



Outstanding RESEARCH



Dawn Hawthorne, PhD, Assistant Professor and RN to BSN Coordinator, is answering the call to care through her research, studying ways new parents and pregnant mothers can manage through some of the most vulnerable times of their lives.

Her work in an ICU and as a midwife set the stage for her research. While focused on her PhD, she collaborated with two researchers on how families function after the death of their children in the NICU and the ways spirituality helps families to cope, a subject she has studied for the past 10 years. She received a Diversity Supplement from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to fund her dissertation, titled "Parent Spirituality, Grief, and Mental Health at 1 and 3 Months After Their Infant's/Child's Death in an Intensive Care Unit." Hawthorne also received a mentor-mentee research award from FAU for similar work focusing on storytelling.

She recently began research on a new study through a grant from the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nursing on how a mindfulness-based mobile app can decrease stress and anxiety in high-risk pregnant women.

Hawthorne said she was inspired to pursue her path of research by her two decades of experience as a NICU nurse. "The nursing profession is steeped in caring values. If we're able to provide holistic nursing care, nurses can treat the person as a whole; we can make a difference for the outcome of our patients' illness. We can utilize their spirituality to promote wellness." ■



Régine Reaves, MSN, MPH, RN, is a PhD candidate whose research inspiration is a result of nearly 12 years of experience as a nurse care coordinator for Children with Special Healthcare Needs (CSHCN). In this role, she coordinated and managed the care of CSHCN enrolled in publicly insured health plans, including Medicaid and Florida Kidcare. "Nurse care coordinators are instrumental in monitoring a child's progress, collaborating with a multidisciplinary team, providing health education and anticipatory guidance, conducting home visits as well as making important referrals," she said. "I saw firsthand the impact that care coordination had on the lives of these children and their families."

As a doctoral student, Reaves is examining the experiences of parents of CSHCN enrolled in public and private insurance, navigating their child's health plan either with or without a nurse care coordinator assigned. Her research answers the call to care by examining the experiences of parents and helping them to feel supported.

"Caring for a child with special healthcare needs can be overwhelming, and parents often express feelings of frustration, anger, and hopelessness. This is further compounded with the navigation of a very complex health plan. I hope to highlight these differences and help implement strategies where parents of CSHCN feel cared for," she said. "It is also my hope that nursing care coordination will be an option for families, despite the type of health plan their child is enrolled in." ■