Institute for Women’s Health

Annual Report
Fiscal Year ’97

Designated National Center of Excellence in Women’s Health: DHHS
I. THE INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN’S HEALTH

Acting Director's Message

Bonita Falkner, M.D.
Institute for Women’s Health
Annual Report for Academic Year 1996-97

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Beginning in September 1996, the overall mission and goals of the Institute for Women’s Health (IWH) were examined, revised, and defined. The mission statement is now congruent with the overall mission of Allegheny University of the Health Sciences. The IWH’s role and position within the University has also been articulated. This statement has been disseminated throughout the University in a IWH newsletter. To describe the IWH, including its functioning components, we have developed a concept model of the Institute which identifies the components and also demonstrated the interdisciplinary activities operational within the IWH.

The above was the immediate response to an internal review/assessment process, conducted to identify strengths and weaknesses. This review also provided a basis upon which to begin a planning process for the IWH addressing its overall goals. Subsequently, a meeting was held of senior members of the Institute with key leaders, including hospital CEOs and Deans. An outcome of this meeting was the recommendation to reshape the IWH governance to create an executive advisory group. The Executive Advisory Board includes key hospital CEOs having a commitment to women’s health, the Deans of the School of Medicine and the School of Nursing, and the Chairs of major clinical departments (Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Ob-Gyn, Surgery, and Psychiatry) This group was convened for an initial meeting in the winter. Subsequently, efforts by members of the IWH were directed toward program planning for specialty women’s health programs adjacent to the newly designated Allegheny University Hospital for Women, City Line. As an overall plan for clinical programs in women’s health, which links the satellite sites, the specialty programs, and the AUHS Hospital for Women, is developed the Executive Advisory Board will be reconvened.

A weakness identified at the beginning of the academic year was the poor communication within the organization about what the IWH was and what activity was underway within the Institute. We have addressed this by not only up-scaling the actual activity, but by also ensuring that the activity was communicated in a more effective manner. We now have activities and accomplishments of the Institute and its members reported in the University Times and the MCP and Hahnemann Internal newsletters. Key
events are also reported in the local newspapers. Additionally, we have published two of a series of four quarterly newsletters of the Institute for Women’s Health. We intend to publish four of these newsletters to complete the contract commitment from the previous year. Subsequently, news items on the IWH will be published in the Allegheny University Times. Descriptive materials on the IWH and also individual components of the IWH, including the Center for Women’s Health, the Women’s Health Education Program, and ELAM are being updated, and an IWH web page has been created.

An essential operational component in development of the IWH is interdisciplinary collaboration. To actualize this we have and continue to connect with faculty in other Departments, Schools, and Institutes by inviting participation in program planning within the IWH and by facilitating the participation of University faculty in national programs related to Women’s Health. Recent examples include the conference of the Office on Women’s Health of NIH, the American Psychological Association, and the Women’s Health Conference sponsored by the Society for the Advancement of Research on Women’s Health.

CLINICAL CENTERS

The Center for Women’s Health is a clinical service unit designed to provide comprehensive primary care for women. This unit was founded several years ago by the MCP hospital as a model center. Beginning in July 1996, the Center was transferred to the IWH. In this Center we are developing the model for Health Service Delivery tailored to meet the needs and optimize health of women patients. The model is being defined in its key elements and critical components. Concurrently, we are developing the methodology to test the model for effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity. Further elements to be installed include an intake format for risk assessment, and uniform clinical records. This will be an important contribution as the Institution advances in its electronic clinical record initiative.

It has been clear that fundamental practice management issues had to be addressed and resolved to insure that the model developing at the Center for Women’s Health (at its current Monroe Office site) could contribute to advancing clinical programs for the University. Dr. Sallyann Bowman was appointed as the Associate Director for Clinical Centers for the IWH in November, 1996. Dr. Bowman is refining the development of our first center and will lead the development of satellite centers. We have also added to the clinical staff with the addition of another internist part time (Dr. Sumner), a physician assistant, a nutritionist, and a nurse practitioner. We are currently recruiting another part time gynecologist and we are developing a panel of mental health providers. These additions will expand the on site services available. We have extended the operation hours to evening appointments to improve access of the center.
Plans for additional centers for women's health are underway. We have received two construction awards from HRSA to create the "HUB and SPOKES" model of a woman's health service network having particular attention to disadvantaged women. Dr. Glenda Donoghue is the Project Director for these awards. One component of the plan is to expand the "HUB" which is our current Center for Women's Health. The expansion entails the development of linking specialty programs adjacent to the Women's Hospital on City Line. We have been working with the community of Allegheny West to develop the first satellite center in an African American community in North Philadelphia. The other sites designated for the "SPOKES" include the expansion of the Family-Centered Programs serving extreme high risk women and the Partnership for the People Program for HIV patients. These two sites will be on Broad Street near Hahnemann. The other site to be developed is a nurse-practitioner primary care center in the 11th Street Corridor. Major planning for these sites has occurred in the past year. It is expected that actual construction will begin during this academic year.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Members of the IWH have been very active in research and educational activities in the following ways: 1) The IWH lead sessions at the University Research Conference in the Fall of 1996 and at the University Clinical Research Conference in Spring of 1997. 2) IWH co-hosted a regional conference of the Office of Women's Health Research at NIH. The NIH Office of Women's Health Research Director, Dr. Vivian Pinn is holding regional meetings to develop the research agenda on women's health for the 21st Century. Dr. Falkner is on the Task Force of this initiative which will develop the agenda from the proceedings of the regional meetings. 3) Dr. Bowman created a database from the mobile mammography records and led a series of presentations by herself and other IWH faculty on breast cancer at the Society for General Internal Medicine this past spring. 4) The designation as one of the first National Centers of Excellence in Women’s Health by the Public Health Service has resulted in additional activities in research and education. 5) The IWH has increased its participation in the Domestic Violence programs in the University. 6) Additional descriptions of research and education activities of the IWH over this past year are described in other parts of this report.
Mission/Goals Statement

"To foster a commitment to Women's health through development of comprehensive programs in education, research, and clinical care which serve as models to promote the health of women. To honor and embrace our heritage, the Institute for Women's Health also promotes leadership in women health-care professions.

The overall goal is to encourage a fundamental shift in health sciences through:

- Inclusion of gender and sex based biology and health issues of women in the research conducted in basic and clinical laboratories.

- Integration of basic and clinical issues of women's health into the curriculum that health care professionals learn throughout their education and continued learning.

- Development of new health service models responsible to the needs of women and their communities.

- Development of partnerships with the diverse communities to which women belong.

- Institution of new models of leadership which value and promote women."