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Federal grant to help combat bioterrorism

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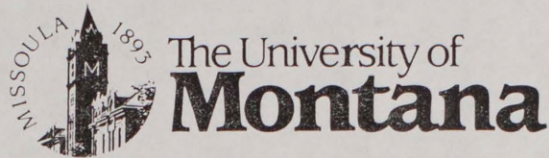
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NEWS RELEASE

CORRECTION: A previous version of this release had an incorrect grant project title in the second paragraph. Please use this corrected version.

Oct. 17, 2003

Contact: UM School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences, (406) 243-4621.

FEDERAL GRANT TO HELP COMBAT BIOTERRORISM

MISSOULA—

University of Montana-Missoula and Montana State University-Bozeman faculty members have landed a \$200,000 federal grant to help health care students train for possible chemical and biological terrorist attacks.

The grant will fund a project titled "Basic Biodefense for Pharmacy, Nursing and Allied Health." This effort will develop training materials that teach students how to recognize the signs and symptoms of exposure to various chemical and biological agents, as well as how to care for patients exposed to such agents.

The proposed training modules also will prepare students to report suspected bioterrorism events and teach them to work with providers from varied disciplines.

"Our health professionals need to be prepared to assist with our public health system in responding to a bioterrorism strike should one occur," said Dave Forbes, dean of UM's School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences. "This is an excellent opportunity for faculty in pharmacy and nursing at UM and MSU to work together to best serve the citizens of Montana."

The grant is from the Bioterrorism Training and Curriculum Development Program of the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. The federal money will fund one year of the project, and there is potential for another \$193,000 becoming available if the Montana project makes good progress.

The principle investigators on the new project are Jean Carter, UM pharmacy practice associate professor, and Sandra Kuntz, an MSU nursing adjunct assistant professor based at UM.

The training curriculum will be developed and tested by faculty at several Montana campuses, including UM-**Missoula**, MSU-**Bozeman**, the UM-Missoula College of Technology and Salish Kootenai College in **Pablo**. The training programs will include pharmacy, nursing, physical therapy, medical technology, practical nursing and medical assisting.

The training modules will be designed using current educational materials and will be made to integrate into existing curriculums. Once designed, the materials will be shared with other training programs across the country.

The UM grant is part of a total federal investment of \$4.4 billion in fiscal year 2003 for bioterrorism preparedness.

Tommy Thompson, secretary of U.S. Health and Human Services, said, "Our health care professionals need to be prepared for the special demands that a bioterrorism attack could make on them and on our health care system. This new program is an important part of our broader efforts to prepare our public health system, develop effective medical countermeasures and stand ready to respond if bioterrorism should strike."

For more information, call the UM pharmacy school at (406) 243-4621.

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