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Allied-Health Research and Policy

Northeastern University is a global leader in health-care research, education, and practice. The university's experiential-learning model and use-inspired research approach prepares students to meet the demands of a rapidly changing allied-health workforce—one that will grow more than any other industry workforce over the next decade. Cross-disciplinary interaction among faculty and students encourages the type of innovation needed to improve health-care access and delivery and to control costs.

Northeastern's Role in Allied Health

Terry Fulmer, dean of Northeastern's Bouvé College of Health Sciences, on how the university's strength in allied-health care will create new knowledge and shape policy.

What is the future of health research at Northeastern?

Northeastern's areas of distinction in health research include drug discovery, development, and delivery; urban population health; and medical informatics. Innovative technologies, including nano-sensors and other patient facing applications, are transforming how we generate and disseminate knowledge and provide care. Our researchers are also focused on self-care management and healthy aging—critical areas as our delivery infrastructure prepares for a fundamental shift in long-term care for an aging population of 70 million baby boomers.



What makes Northeastern's approach to allied-health education unique?

Health reform requires allied-health professionals to work together in new and creative ways. Northeastern's Bouvé College of Health Sciences—working with faculty in disciplines across the university's eight colleges—uses an innovative educational model that trains providers across the spectrum of allied-health disciplines, in both classrooms and clinical settings. These providers function as teams to improve coordination of care and patient outcomes and to contain costs.

How can Northeastern's interdisciplinary collaborative approach to allied health contribute to positive changes in public policy?

The Institute of Medicine has identified the need to develop new, more family-centered models of health-care delivery and interdisciplinary research. As our nation's population ages in a fiscal environment with finite resources, policy-makers must focus on improving efficiencies with more coordinated efforts among providers. Northeastern—with its proven track record in interdisciplinary teaching and research—is in the perfect position to lead the way in evaluating the impact an success of health-care reforms.

Allied-Health Experts



James Benneyan, director of Northeastern's health-care systems engineering program. Benneyan leads two federally funded, multi-university

research centers, which employ systems-engineering principles and methods to develop innovative solutions for health-care challenges, including improved health care for veterans.

Judy Barr,

associate professor of pharmacy, director of Northeastern's National Education and Research Center for Outcomes Assessment in Health-



care. Researchers at the center assess patient-centered methods and outcomes, and the resulting data is used to help health-care providers make informed treatment decisions essential for containing health-care costs while improving the quality of care.



Timothy Bickmore, professor of computer and information science. Bickmore has developed software for a virtual nurse that talks patients through the

hospital-discharge process and assesses their understanding of post-hospital care instructions. The goal is to keep costs down by improving patient treatment compliance and reducing patient re-admission rates.



Hortensia Amaro, associate dean of the Bouvé College of Health Sciences, Distinguished Professor of Health Sciences and of Counseling Psychology, director of the Institute on Urban Health Research, member of the National Academy of Science

Research focus: Amaro focuses on substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, HIV prevention, health disparities, and women's health.

Recent grants: \$4.4 million from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administrations (SAMHSA) for Project LAUNCH, an integrative approach to child health and mental-health services; \$3 million from SAMHSA to develop an intensive outpatient treatment program for women; \$2 million from SAMHSA to create a family-focused approach to treatment for pregnant and postpartum women; \$1.2 million from SAMHSA for a community re-entry program for incarcerated women; \$1.2 million from SAMHSA for a family-centered system of substance-abuse treatment for men in recovery.



Vladimir Torchilin, Distinguished Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences, director of the Center for Pharmaceutical Biotechnology and Nanomedicine

Research focus: Torchilin is looking at how drug delivery systems can be improved by pharmaceutical nanotechnology.

Recent grants: \$13.5 million from the National Institutes of Health for the Center of Cancer Nanotechnology Excellence; \$1.85 million from the National Institutes of Health for intracellular drug delivery; \$1.34 million from the National Institutes of Health's National Cancer Institute to examine a new, nanotechnology-based method of drug delivery.



Carole Kenner, professor of nursing, dean of the School of Nursing, associate dean for Bouvé College of Health Sciences

Research focus: Kenner identifies the changes needed in health-care education and training, and measures the impact of innovative interdisciplinary models of education and health-care delivery on health outcomes and cost. She is certified in newborn intensive care, and does research in perinatal and neonatal nursing.

Publications: Kenner co-authored the book *Teaching the IOM: Implications of the Institute of Medicine Reports for Nursing Education*. Now in its second edition, the book stresses the integration of nursing education with nursing practices to better equip students to provide efficient, quality care. *Teaching the IOM* is considered essential reading for nursing educators and professionals participating in the national-policy dialogue on building a more inclusive, less expensive, and higher-quality health-care system in the United States.

ADVOCATING FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

Northeastern's Bouvé College of Health Sciences Physician Assistant (PA) program offers a highly integrated curriculum that provides students with the broad generalist training to prepare them for successful employment in all fields of clinical practice. The PA Program is located in close proximity to Boston's major academic medical centers and was the first generalist PA training program in the nation to offer a master's degree.

Given the large overlap of care administered by PAs and physicians, the Northeastern PA program director and clinical professor, Rosann Ippolito, and her students have joined practicing PAs to advocate for a more expansive definition of a PA's duties under Massachusetts law.

The broader definition would authorize PAs to be reimbursed for the primary-care services currently only billable by physicians. Allowing PAs to practice at the top of their licenses would help address the current primary-care provider shortage and save billions of dollars.

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