



Dr. Peter Boling

VCU Receives Largest Geriatric Education Grant

Benefiting from one of the largest grant initiatives ever offered for geriatric education, Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Medicine has been awarded a four-year, \$1.83 million grant from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation. The purpose of the grant is to enhance geriatric medical instruction.

The VCU School of Medicine is one of 10 schools in the nation and the only mid-Atlantic school to receive a share of the \$20 million Reynolds funding. Sixty-four institutions applied. The grant will also benefit the geriatrics section at the McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center, which is closely affiliated with the School of Medicine and is a key partner in the project.

The funding, which VCUHS will match by half for a total of \$2.7 million, will finance several positions, enable development of new interactive curricula and increase the num-

ber of required hours medical students and residents spend on gerontology subjects. "This will make it possible for our medical school to build a cohesive curriculum for geriatric education," said Dr. Peter A. Boling, principal author of the grant and MCV Campus Director of Geriatrics. "It will enable us to take a quantum leap forward."

Each medical student will spend 60 hours of new instruction in gerontology during their four years of training, including housecalls and nursing home visits. Students will work closely with the medical school's Computer Based Instructional Laboratory, where they will find interactive, fictional case studies and web-based resources. Resident physicians in the hospital will learn to improve acute care of the elderly and will access new computerized resources for geriatric care via the hospital's new computer system. The grant will expand continuing education for faculty at the School of Medicine and Virginia's community physicians. Seminars on teaching geriatrics will be given to 50 basic science faculty, 50 clinical faculty and 75 community physicians who mentor primary care students and residents. "The older population has many unique needs when it comes to health care, and geriatrics tends to cross many disciplines," said Boling. "It's vitally important that all medical personnel have the knowledge needed to properly treat these patients."

\$1 Million Grant Awarded To Non-Physician Staff at VCUHS Heart Center

For the first time ever, the Theresa Thomas Foundation has donated \$1 million to create a new endowment to support nurses and other non-physician staff of the VCUHS Heart Center. Grants have been given to several schools of nursing, however, this is the first time a grant has been given to a department of non-physician support staff, such as technicians, secretaries and nurses. The grant will fund many professional development projects for the non-physician members of the team such as scholarships, continuing education, reward and recognition.

"I believe this is a real statement about the support of patient care teams. I am excited to work in an organization where teamwork is recognized and supported by colleagues and external foundations," said Wanda Miller, Director of Nursing at VCUHS Heart Center.

The Theresa A. Thomas Memorial Foundation was set up nearly 27 years ago by the late George Thomas to honor his wife, who was a nurse. Upon his death, Thomas left virtually his entire estate to the Foundation, with the hope that the money would make a difference in many aspects of health care.