



For Immediate Release:

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University of Colorado Denver College of Nursing Receives Anonymous \$3 Million Gift

Gift establishes endowment for Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing Program

AURORA, Colo. (Nov. 10, 2008) – At a time when mental health services are shrinking, Colorado communities served by specially educated mental health nurses just received significant reassurance that this incredibly important care provided by advanced practice nurses will continue. The College of Nursing at the University of Colorado Denver has received a \$3 million gift to fund an endowment for the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing specialty in the graduate program. This anonymous gift comes from a generous donor who is passionate about supporting advanced practice nurses committed to meeting the mental health needs of Coloradans. It also re-establishes the specialty in the College's Master of Science program.

“This gift is extraordinarily important for ensuring that there are advanced practice nurses available to continue to meet the mental health needs of the people of Colorado,” said UC Denver College of Nursing Dean Patricia Moritz, PhD, FAAN. “The donor had the foresight to realize how important nurses are in providing mental health care in all areas of the state.”

UC Denver's College of Nursing is the sole nursing program in the state offering graduate education at the master's and doctoral level to nurses for advanced specialty practice in psychiatric-mental health nursing. Graduates currently work throughout Colorado in urban and rural areas, with adults, children, adolescents and families. Their impact is especially significant in public health settings such as clinics and community mental health centers. In 2007, the College of Nursing (CON) had to suspend admissions to the graduate psychiatric-mental health nursing specialty because of the retirement of program faculty. During this hiatus in admissions, new faculty members were recruited and the curriculum has been revised to meet the new American Nurses Association Mental Health Nursing Practice Standards and the requirements of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing.

First Lady Jeannie Ritter has dedicated her advocacy work to raising awareness about mental illness and recognized this gift for the important work it will support.

"This is such a generous and important gift at a time when it's most needed," said First Lady Jeannie Ritter. "As psychiatric mental health nurses play such a critical role in service delivery in rural and low-income communities, this gift ensures that future nurses are even better prepared to serve those faced with mental health issues."

This gift will provide an endowed chair, an endowed professorship and graduate student fellowships that enable the CON to admit students to begin coursework in the fall of 2009. Mary Weber, PhD, RN, associate professor, has been appointed to the endowed professorship.

Terry Biddinger, BSN, RN, director of External Affairs, commented, “We are grateful to this donor for having the vision to understand the great need for supporting individuals and families facing mental health issues today.”

Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) is defined by the Colorado Board of Nursing as an individual who is educationally prepared as a Nurse Practitioner (NP), a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), a Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM), or a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA).

Located at the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora, Colo., the UC Denver College of Nursing offers some of the highest ranked programs in the country -- from bachelor's through doctoral degrees and post-graduate certificate programs. The college offers several specialties through its Master's program and the only PhD program in clinical research in Colorado. It also is the birthplace of nurse practitioner education and the caring movement, and was one of the first schools in the country to offer a Doctor of Nursing Practice program. This year, U.S. News & World Report ranked UC Denver College of Nursing's nurse practitioner and clinical nurse specialist programs among the top ten in the country. For more information, visit the [UC Denver Newsroom](#).

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