



*Welcome from...*

## **Marja M. Hurley, M.D.**

*Professor of Medicine  
Associate Dean & Director  
Health Career Opportunity Programs  
University of Connecticut Health Center*

This year has been a tremendous year for the programs in the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs. The impact of these programs on helping students realize their dreams of becoming health professionals is seen in many different ways. Among the 2010 graduates of the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine here at the University of Connecticut Health Center are 14 students who participated in at least one of our pipeline programs.

We had over 200 middle school, high school and college students participating in our 2010 Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative (Aetna HPPI) Summer Programs sponsored by the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs (HCOP). During the academic year 2010-2011, we anticipate over 1,000 students participating in our after school, partner high schools, Saturday Academies and college programs. Early exposure to the various fields in the biomedical sciences will ultimately increase the diverse pool of students who pursue careers in medicine.

HCOP is an integral part of the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine's educational community at the UConn Health Center. The Schools of Medicine and

Dental Medicine are actively committed to the recruitment, retention and graduation of diverse dental and medical students who are capable of providing culturally competent health care.

The Aetna HPPI programs and activities are designed, coordinated and implemented through this department. They have proven to be top-notch because the under-represented students who have successfully completed their undergraduate degrees have actualized their goals of entering medical or dental school. It is for this reason that the programs and activities sponsored through HCOP are recognized as a national model. To date we have accomplished our goals and continue to develop new programs and fine-tune existing ones.

Finally, I would like to thank our entire faculty, staff and students at the Health Center and partner institutions for their dedication and support of these programs. I would also like to thank all of our funders for their continued financial support of our programs. A special recognition goes to the legislators of the state of Connecticut who have provided Aetna HPPI with state funds to support some of our existing programmatic initiatives.

Read about the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative and Pipeline programs at:

[www.hcop.uchc.edu](http://www.hcop.uchc.edu)



*A note from...*

## **Granville Wrensford, Ph.D., C.R.A.**

*Assistant Dean & Associate Director  
Health Career Opportunity Programs  
University of Connecticut Health Center*

I would like to thank everyone for making my first year here a very warm and pleasant experience. The year has been very exciting due to the many programs that are offered. We have seen an increase in the interest among students, parents and educators alike. Indeed we have visited many middle and high schools as well as colleges and universities throughout the state of Connecticut. We have also visited a few colleges in New York and Massachusetts.

We have added the Sport and Medical Sciences Academy, the Greater Hartford Academy of Mathematics and Science, and Jumoke Academy to our Great Explorations after school middle school programs. We had a pre health advisors workshop where advisors from local and regional colleges had an opportunity to interact with admissions and other personnel here at the Health Center. We also hosted the first Dental Impressions Program during our annual Bridges to the Future Science Mentoring Conference.

We had over 500 students participating in our summer and academic year programs. We interacted with an additional 685 students during recruitment and informational sessions. It pleases me to see such a large number of students excited about the health sciences and careers in the health professions. I am grateful to the many individuals who have contributed to the success of the programs.

As we prepare for another year, I must acknowledge the parents, guardians and students of the programs for their firm commitment. A special thank you also to Dr. Hurley and the HCOP staff, Dr. David Williams of the Greater Hartford Campus, and Dr. Lee Aggison Jr., Dr. Ruth Washington and Mr. Lee Melvin at the Storrs campus for their invaluable help.

## Summer 2010 Aetna HPPI Academy Staff (Greater Hartford Campus)



**Mr. Keith Carter, M.H.R.**  
Community Based Educational  
Specialist and Aetna HPPI  
Academy Program  
Coordinator.



**Ms. Shaneca Napier**  
Lead Peer Counselor.



**Mr. Joshua Freeman & Mr. Mark Montalvo**  
Peer Counselors.



**Ms. Cecilia Ortega & Mr. Adrian Howell**  
Peer Counselors.

*Dr. Wrensford and his staff would like to thank Dr. Williams  
and his staff at the University of Connecticut,  
Greater Hartford Campus.*

## *Congratulations to...*

### *Veronica Pimentel, M.D.*

Medical Doctor, Medical Student, Mentor



Dr. Veronica Maria Pimentel was born in the Cape Verde Islands and migrated to the United States when she was in high school. She graduated from Crosby High School in Waterbury, CT and received two bachelor degrees from the University of Connecticut. She then attended Purdue University where she graduated with a Masters in Audiology.

Dr. Pimentel is a first year resident at Boston Medical Center in Obstetrics and Gynecology. She is working with an underserved population that is very diverse ethnically, linguistically, and culturally. A large number of the patients are from her home country of Cape Verde. She is getting to know the Cape Verdean population in Boston, including physicians, other health professionals, and community leaders. She looks forward to getting more involved with the community and having the community become engaged with the Cape Verdean - American Medical Alliance (CV-AMA), an organization she founded with the mission of being dedicated to the advancement of medicine in the Cape Verdean community through advocacy, education, research and service. She is very excited about this.

Dr. Pimentel became involved with HCOP when she gained acceptance into the post-baccalaureate pre-medical program. During this time, she participated in two summer programs prior to starting medical school. While in medical school, she continuously volunteered for different HCOP programs, mostly through mentorship of younger students and participation in workshops. She also represented HCOP during various medical school activities. She returned to her high school, Crosby High, to speak with the students about her journey to medical school. Her overall goal is to continue encouraging young people to work hard, attend college and pursue a career in the health professions.

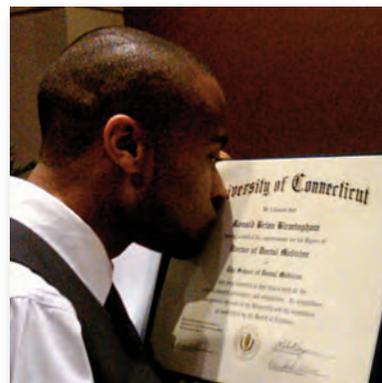
Dr. Pimentel's best HCOP experience was when she learned to reinforce the notion that she needed to believe in herself, work hard, look for mentors, and have faith that all barriers she will face will eventually fall. She would like to leave these words of advice and encouragement to all up and coming students interested in the health professions: "Put away your fears; let it

be the fear of not being well-prepared for the workload or not having the necessary financial or emotional support. Instead, try to find different mentors who will guide you, evaluate your strengths and weaknesses and help you address any concerns you may have. Contact different universities and ask about the programs they offer to young people interested in a health profession." She suggests that students attend these programs, work hard, do volunteer work, and have fun in the process. These are very important elements that contributed to her success as a student.

Dr. Pimentel wishes to recognize the three influential people that helped make her dream a reality. "Dr. Ardolino will always be in my heart for being a kind, compassionate, and resourceful mentor. The Student Continuity Preceptors at the Burgdorf Health Center, especially Dr. Flitcraft, for four years of hands-on learning and intellectually stimulating experiences, and I will always be thankful to Dr. Marja Hurley for believing in me and supporting me as well as for her leadership in the Health Center." She also expressed her gratitude to all of her teachers and preceptors because they have taught her so much and continuously inspired her to become a better physician. She also wishes to thank the HCOP staff for their support and contribution to her medical school journey. Above all, she wants to recognize her mom for her strength, love and exemplary life of service to the community.

### *Ronnie Birmingham, D.M.D.*

Dentist, Dental Student, Mentor



Dr. Ronnie Birmingham was born in Boston, MA, and moved to New Britain, CT while he was in middle school. Later his family settled in Milford, CT, where he graduated from Joseph A. Foran High School in 2001. Ronnie is a total product of the University of Connecticut where he received his undergraduate degree in 2005 in Physiology and Neurobiology. He is a 2010 University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine graduate. He will be starting a residency in general practice at Bronx Lebanon Hospital Center in NY, and

looks forward to returning to Connecticut upon completion of his residency.

Dr. Birmingham became involved with HCOP programs through the High School Research Apprenticeship Program during his senior year of high school. He stated, "As a new driver to the highways, I drove for over an hour everyday to participate in the program without missing a single day. This was a big sacrifice for me but I had a goal I wanted to achieve and am glad I did it." He would continue to take part in HCOP programs for the next five years and continued his work with the programs after he gained acceptance to the School of Dental Medicine as a mentor.

Dr. Birmingham's best HCOP experience was when he learned that his combined experiences were actually a passage to his overall success. He would like to leave the following message to anyone who believes that their goals are unattainable. "It's hard to think you'll get somewhere in life when in your head you are thinking you are the only one doing it. Don't let this stop you because you can achieve. College is a transition and a part of the highest passage; use your time to do what you are good at and harness the talent. Get involved with programs such as HCOP, interest clubs, and look to the college experience as an opportunity to grow and to gain purpose."

Dr. Birmingham wishes to recognize the three most influential people that helped make his dream a reality. Dr. Gerald Birmingham (his father), for being a strong parent, mentor, best friend, and a positive influence in his life. Dr. Boake Plessy and Dr. Marja Hurley for giving him the opportunity to be introduced to HCOP and providing him a firsthand look at an actual lab before he entered college, and providing him with the support he needed to achieve his overall goal of becoming a dentist. He states he will be forever in their debt.

*Ms. Marlyn Davila, M.S.W.*

*Former Jumpstart Student, Now UConn Alumni*



Ms. Marlyn Davila, a 2004 graduate of Bulkeley High School and 2008 UConn Alumni recently received her Masters of Social Work from the University Of Connecticut School Of Social Work. Ms. Davila spent most of her high school years tutoring her classmates and middle school students in math and science. She also participated in the Aetna HPPI programs. Her work with HCOP did not end after high school.

Ms. Davila worked as an undergraduate intern during her sophomore year where she played an integral role in the development of the Junior and Senior Doctors Programs. She also worked as a peer counselor with the programs throughout her undergraduate and graduate years. Ms. Davila will be joining the Wheeler Clinic as a clinician and plans to continue her work with HCOP during the weekends and spare time.

*Ms. Gian Grant*

*Former Aetna HPPI Academy Student,*

*Now a 2010 UConn Freshman*



Some college students can only dream of gaining acceptance into medical school during their undergraduate years of college. But for Gian Grant this dream began during her early years of high school. Ms. Grant is a 2010 graduate of Windsor High School and is currently a student in the combined B.A./B.S. and M.D. program (CPiM). The University of

Connecticut and the University of Connecticut School of Medicine offer a combined B.A./B.S. and M.D. program that will lead to the awarding of an undergraduate degree and a medical degree. At the time of admission to the undergraduate program, the combined program allows for provisional acceptance to the School of Medicine once the student has completed the undergraduate degree.

The program gives gifted and talented high school students, who are certain that they want to become physicians, the opportunity to combine liberal arts and professional education. The undergraduate and professional schools are committed to providing a culture that reflects diversity with respect to age, gender, racial and ethnic origins, and academic concentrations across many disciplines. The combined program is viewed as a liberating opportunity for gifted and talented students to more fully develop their interests and encourages students to explore a wide range of undergraduate courses encompassing the sciences, humanities, and social sciences.

Her initial reaction to the news of acceptance into the CPiM program was one of shock and also an immense sense of pride for being one step closer to completing her goal of becoming a pediatric hematologist. Ms. Grant states she was proud of the hard work that she had completed in order to gain acceptance in the program. And her hard work also reaffirmed for her that

it doesn't matter what your financial background is if you are educated and dedicated then you can achieve anything you put your mind to.

Ms. Grant is also a member of the prestigious UConn Honors Program and a John and Valerie Rowe Health Professions Scholar. The Rowe Health Professions Scholars Program is open to select incoming undergraduates who are Connecticut residents. The scholarship program is designed for students who intend to have careers in the health professions. The mission of the Rowe Scholars Program is to provide students from backgrounds that are underrepresented in the health fields with opportunities to learn about and prepare for careers in the health professions. These opportunities are financial, academic, and experiential in nature. Through mentoring, educational enrichment, community service, and professional development, students are poised to take their places as leaders in the health professions community. Students who are considered for a Rowe Scholarship generally rank within the top 10 percent of their high school class and have strong SAT scores (especially in mathematics).

During high school, Ms. Grant participated in several extracurricular activities including the Aetna HPPI Academy programs, and the National Honors Society. She was also an active member of the West Indian Club located in Hartford. She received acceptance letters to Fordham, Stony Brook, Boston, and Clark Universities and the University of Connecticut where she is currently in her freshman year majoring in Pathobiology. Ms. Grant is currently a member of the Black Students Association and SUBOG Concert Committee on campus.

## Congratulations Senior Doctors Academy Graduates 2009-2010 Academic Year

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| ■ Klajdi Avdiaj      | ■ Aundre Barnaby     |
| ■ Ariana Barrenechea | ■ Gabrielle Bennett  |
| ■ Avani Bhoj         | ■ Gierra Castillo    |
| ■ Somaly Chhean      | ■ Anik Costa         |
| ■ Syreeta Crawford   | ■ Faith Crittenden   |
| ■ Chelsea Flores     | ■ Beatriz A. Frausto |
| ■ Gian Grant         | ■ Tiffany Gray       |
| ■ Ceilena A. Gurahoo | ■ Robert Harris      |
| ■ Marian Hasan       | ■ Kwania Hayes       |
| ■ Shoshannah Harris  | ■ Khalelah Joseph    |
| ■ Trisha Kwarko      | ■ Yancy Lor          |
| ■ Shimmel Melville   | ■ Andrew Morgan      |
| ■ Kayla Ritter       | ■ Jerry Rivera       |
| ■ Javar Stephenson   | ■ Kristin Springer   |

## *Congratulations to Our Mentors*

### University of Connecticut Health Center Medical and Dental School 2010 Graduates

- Ronald Birmingham, D.M.D.
- Noel Baker, M.D.
- Afton Ellis, D.M.D.
- Adeniyi Fisayo, M.D.
- Camile Gooden, M.D.
- Mwatsveruka Munhutu, D.M.D.
- Veronica Pimentel, M.D.
- Sheldon Sealy, D.M.D.
- David Woods, D.M.D.
- Michael Woods, D.M.D.

## *A Returning Face...*

### Former Aetna HPPI Academy Student Now a Yale College Student



The Aetna HPPI Academy welcomed one of their own back during the academy programs closing ceremony. **Ms. Oluwadamilola (Demi) Oni-Orisan** recently took a brief break from her studies at Yale University to bring words of encouragement and strength to her fellow classmates. Ms. Oni-Orisan is in her freshman year at Yale University majoring in neurobiology. She plans to become a pediatric neurosurgeon.

Ms. Oni-Orisan graduated valedictorian of the New Britain High School class of 2009. During high school she attended classes at the Greater Hartford Mathematics and Science Academy, participated in the Aetna HPPI programs, and a number of enrichments programs offered at the University of Connecticut including a trip to South Africa where she was afforded an opportunity to work with UConn's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Ms. Oni-Orisan, also received acceptance to the University of Connecticut Combined Program In Medicine, Princeton, Brown, Cornell, Dartmouth, and John Hopkins Universities, but chose Yale. HCOP is very proud of her and wishes her all the best.

## *2010 Award Recipients*

### John and Valerie Rowe Scholarship

Each year, the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs provides scholarships in the form of book awards to students from the Aetna HPPI Academy who will enroll as freshmen at the University of Connecticut. The 2010 John and Valerie Rowe book awards recipients were announced at the May 5 closing ceremony of the Aetna HPPI Academy. They are Somaly Chhean, Faith Crittenden, Mariam Hasan, and Javar Stephenson. All four recipients participated in numerous middle and high school programs sponsored by HCOP.

### Friends of the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs Scholarship Fund



In honor of **Dr. Boake Plessy's** contributions, the UConn Health Center has established a scholarship fund that will be used to support educational enhancement for students who participated in Aetna HPPI programs and are planning to continue their education at the post-secondary level. The Friends of the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs scholarship was awarded to Gian Grant and Kristen Springer on May 5, 2010 at the Annual Academic Year Recognition Closing Ceremony.

*To contribute to these funds, or for more information about philanthropy to support the Health Career Opportunity Programs at the UConn Health Center, please call Dina Plapler, Vice President for Development, at 860-679-1122.*



Graduates from the Aetna HPPI Saturday Academy received scholarships to pursue undergraduate studies at UConn: (seated from left) Kristen Springer, Faith Crittenden, Somaly Chhean, (standing from left) HCOP Associate Director Granville Wrensford, Gian Grant, Javar Stephenson, and Dr. Marja Hurley, HCOP Director.

## *In the Spotlight...*

*Ms. Sharon Plummer*  
Bloomfield High School Guidance Counselor



**A** counselor with a mission are the words that would best describe Ms. Sharon Plummer, school counselor at Bloomfield High School. Ms. Plummer is an energetic yet caring person with the biggest heart of gold. Most educators would agree that it is more than a full time job preparing students, not only for success through their high school years, but their work extends throughout the rest of each and every student life. As a high school counselor, Ms. Plummer has been working for several years to ensure that not only will the students of Bloomfield High be prepared for life beyond college, but she is working to ensure they are prepared for life. She has extended her work towards creating relationships with enrichment programs, such as the Aetna HPPI Academy Programs where she was recently recognized for her outstanding efforts at promoting the Academy among her students.

Ms. Plummer's students admire and respect her and feel that she is one of the best in the business. And her message of success resonates throughout all of her students. For her outstanding service to her community as well as her school, Ms. Plummer received the HCOP Recognition Award during the programs closing ceremony. Quoting the old African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," Ms. Plummer is a true dream maker and a value to her school and community.

## *Enrichment Programs...*

### **Great Explorations**



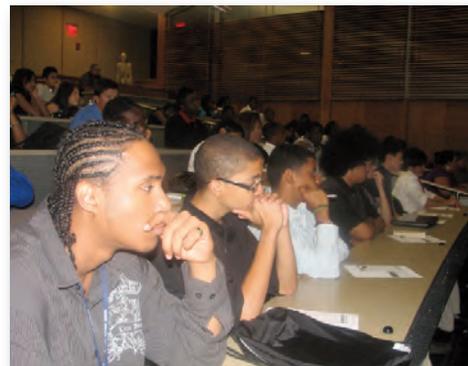
The Great Explorations Program is an after-school program designed to provide extra curricular activities in math, science, and reading to 6th, 7th and 8th grade middle school students. Students participating in the Great

Explorations Program are currently enrolled in one of six Hartford Public Middle Schools, Bellizzi, Greater Hartford Academy of Mathematics and Science, Jumoke Academy, Kennelly, Naylor, and Sport and Medical Science Academy.

Great Explorations offers a four-week summer academic enrichment program for approximately 30 rising 7th and 8th grade participants. The program is held at the Greater Hartford Academy of Mathematics and Science. Students receive instruction in math, science, and language arts.

The Great Explorations Program targets any racially ethnic group, i.e. African American, Hispanic, Latino, Native American, Native Hawaiian, and others from disadvantaged backgrounds meeting all eligibility criteria.

### **Aetna HPPI Academy**



The Aetna Health Profession Partnership Initiative Academy is designed to provide educational opportunities which may not be available to a number of Connecticut high

school students. The purpose of the Aetna HPPI Academy is to provide access and preparation to students interested in health professions who come from backgrounds where they are the first in their family to earn a four-year degree, come from modest family means, and/or are from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in healthcare. Students participating in the Aetna HPPI Academy are generally recruited from Hartford area schools and have chosen to pursue careers in the health professions. Aetna HPPI Academy students aspire to become doc-

tors, dentists, biomedical research scientists, pharmacists and nurses.

The Aetna HPPI Academy has two major components: the summer program and the academic-year program. Both components are offered at the University of Connecticut Greater Hartford campus. The summer and academic year programs are designed to advance students' academic skill levels in math, science and language arts. The programs promote personal growth through extracurricular experiences designed to help students develop the skills necessary to succeed in Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the American College Test (ACT) testing.

## High School Mini Medical/Dental School Seminar Series



The High School Mini Medical/ Dental School Seminar Series offers eight to ten weekly lectures and demonstrations presented by faculty members of the University of Connecticut Schools of Medicine and

Dental Medicine. Topics include molecular biology, pharmacology, cardiology, oncology, and dental medicine. Participants of the High School Mini Medical/Dental School Seminar Series are eleventh and twelfth grade students who are in state residents and selected by their school guidance counselors or science teachers. All students have shown a strong interest in pursuing careers in medicine, dental medicine and the biological sciences. For more information, contact Anna Curtin at 860-679-3484.

## College Science Partnership

More than 100 students from Sport and Medical Sciences Academy participated in the 2009-2010 College Science Partnership Series sponsored by HCOP. Under the leadership of Dr. Kathy Martin-Troy (Molecular Biological Sciences Department at Central Connecticut State University) students participated in five biology and chemistry labs at Central Connecticut State University.

## Epidemiology



The Epidemiology Program, a series of five programs, was held for seniors from the Sport and Medical Sciences Academy (SMSA) to introduce basic concepts and terminology used in

the study of epidemiology. Under the direction of Dr. Scott Wetstone and Dr. Richard Stevens, the program provided an introduction to general epidemiology as well as descriptive, applied, and analytical epidemiology and screening. Twelve 11th and 12th graders attended sessions at the UConn Health Center on two occasions, and Dr. Stevens and Dr. Richards visited SMSA on three occasions.

## High School Student Research Apprenticeship Program

Fifteen students had the opportunity to be a part of a research team and learn laboratory techniques through the 2010 High School Student Research Apprenticeship Program Summer Program. As part of the 2010 program, eight students commuted daily to Central Connecticut State University and seven students commuted daily to the UConn Health Center for their research project. In order to be eligible for HSSRAP, students must be 16 years of age by the start of the program.

## Pre-College Enrichment Program

The Pre-College Enrichment Program is a six week residential enrichment program for incoming students at the University of Connecticut. Designed to provide solid development of scientific, mathematical, communications, problem-solving, and test taking skills, it is intended to enhance the college preparedness of freshmen students. It allows the students to experience life on a college campus prior to their matriculation in the fall. This past summer, 13 students participated in either an academic track or a research track. Students in the academic track concentrated on academic courses, while those on the research track completed a research project. All participants also engaged in numerous enrichment activities at the Health Center.

## College Enrichment Program

The College Enrichment Program is designed for college sophomores. The program's curriculum focus on critical math and science skills needed for success. A total of six students are selected annually to participate in this program. The program is held at the University of Connecticut in Storrs. In addition to academic preparation, students participate in weekly enrichment lectures at the UConn Health Center.

## Medical/Dental Preparatory Programs



The Medical/Dental Preparatory Program students are selected from various universities throughout the country to work on academic skills

and foundation as well as on preparation for the MCAT or DAT examination. A total of 37 participants are bussed daily to the UConn Health Center for classes, guest lectures and enrichment programs. The Medical/Dental Preparatory Program is housed at Central Connecticut State University.

## Summer Research Fellowship Program



The Summer Research Fellowship Program is a nine-week research enrichment experience designed for college sophomores, juniors, seniors, and recent graduates who are interested in a career in medicine, dental medicine or biomedical research and for applicants who have completed some college coursework in biology and chemistry (preferably through organic chemistry). In the summer of 2010, a total of nine

students participated in the program. A faculty sponsor is identified for each student. Faculty develops and makes available suitable project descriptions. The student contacts their faculty sponsor in April or May and develops a research protocol. Minority Access to Research Careers students are encouraged to apply. Students devote approximately 30 hours per week of work on a research project and 10 hours per week of clinical experience.

## Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program



The Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program is a six-week clinical enrichment experience designed for rising college sophomores, juniors, seniors or recent graduates. In the summer of 2010 a total of six students participated in the program. The program is designed to provide the following: clinical research and enrichment experiences, an introduction to health disparities across cultural, principles of clinical medicine, public health research and interventions, an overview approach to cultural definitions, public health issues, and discussions of specific techniques for working with diverse populations in community settings. Housing is available.

## Parental Seminar Series

The fall Parental Seminar Series is designed for parents or guardians of scholars enrolled in the Aetna HPPI Academy. Guest speakers are from the UConn Health Center and the University of Connecticut. The University of Connecticut Greater Hartford Campus hosts the event. Topics are chosen based on the interest of the parents or guardians. Each fall, participants complete a survey indicating topics and areas of interest. The topics are divided into two general areas: health related topics and college admissions topics. This past year the health related topics and speakers included Dr. Beatriz E. Tandler, Assistant Professor at the UConn Health Center who spoke on hypertension, and Dr. Geraldine Pearson, Assistant Professor at UConn Health Center who spoke on stress management.

An overwhelming sentiment among the participants was the need for additional information on the college admissions process and financing college education. Mr. Jason Hodge from the office of Undergraduate Admissions at the Storrs campus, and Mr. Dennis Seymour, from the office of Undergraduate Admissions at the Greater Hartford campus, provided valuable information on college admissions, financial aid and completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Form. For additional information please contact the office of Financial Aid at [www.financialaid.uconn.edu](http://www.financialaid.uconn.edu).

The Student Support Services Program at the University of Connecticut also generated interest among the parents/guardians. Mr. Leo Lachut, a counselor in the program at Storrs, made a presentation and answered questions during one of the sessions.

## College Lecture Series

The Aetna HPPI offers a series of lectures from different health care providers at the University of Connecticut Greater Hartford Campus and the University of Connecticut Storrs Campus. The lecture series are geared towards students with an interest in health professions.

This past year, speakers included Dr. Edward Thibodeau, Associate Dean for Dental Admissions at UConn Health Center, who spoke about admissions to dental school; Dr. Barbara Kream, Professor of Medicine and Director of the combined MD/PhD Program, who spoke about admissions to the program; Dr. Rafael Pacheco, a recent graduate of UConn School of Medicine and current resident at UConn Health Center, who spoke about his experience in medical school and his path in selecting a residency program; Dr. Granville Wrensford, Assistant Dean and Associate Director, HCOP, who spoke about preparing for graduate and professional school. There was also a session where current students at the Health Center, Marcus Moss, Kevon Rennie, Amoah Yeboah-Korang and Adeniyi Fisayo spoke about their experiences as students and offered advice to the college students.

For more information, please contact Mr. Keith Carter at (860) 679-8031.

## 2010 Bridge Conference



The 2010 Annual Bridge to the Future Mentoring Conference was held on Saturday, April 9, with over 120 high school and college students participating. The students were from diverse backgrounds. They were brought together with UConn Health Center faculty, staff, medical, dental and graduate students to interact in a series of activities to raise awareness about health and biomedical science careers and the admissions process for medical, dental, and graduate schools. HCOP, the University of Connecticut Chapter of the Student National Medical Association, Student National Dental Association and the Hispanic Student Dental Association Chapters sponsored the 2010 Annual Bridge to the Future Mentoring Conference. The Jack and Valerie Rowe Health Professions Scholars Program Fund supported the conference.

Enrichment activities for high school students included presentations on dentistry by Dr. Arthur Hand and the MD/PhD program by Dr. Barbara Kream. There was also a college admissions panel from UConn Storrs, Wesleyan University and Central Connecticut State University who provided the students with valuable information. Dr. Barbara Bell from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, also participated on the panel. Led by a group of medical students, the high school students also participated in some hands on activities such as recording blood pressure and surgical suturing. College students who participated in enrichment seminars learned about the admissions process for graduate, medical and dental programs offered at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and Dental Medicine.

The college students participated in a mock admissions process where they served as potential Admissions Committee evaluators. Student participants ranked prospective applicants based on their academic profiles, letters of recommendation and DAT/MCAT scores. Led by facilitators, the participants engaged in discussions and activities similar to the admissions

committees at the Health Center. This process helped the students better understand what admissions committees are looking for in qualified candidates.

During this year's conference, the first ever Dental Impressions Program for college students interested in dental medicine was held. This program consisted of a series of information sessions specifically related to dentistry, in addition to several hands on activities such as taking dental impressions and touring the dental labs at the Health Center. Approximately thirty college students participated in this component of the conference.

Both the high school and college students had an opportunity to listen to personal anecdotes from students currently enrolled at the University of Connecticut Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine and the Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences. The medical, dental and graduate students shared their pro-

gression through their respective health professions school and allowed the high school and college students to ask questions. This was a very informative dialog for all participants.

## Aetna Foundation Meets Beneficiaries of Gift

The UConn Foundation recently hosted a luncheon for executives from the Aetna Foundation to meet some of the students who have benefited from the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative. The executives met with the students and administrators of the program to discuss the impact of the program on the students' lives and educational achievements. The Aetna Foundation made a \$2 million donation to support the Aetna HPPI in 2005.



**Front row from left:** Aisha Castater, second-year medical student, Tiffany Brady, second-year dental student, Shawnet Jones '09, second-year medical student, and Shanado Williams '11, senior in the undergraduate program. **Back row from left:** Aetna Foundation Vice President Chris Montross, Assistant Dean and Associate Director of Health Careers Opportunity Programs Granville Wrensford, Aetna Foundation Program Consultant Melenie Magnotta, Aetna Foundation Vice President of Corporate Relations Sharon Dalton, Aetna Foundation President Anne Beal, Associate Dean and Director of HPPI Marja Hurley, M.D., and Keith Carter, community based educational specialist and coordinator of HPPI Academy Program.

# Bridge to the Future Mentoring Conference



## Alumni Speakers for the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Bridge Mentoring Conference and Summer Closing Ceremonies



On April 10, the Annual Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Program Conference was held for over 100 high school and college students at the UConn Health Center. The keynote speaker for the conference was **Cynthia Roque, M.D.**, a pediatric resident at the University of Connecticut Pediatric Residency Program working at the Connecticut Children's Medical

Center. Dr. Roque is currently a general pediatrician at the Community Health Center in New London, CT. Dr. Roque graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Medicine in 2007.



On July 30, closing ceremonies were held at the UConn Health Center for one hundred fifty participants from the Jumpstart Program, Juniors Doctors Academy, Seniors Doctors Academy, High School Student Research Apprentice Program, Pre College Enrichment Program, and the Summer Research Fellowship Program.

During the morning session, the participants of the High School Student Research Apprentice Program gave oral and poster presentations on the outcome of their research experience a research symposium for faculty and invited guests. On July 29th, the participants of the Summer Research Fellowship Program presented their posters in a session for faculty and staff. **Ricardo Whyte, M.D.**, Medical Director of Chemical Dependency Services at the Behavioral Health Institute of Loma Linda University Medical Center was the Keynote Speaker. Dr. Whyte participated in the Scholars Training Academy during the summer of 1993 and the Medical Dental Preparatory Program in 1996. Dr. Whyte graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Medicine in 2004.

The July 23rd and July 30th Closing Ceremonies marked the culmination of a six-week and nine-week summer enrichment experience for students from the seventh-grade level to students who matriculated at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and Dental Medicine Class of 2014. During these ceremonies, program participants were awarded certificates, and brief statements were made by students and coordinators for invited faculty, preceptors, friends and family members.



On July 23, closing ceremonies were held at the UConn Health Center for forty-nine participants from the College Enrichment Program, Medical/Dental Preparatory Program, and the Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program. Poster presentations from the participants of the Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program showing the outcome of their research experience were held.

**Damian Findlay, D.M.D.**, an oral and maxillofacial surgical resident at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City was scheduled to be the keynote speaker. Dr. Findlay participated in the Medical/Dental Preparatory Program Tracks One and Two during the summers of 2000 and 2001. Dr. Findlay graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine in 2006 and will receive a Doctor of Medicine Degree in May 2011.



## Acknowledgement: Funding Sources

AETNA FOUNDATION

CONNECTICUT STATE LEGISLATIVE FUND

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION CONNCAP GRANT

FISHER FOUNDATION

JOHN AND VALERIE ROWE HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOLARS PROGRAM

MORTENSEN FOUNDATION

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH CENTER FRIENDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH CAREERS OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH CENTER

## Dates to Remember

### **April 9, 2011**

Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Program

### **May 4, 2011**

Aetna HPPI Academy Closing Ceremony

### **June 20, 2011**

Start of the Aetna HPPI Summer Academy

## Application Deadlines

### **February 2011**

High School Mini Medical/Dental School Program  
Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program  
High School Student Research Apprenticeship Program  
Medical/Dental Preparatory Program  
Summer Research Fellowship Program

### **April 2011**

College Enrichment Program  
Pre-college Academic Enrichment Program  
Pre-college Research Program  
Aetna HPPI Academy  
Aetna HPPI Great Explorations

## We Welcome Your Comments

Please feel free to provide Keith A. Carter with your suggestions, ideas and comments for the next issue of the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Pipeline. You can contact him at (860) 679-8031.



## **If you would like more information about the University of Connecticut Health Center's Pipeline Programs...**

- Great Explorations Middle School Program, 6th- 8th grades
- Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Academy 6-week Summer and 20-week Academic Programs, 9th-12th grades
- Bulkeley High School, 9th-12th grades
- Sport and Medical Sciences Academy, 9th-12th grades
- Health Careers Discovery Program, 11th and 12th grades
- High School Summer Research Apprenticeship Program, 12th grade
- Mini Medical/Dental Series, 11th-12th grades
- Pre-College Enrichment Program, 13th grade
- College Enrichment Program, 13th-14th grades
- Medical/Dental Preparatory Program, 13th- 15th grades
- Summer Research Fellowship Program, 15th- 16th grades
- Post Baccalaureate Program, post-16th grades
- BS/DMD Joint Degree Program, 13th-16th grades

**See the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs website at:**

**[www.hcop.uhc.edu](http://www.hcop.uhc.edu)**



**University of Connecticut  
Health Center**

Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs  
263 Farmington Avenue  
Farmington, Connecticut 06030-3920