she wanted to help and reported to Qualcomm Stadium – where the San Diego Chargers play – after hearing a call for medical professionals on a local radio station.

"I got to Qualcomm as fast I could. When I arrived, there was only one doctor there. He was dealing with a patient who appeared to be having a hypertensive crisis and a few others who had minor difficulties breathing. I told the doctor I was an unlicensed intern, so he asked me to set up a medical station instead," Servies said.

She began organizing donations and supplies when a fellow USU graduate and a group of military police officers arrived on the scene. The physicians created a makeshift casualty bay in the stadium and the police officers managed the patient flow.

"The training I received in USU's Military and Contingency Medicine course immediately kicked in. I created traffic lanes and separate spaces for triage, transport and treatment areas," she said.

Before long, Servies became the unofficial person in charge, and oversaw the sophisticated operation until the turmoil subsided the following evening.

It was a grueling but rewarding two days that highlighted Servies' professional strengths, including her ability to plan

and execute seamless health plans in a crisis situation.

Servies demonstrated her leadership ability during another disaster situation as well. In 2008, she was working at a remote clinic in Nevada, when an irrigation canal overflowed and flooded hundreds of homes in Fernley, a small city about 30 miles from her clinic.

Servies was part of the Navy's search and rescue team.

"All together, we rescued 18 people, including residents who were stranded on their rooftops. It was a crazy experience, but I'm so glad my team was able to help a community in need," she said.

Helping communities in need is what public health is all about. Servies, who finished a preventive medicine residency from USU a few months back, is excited to continue pushing this mission forward as a board-certified public health physician.

"I'm drawn to public health for so many reasons, but I especially like the fact that I will be doing work that helps many people at once. I can't imagine anything more rewarding than knowing I'll be part of a discipline that has the potential to make the entire world a healthier place," Servies said.



Courtesy photo

Servies deployed to Bahrain in 2009 and turned a tent into a functional clinic.

NCDMPH collaborates with GSN to provide disaster health curriculum recommendations

By Liz Brasington, communications and administrative assistant for NCDMPH

The National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health at the Uniformed Services University has a unique mission to improve education and training for health professionals across the nation. One way NCDMPH pursues this goal is by developing and propagating core competencies for disaster health curriculums.

The center's most recent effort is a curriculum recommendations project based on a recent article published in "Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness," written by experts from the NCDMPH and the Center for Public Health Preparedness and Disaster Response. These collaborators identified 11 core competencies for all personnel who could potentially fall under Emergency Support Function #8 – a method for providing coordinated federal assistance to victims of major disasters or public health and medical emergencies.

The NCDMPH has taken the journal's 11 recommendations and turned them into proposed curriculum benchmarks in concert with Graduate School of Nursing faculty members, Drs. Heather Johnson and



The National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health recently developed curriculum recommendations for health care professionals that can be used in a variety of situations, including major disasters and public health and medical emergencies.

to mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery and can be customized to meet the specific needs of health care scholars.

"The unique aspect of this project is that it connects competencies for pediatric care in disaster situations [to] learning objectives and resources [identified by content experts]," said Ling. "This allows the educator to focus a class or course on identified critical topics while tailoring learning activities and evaluations to the learner population."

Johnson expounded on the value of a customizable curriculum, citing the need to plan for adolescent care during unexpected tragedies.

"The recent events in Boston underscore the unpredictability of disasters," she said.

"Sadly, children and others from vulnerable populations were among the victims. The importance of being prepared to care for children in these situations cannot be over-emphasized."

A draft of NCDMPH's curriculum recommendations were presented at the March 2013 Public Health Preparedness Summit and can be accessed online at www.ncdmpH.usuhs.edu.

Catherine Ling, assistant professor in the Family Nurse Practitioner Program at USU. Together, they created, "Curriculum Recommendations for Disaster Health Professionals: The Pediatric Population."

Their peer-reviewed curriculum recommendations are designed to aid disaster educators in teaching about the needs of children. They align with the core competencies relating



Save the Date August 15, 2013 at 11:30 a.m. Festival of Cultures

The festival will include food and beverages, music, face painting, clowns and other family-friendly activities.

USU dental faculty earn top honors from prestigious university

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

The Uniformed Services University is home to many distinguished faculty members, and two of them were recognized by the University of Pittsburgh recently.

Pitt alumni, Army Col. (Dr.) Priscilla Hamilton, dean of USU's Army Postgraduate Dental College, and her predecessor, retired Col. (Dr.) Robert Manga, former dean and professor emeritus of the APDS, were honored for outstanding accomplishments in dental medicine.

Hamilton – a comprehensive dentist with extensive deployment experience – is one of Pitt's 225th Anniversary Medallion recipients. Hamilton earned the prestigious award for her many pioneering contributions to military dentistry, which include serving as the first female commander of the U.S. Army Dental Command.

"I'm still awed that I was selected to receive this honor from the university. To say that I'm humbled would be an understatement," she said.

Manga, a fellow trailblazer and career Army dentist, received the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year Award from the Pitt School of Dental Medicine for his contributions to society and the profession of dentistry. Before retiring from the military in February, Manga was chief of graduate dental education for the Army Dental Corps and the first dean of the Army Postgraduate Dental School at USU.

"I always said that when serving as dean of the Army Postgraduate Dental School and the chief of Graduate Dental Education I had the third best job in the Dental Corps. The second best was to be a program and assistant program director of a residency program. The best was to be able to treat patients. The soldiers are the reason we serve," said Manga.

For Hamilton and Manga, part of that service has included teaching other military dentists to care for



Courtesy Photo

Army Col. (Dr.) Priscilla Hamilton (left), dean of the the Army Postgraduate Dental College at the Uniformed Services University, and retired Col. (Dr.) Robert Manga (right), former dean and professor emeritus of the APDS, were recognized by Dr. Thomas Braun (center), dean of the University of Pittsburgh's School of Dental Medicine, for their contributions to the field of dentistry with prestigious alumni awards given at the Dean's Scholarship Ball earlier this year.

servicemembers as esteemed members of USU's faculty.

"Awards like these further demonstrate the quality of USU's faculty. They truly are a world class group. The respect and esteem they've earned from other leaders in academic health

care speaks volumes about USU's programs and reputation," said Dr. Patrick Sculley, executive dean of USU's Postgraduate Dental College. "I'm humbled and honored to work alongside top-caliber dentists like Drs. Hamilton and Manga."

USU's color guard seeks new talent

By MC2 Brittney Cannady, writer

The university's color guard is seeking new brigade volunteers to represent the Uniformed Services University at ceremonies and public events. In the past, this has included USU's commencement, change-of-command ceremonies, Major League Baseball games, warrior galas and other high-profile events.

Although membership on USU's color guard team is rigorous, it's also prestigious and rooted in military history.

"(As a member of the color guard,) you get to learn a lot about the other service cultures. It's a great experience in general," said HM1 Juan Vega, USU's newest color guard member.

For more information about USU's color guard, contact Army Staff Sgt. Michael Bennett at michael.bennett@usuhs.edu. Membership is open to all enlisted personnel currently assigned to USU.

Final Frame



Photo courtesy of Walter Reed Public Affairs

Dr. Paul Pasquina, a School of Medicine alumnus and chair of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the Uniformed Services University and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, briefed the new Joint Staff Surgeon Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Nadja West during her recent visit to WRNMMC.