



DR. LARRY HOLLIER

# CHANCELLOR'S Notes



December 7, 2012

## LSUHSC public health student awarded scholarship

**B**randy Davis, an MPH student in the Health Policy and Systems Management Program at the LSUHSC School of Public Health, was selected as the recipient of the Gil Dupré Graduate Student Scholarship by the Louisiana Association of Health Plans. Carol Solomon, CEO of Peoples Health presented the scholarship award to Brandy last week during the LAHP Annual Meeting. Mrs. Solomon announced that Brandy was "unanimous choice" for the scholarship. She is the first LSUHSC School of Public Health student to receive this award.



Brandy Davis & Carol Solomon

LAHP established the Gil Dupré Graduate Student Scholarship as a community service to promote careers in the health benefits industry. Named for LAHP's founder and long-time chief executive officer who retired after a 41-year career, it is awarded to Louisiana students who have demonstrated strong promise of leadership in the health care profession, along with significant community involvement. The scholarship is designated for students enrolled in their final year of a graduate management program.

## LSUHSC research continues to find keys to future obesity & related diseases

**M**elinda Sothern, PhD, CEP, Professor and Director of the Behavioral and Community Health Sciences Program at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans School of Public Health, has been awarded \$675,000 in grant funding to advance her research on the role of social, genetic, environmental and behavioral determinants of future obesity. Five years later, Dr. Sothern is bringing back the same group of healthy children, now adolescents, in which she previously discovered early predictors of metabolic syndrome when they were 7-9 years old. The funding, from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, is a sub-project in collaboration with the University of Alabama Birmingham.



Dr. Melinda Sothern

Dr. Sothern is one of the few scientists conducting cross-sectional studies of obesity in children and adolescents. With soaring obesity rates and the earlier emergence of related conditions like type 2 diabetes, this type of research is critical. The identification of biomarkers at an early age may offer targets for diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

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## Doctoral Nurse Anesthesia program approved

**T**he BSN to DNP Entry Level Nurse Anesthesia Program at the LSUHSC School of Nursing has been approved by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA).



The Nurse Anesthesia program at LSUHSC's nursing school will now transition from a master's degree program to a doctoral degree program, although the prerequisite degree to apply will remain a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. The School of Nursing at LSU Health Sciences Center is now on the leading edge of the national trend of raising

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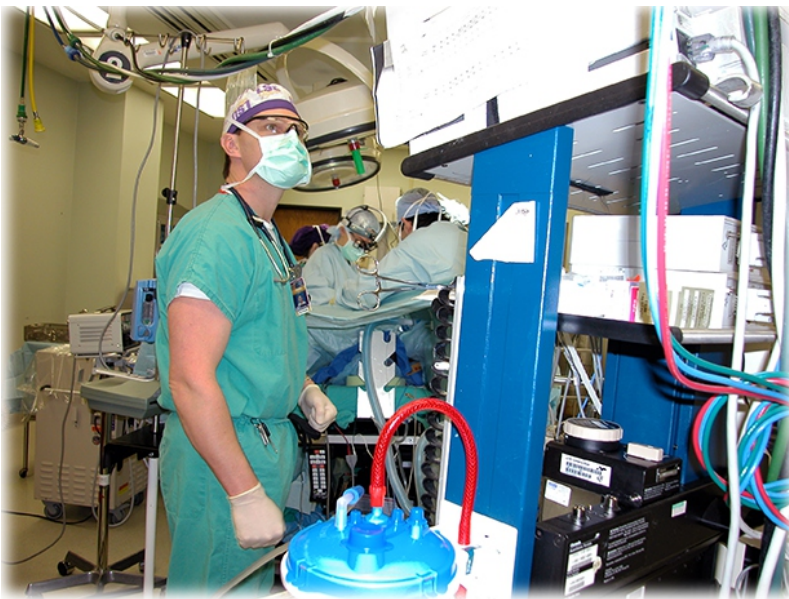
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Dr. Sothorn previously documented evidence that supports relationships seen in adolescents between insulin sensitivity and fatty liver, belly fat, and total body fat, and identified additional potential early markers of insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome in healthy 7-9 year-old children, including fat in muscle cells, blood pressure, physical activity, and birth weight. The study found that fat in the liver, abdominal fat, and fat oxidation predicted insulin resistance and appear to be early markers for the metabolic syndrome via a mechanism of impaired lipid metabolism and fat oxidation. Impaired metabolic function may be due, in part, to pre-and post natal factors that are modified by current physical activity. Therefore, race, low or high pregnancy weight and/or birth weight, and low physical activity collectively create a phenotype for poor metabolic function leading to increased risk for insulin resistance in young children.



In the current research project, Dr. Sothorn will be re-measuring BMI and also analyzing blood tests for metabolic and genetic parameters in 100 healthy obese and non-obese adolescents. Because obesity and the metabolic syndrome are associated with inflammation, Dr. Sothorn's group will examine the role of genetically determined pro and anti-inflammatory compounds and the change in obesity and biomarkers from pre-adolescence to adolescence. Over the same period of time, they will also examine the contribution of social determinants such as stress, economic disadvantage, neighborhood deterioration, violence, diet, and physical activity environment that can modify these compounds. The researchers will factor in maternal pregnancy weight and whether or not participants were breast-fed and for how long, as well.

To date no studies have documented the progression of obesity, insulin resistance and inflammation through the pubertal period of development using objective measures in relation to molecular, social and behavioral determinants of health in multi-ethnic children and adolescents. ■

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preparation for entry into a number of health professions, including nurse anesthesia, to the doctoral level. The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) and the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Programs have adopted the position that the DNP will be the entry level into practice for nurse anesthetists by 2025.

The Masters of Nursing (MN) Nurse Anesthesia will be phased out when all students currently enrolled graduate in May, 2015. Admissions to the MN Nurse Anesthesia program has been discontinued effective fall 2012.

All students applying to the Nurse Anesthesia Program in December 2012 will be applying to a BSN to DNP program, and if accepted, will begin the program in May 2013. The program will be 36 months long, and students who enroll in May 2013 will graduate in May 2016. ■