



NATIONAL CENTERS OF
EXCELLENCE
IN WOMEN'S HEALTH

**Innovation at the
National Centers of Excellence
in Women's Health**

May 2000

OFFICE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES

The National Centers of Excellence (CoEs) in Women's Health were established in 1996 by the Office on Women's Health within the Department of Health and Human Services. Their mandate is to establish and evaluate a new model health care system that unites women's health research, medical training, clinical care, public health education, community outreach, and the promotion of women in academic medicine around a common mission – to improve the health status of diverse women across the life span.

This pamphlet highlights some of the innovative activities and programs at the CoEs to advance women's health. Now that's a good idea!

Encouraging the Next Generation of Women Scientists and Women's Health Professionals

- ◆ Wisconsin hosts a Career Day Program for high school girls.
- ◆ Magee hosts a summer internship program for high school and college students in women's health research.
- ◆ At Yale, an email-mentoring program for undergraduate women matches students who are members of "Society for Women in Science" with faculty at the School of Medicine.
- ◆ UCSF sponsors an internship program for Asian American students.
- ◆ A Women's Health course is offered to Yale undergraduate students.

- ◆ The Michigan Women's Health Program sponsored 20 sites for the University's "Alternative Spring Break" program. In this program, students are placed at sites across the United States to work with and serve communities.
- ◆ The "Prospective Student Housing Program" at Yale matches women applicants to the medical school with current women medical students.
- ◆ The Harvard Medical School Center of Excellence contacted surviving members of the first class of women to enter the medical school (Class of '49) and encouraged them to establish a one-year fellowship for a female junior faculty member to aid her academic progress. Commitments were secured for funding 22 junior faculty fellowships, as well as additional funds to support 3 minority fellowships for junior faculty.
- ◆ OSU sponsors the Moms in Science Program, which focuses on the realities of life as a mother with a medical career.
- ◆ Wisconsin hosts a popular First Friday Breakfast Series for Women Faculty.
- ◆ Illinois convened the Young Women in Science and Technology Conference.
- ◆ MCP Hahnemann is evaluating and expanding its nationally acclaimed Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine program.
- ◆ The IU CoE has created an undergraduate course given for credit on the IUPUI campus on "Women's Health."
- ◆ MCP Hahnemann offers summer internships to college-students interested in pursuing careers in women's health.
- ◆ MCP Hahnemann offers a women's Health Affinity Group for

first and second year students.

- ◆ MCP Hahnemann pre-clinical students are able to participate in a women's health research program as both investigators designing the study as well as study participants.

Research and Education Resources

- ◆ UCSF created one of the first directories of women's health researchers.
- ◆ At OSU, the Women's Health Research Listserv is utilized to communicate announcements about women's health research activities and other events related to women's health.
- ◆ Tulane/Xavier University formed a Curriculum Advisory Committee to develop a women's health curriculum. The committee includes an academic dean from the medical, nursing, dental, pharmacy, social work, and public health schools.
- ◆ MCP Hahnemann has developed an extensive women's health reference collection, including books, reports, journal articles, and videos.
- ◆ MCP Hahnemann sponsored a city-wide Philadelphia Health Fair with an emphasis on women's health wellness and prevention.
- ◆ Indiana's Center of Excellence is working with the School of Medicine Library to create an on-line women's health resource for the public that can be accessed from all public libraries around the state.
- ◆ The Center of Excellence at the University of Puerto Rico prepares on-line literature searches for faculty, students, and the general public.

- ◆ Illinois sponsors a summer research institute on women's health.
- ◆ Wake Forest has organized a "leadership" reference library.

Innovative Public Outreach Efforts

- ◆ Harvard hosted the "Boston Heart Party," a 4-month (from Valentine's Day to Mother's Day) campaign to educate local women about cardiovascular disease. This program included screenings, information about CVD risk factors, and heart health management tips for women. Screenings were held at more than 60 sites and included blood pressure measurement, cholesterol and glucose testing, and individualized risk factor profiles.
- ◆ The University of Pennsylvania sends out a weekly email newsletter, Current Women's Health Newsletter, to over 400 subscribers. The newsletter contains the latest scientific news, facts on women's health, nutrition tips, and recipes.
- ◆ OSU sponsored the "Science in the Cinema" program that discusses the portrayal of scientific and medical information in popular films.
- ◆ At Indiana University, Wishard Hospital employees and their families received coupons for free or reduced-price mammograms.
- ◆ Providers are given a "prescription pad" for health information for their patients, which patients can "fill" at the UCLA's Women's Education and Resource Center.
- ◆ The UCLA Center of Excellence also disseminated a press release of the "Top 10 Celebrity Women in Women's Health Education" list. The CoE leadership board chose this list.
- ◆ Wake Forest's CoE sponsors the "Health at the Well" program with a local public library where they have set up a "well" of

information through lectures and “hands-on” workshops on different health topics each month.

- ◆ The Maryland CoE developed “Dental FAQs for Women,” a list of frequently asked questions about good dental health.
- ◆ Wake Forest CoE sponsored the “Excellence Triathlon” to benefit domestic violence programs and to raise awareness about domestic violence issues.

Unique Partnerships

- ◆ The University of Pennsylvania has partnered with Barnes & Noble bookstores to host a seminar series on women's health issues, covering topics such as weight issues, menopause, mind/body/spirit, infertility, and stress.
- ◆ Michigan has installed over 300 ATM-like women's health kiosks in malls, offices, libraries, and hospitals throughout the state.
- ◆ Wake Forest sponsors the Best Health Store, located in a local shopping mall.
- ◆ Tulane/Xavier partnered with Wal-Mart pharmacies to promote Breast Cancer Awareness month in October. Shoppers were given a card and pin stressing the importance of breast cancer screening, and received free clinical breast exams and reduced cost mammograms.
- ◆ The University of Maryland arranged for a United Way designation to obtain CoE contributions and Avon Matching Funds sales at their kiosk.

Media Campaigns

- ◆ Magee's CoE sponsors an ongoing series of ½ hour infomercials on TV, covering topics such as STDs, breast cancer, and urinary incontinence.
- ◆ A consortium at Harvard, including the Division of Women's Health at Brigham and Women's Hospital, the Telemedicine Dept. at Partners, and other institutions, submitted a proposal for the development and evaluation of a women's health TV channel. If funded, the channel will be part of a comprehensive, interactive, on-demand patient education TV network.

Food, Food, Glorious Food!

- ◆ The University of Pennsylvania hosts healthy cooking classes.
- ◆ In collaboration with Giant Eagle Grocery Stores, Magee produced a new women's health publication that will be distributed free at Giant Eagle locations.
- ◆ MCP Hahnemann posted nutrition education materials on the web, including quizzes.
- ◆ Illinois is planning a project on botanical dietary supplements for women's health, which will include women from all racial groups.

Focusing on the Health Needs of Specific Groups

- ◆ The University of Pennsylvania's CoE developed the Health Tip Card Project, an educational outreach activity that is socially and culturally specific to African American women. These easy-to-read cards with large, colorful pictures cover topics such as cardiovascular disease, depression, cancers, and female aging issues. The tip cards emphasize the role women can take to ensure healthy lifestyles and includes a list of community

resources as well as a “heart healthy” recipe.

- ◆ The University of Pennsylvania designed an outreach program, entitled “Did You See What She Said?: Creating Access to Healthcare with Deaf Women.” This program seeks to overcome the health care barriers and optimize the use of visually accessible information pathways in an effort to empower Deaf women to become informed and effective consumers and advocates of health care services.
- ◆ Magee Women’s Hospital CoE developed a CD carrying case for teens, which includes health information, hotline numbers, and a health diary calendar with sticker reminders for health checkups.
- ◆ Working with local organizations, MCP Hahnemann has developed a women’s health program for the Asian community and is exploring women’s health needs of the Egyptian community.
- ◆ The University of Washington hosted a summer institute to train investigators on how to conduct research in minority and underserved populations.
- ◆ Junior faculty at Boston University are conducting a survey and toxicological assessment of hair care products used by African American women in hair salons. This study will assess the effects that these products may have on women’s health and on the health of their children who accompany them to the salons.
- ◆ Maryland hosts “Planning for Fatherhood” classes.
- ◆ With pharmacy faculty, University of Wisconsin CoE hosted “Sorority Talks,” a seminar series for sorority members on campus regarding contraception and STD prevention.

- ◆ To assess patients' perceived need for health care, the University of Washington held focus groups with Somali, Hispanic, Vietnamese and African American women.
- ◆ Tulane/Xavier developed a health education model on STDs for high school girls in African-American inner city schools and for young adults in Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- ◆ The University of Washington developed a pamphlet series on 10 health topics identified as being most relevant to underserved target groups. Topics include a pamphlet on how to navigate the health care system for new immigrants and breast cancer in African American women.
- ◆ The University of Puerto Rico is conducting a survey on knowledge and attitudes about HIV/Sexual Transmission among inmates at a women's prison.
- ◆ The University of Illinois CoE is developing a project to increase public awareness about HIV/STD infection. This project will be targeted for women outside of the metropolitan Chicago area who do not perceive themselves to be at risk.
- ◆ The University of Puerto Rico developed a health education program for adolescent girls.
- ◆ UCSF is looking into the possibility of developing internship opportunities for local adolescent girls at-risk for under-achievement.

Advances in Information Technology

- ◆ Michigan developed an interactive, comprehensive CD-ROM for patients on prenatal and pregnancy education.
- ◆ Indiana developed a patient education CD-ROM for smoking

prevention and cessation for girls and women.

- ◆ The ELAM Program of MCP Hahnemann University's CoE had created an exclusive software program designed to help program participants and others with strategic planning and implementation. With the software's "practice playing field", users can see the effect and impact of decisions up to five years after their implementation.
- ◆ A CD-ROM on domestic violence is shown as part of the third year Obstetrics/Gynecology clerkship at Indiana University.
- ◆ UCLA developed a "Surfing the Net" guide for users not familiar with the web.
- ◆ Boston developed an interactive CD-ROM on breast cancer control for medical students.

Encouraging Clinical Trials

- ◆ Boston highlights a "Trial of the Month" page on their web site, which highlights a specific clinical trial with greater detail on the background of the principal investigator, the study's goals, and

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