

## CCI and CHHS join forces to create groundbreaking curriculum

The College of Computing and Informatics and the College of Health and Human Services are collaborating on a groundbreaking curriculum that will train students to meet the 21st century needs of the health care industry. Students will have an opportunity to receive a professional science master's degree in health information technology.

"Electronic medical records are coming," said Larry Mays, chair of the Department of Bioinformatics and Genomics. "The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 calls for \$19 billion in expenditures to help with the computerization of health records by 2014. Estimates are that it will take at least 200,000 new health informatics support specialists to make this happen. UNC Charlotte will be a leader in preparing students for what certainly will be one of the most important jobs for the health care community."

Conversion to electronic medical records is expected to improve health care quality, prevent medical errors, reduce health care costs, increase administrative efficiencies, decrease paperwork and expand access to affordable care.

"Computerized health records facilitate more timely access to patient information, leading to improvements in care and decreases in medication errors," said Karen Schmaling, dean of the College of Health and Human Services. "They also facilitate population-based health services research to investigate health care effectiveness and quality, which can be used to improve access and develop health policy. The timely development of this professional science master's degree will complement our colleges' expertise and existing degree programs, such as the Ph.D. program in health services research."

The two colleges are soliciting input from informatics and health care professionals from around the Charlotte region to help develop the curriculum for the professional science master's degree in health information technology. A certificate in health care information technology will be offered starting this fall.



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