

momentum

Updates from the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing

February 2026

DEAN'S WELCOME



From the Dean

This year marks an important milestone for our school. As we launch our 15th anniversary series, 15 Years: Shaping What's Next in Health Care, we are reflecting not only on how far we have come, but on how our growth positions us to meet the needs of the future health care workforce and the communities we serve.

When the school opened in 2010, we began with a bold vision — to prepare leaders who could transform care, advance research and drive meaningful system change. Today, that vision lives on through our students, alumni, faculty and partners across California and around the world.

This issue also celebrates the global impact of our faculty. Charleen Singh's Fulbright Scholar Award reflects the kind of international leadership and collaboration that defines our global outreach. Her work demonstrates how partnerships across borders can strengthen care delivery, expand knowledge and improve health outcomes globally.

You will also read about how our faculty are rethinking how health research is conducted — ensuring research is more inclusive, community-engaged and responsive to real-world needs. We continue to build on investments grounded in shared values, advancing work that improves care experiences and outcomes. Additional research in this issue highlights the urgent challenges facing rural older adults and the opportunities to close gaps in care through innovation and partnership.

Finally, we look forward to reconnecting with many of you at our upcoming alumni reunion picnic — a reminder that our greatest impact continues to come from the people who make up our school community.

Thank you for being part of this journey and for helping shape what comes next.

— **Stephen J. Cavanagh, Ph.D., M.P.A., R.N., F.A.C.H.E., F.A.A.N.**

Dean, Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing

FEATURE STORY



From doubt to distinction: A Fulbright journey

When Associate Professor Charleen Singh learned she had been selected as a Fulbright Scholar, the moment didn't fully register.

"It still hasn't settled in," she said. "It's too big."

Singh, director of the [Doctor of Nursing Practice — Family Nurse Practitioner](#) program, is the first faculty member from the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis to receive one of the world's most competitive international exchange awards. For Singh, the honor represents more than professional recognition — it affirms a career shaped by clinical care, teaching, research and a commitment to improving outcomes for children and families.

Her Fulbright will take her to Indonesia for five months, where she will teach across nursing programs, collaborate with faculty and help strengthen global partnerships in pediatric, maternal and family health.

[Read the full story](#)



Changing the research questions to change health outcomes

Doctoral student Julia Zabala never envisioned herself in a nursing PhD program—let alone researching how neighborhood greenery and historical disinvestment affect health outcomes.

But through the [T32 ReACH \(Research to Advance Community and Connected Health Equity\) program](#) at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis, she's doing just that. ReACH trains students to pursue people-centered, equity-driven research that considers the social and environmental factors shaping health.

For Zabala, a formative experience was a multi-day bus tour of California's Central Valley, where she connected data with lived histories—including her own family's. The program's interdisciplinary approach and focus on context are helping redefine how health research is done.

[Read the full story](#)

15 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

*Shaping
what's next in
health care*



15 Years: Shaping what's next in health care

When the first students arrived at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis in fall 2010, they stepped into something new — not just for UC Davis, but for nursing education.

The school opened with two academic programs, 33 students and no alumni network. What it did have was a bold vision: to prepare health professionals who could lead change across care settings, health systems and communities.

Those first programs were intentionally designed to focus on research, leadership and bold system change. The goal was to prepare graduates who could ask new questions, challenge existing models and help reshape how care is delivered.

[Read the full story](#)

Look for more 15 Years news in the next Momentum

RESEARCH NEWS



Bridging the gap: Addressing rural aging challenges in California

As California's population ages, rural communities face mounting challenges in providing adequate care for older adults.

By 2040, the number of residents aged 80 and older is projected to more than double, with some rural counties experiencing a tripling of this demographic. These areas often grapple with limited access to health care, long travel distances for medical appointments, and a scarcity of home-health services.

Recognizing these pressing issues, researchers at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing's Family Caregiving Institute have released a series of policy briefs aimed at guiding state-level interventions. Developed in collaboration with The SCAN Foundation, these briefs highlight the unique needs of rural older adults and propose actionable solutions to enhance housing, long-term services, and health care access. The goal is to ensure that aging Californians, regardless of their location, receive the support they need to live with dignity and independence.

[Read the full story](#)

RESEARCH BRIEFS

Faculty-led team explores link between caregiver wellness and hospitalizations of older adults

Professor Janice F. Bell coauthored “[Association Between Caregiver Well-Being and Care Recipient Hospitalization: A Secondary Data Analysis](#)” published in [Research in Gerontological Nursing](#). Along with authors Teuta Kadiu, Cherrie Demayo, Kerri L. Maya and Nicole Heibert, all former doctoral students, the team revealed a strong association: caregivers reporting poorer well-being — including worse general health and higher physical or emotional strain — were more likely to see their care recipients hospitalized, especially when hospitalizations were frequent.

Young highlights structural inequities faced by immigrant care workers

An editorial by the Family Caregiving Institute’s Heather M. Young titled “[Essential Yet Overlooked: Structural Disregard for Immigrant Direct Care Workers](#)” appeared in [Research in Gerontological Nursing](#). She argues that immigrant direct-care workers — who provide essential care for older adults — are frequently neglected by health care and social-service systems. Though not a traditional research study, the editorial underscores how systemic neglect contributes to low pay, poor working conditions and lack of recognition for immigrant caregivers.

Wung publishes studies on AI fall prediction and monitoring technologies

Professor Shu-Fen Wung, a professor at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis, published

[“Fall prediction algorithm with built-in instability metrics”](#) in The Journal of Biomechanics. The work advances fall detection technology using artificial intelligence (AI) at a new level. This novel single-camera AI platform achieves approximately 91% accuracy in predicting falls before they occur. She also published the study, [“The Lived Experience of Older Adults with Monitoring Technologies: An Interpretive Phenomenology Study,”](#) in the journal Healthcare. This study highlights the real-life experiences and strategies older adults use to manage a monitored life, providing insights for effective technology-assisted interventions.

Faculty present at AACN doctoral education conference

Several faculty from the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis presented at the [2026 Doctoral Education Conference: Chart the Future of Doctoral Nursing Education](#) of the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing \(AACN\)](#). Associate Dean for Academics Amy Nichols led the session, “Innovation with Purpose: Simulation-Enabled Leadership for Doctor of Nursing Practice Programs,” to illustrate how simulation can be a strategic leadership development tool, not solely a clinical skills modality. Associate Professor Charleen Singh gave a podium presentation on “Integrating, DNP education, global opportunities, as well as challenges and achievements faced at UC Davis with the DNP-FNP Program” where she discussed scholarly projects from the inaugural cohort of the DNP-Family Nurse Practitioner program. Assistant Professor Jody Minnick presented the poster, “Integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) in DNP Project Prospectus Development: a Pilot Framework,” which discussed how artificial intelligence can support doctoral work through synthesizing data to create an outline.

FACULTY AWARDS

Simmons named to statewide advisory board

Professor Leigh Ann Simmons has been appointed to the advisory board for the [California Initiative to Advance Precision Medicine](#). Launched in 2015, the initiative drives the development of innovative technologies and personalized strategies to coordinate cross-sector partnerships for prevention, diagnosis and treatment to improve the health and well-being of all Californians. The purpose of the council is to advise and make recommendations to the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) on matters related to the initiative.

Marsh named to top 10 outstanding Filipino nurses



Assistant Professor Zyrene Marsh was named one of the 10 Outstanding Global Filipino Nurses by the Philippines Nurses Association of America (PNAA) at the [Filipino Nurses Global Summit VI and 15th International Nursing Conference](#) held in Manila. The award celebrates the significant contributions of Filipino nurses in international practice, research, education and policy advocacy.

Kennedy funded \$100,000 to test model for traumatic brain injuries in children

Associate Professor Lori Kennedy received \$100,000 grant from Children’s Miracle Network to support “\$100,000 from the Children's Miracle Network to support “Optimal Virtual Care for Mild Traumatic Brain Injury in Children.” Lori’s research will test a regional telehealth model for children with mild traumatic brain injury that combines application of Brain Injury Guidelines and pediatric neurosurgeon consultation with structured follow-up provided by advanced practice providers. The study aims to improve outcomes, reduce unnecessary transfers and promote equitable access to specialty care for families across rural and underserved communities.

NEWS FROM UC DAVIS HEALTH

New Vice Chancellor Mark Rosenblatt joins UC Davis Health

Mark Rosenblatt, the newly appointed vice chancellor for Human Health Sciences, officially started his tenure at UC Davis Health on Jan. 21.

“I’m so pleased to be back at UC Davis – it feels like coming home,” he said. “My job is to help bring all of that together into a unified vision strategy.”

Rosenblatt describes his management philosophy as taking a servant leadership approach. He will oversee the health system’s research, education and patient care. He began his academic career at UC Davis in 2005 as an assistant professor of ophthalmology and vision science, where he split his time

between research in Davis and clinical care in Sacramento.

Before rejoining UC Davis, Rosenblatt served as the G. Stephen Irwin executive dean at the University of Illinois College of Medicine, the chief executive officer of the University of Illinois Hospital and Clinics, and as a distinguished professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences at the University of Illinois Chicago.

[Read the official announcement](#)

ALUMNI NEWS



You're invited: Alumni Reunion Picnic

Join us on **Saturday, May 14 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Vanderhoef Commons** for a fun, relaxed afternoon to reconnect, celebrate our alumni, and catch up with classmates at a family-friendly picnic.

Enjoy games for all ages, a picnic lunch, complimentary parking and plenty of fun!

[RSVP by March 7](#)

DEVELOPMENT NEWS



Donate to our crowdfunding campaigns: SHINES and Nurse-Led Mobile Clinic

The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing is proud to support our SHINES and [SHINES](#) and [Nurse-Led Mobile Clinic](#) programs with our spring crowdfunding campaign.

Together, these programs support the full journey of health care, from early exposure and education to hands-on, community-based care, expanding access and opportunity for students and the communities they serve.

Support these programs by **making a gift by March 1**.

Make a gift to SHINES

Make a gift to Nurse-Led Mobile Clinic

ADMISSIONS

Applications are open now

- **Doctor of Nursing Practice — Family Nurse Practitioner Degree Program** – [Apply by June 1](#) with our Space Available deadline to join the June 2026 cohort

- **PhD in Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership Degree Program** – [Apply by May 1](#) with our Space Available deadline to join the September 2026 cohort
- **UC Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certificate Program** – [Apply by May 15](#) with our space available deadline to join the June 2026 cohort
- **Clinical Instructor Internship** – [Apply by March 22](#) to join the Summer 2026 cohort
- **Nurse Faculty Residency** – [Apply by March 22](#) to join the June 2026 cohort

Stay connected!

[Join our email list](#)

Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis

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