

PRESS RELEASE

FSU Establishes Center on Terrorism and Public Health

By Nancy Kinnally  
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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. –The Florida State University College of Medicine has established a Center on Terrorism and Public Health that will serve as a resource for educating health professionals and the public on how to deal with weapons of mass destruction and bioterrorism.

The center received approval Monday from the Florida Board of Education.

Dr. Robert G. Brooks, associate dean for health affairs and professor of family medicine at the FSU College of Medicine, will be the center's director. Brooks joined the medical school in September after serving from January 1999 to August 2001 as Secretary of Florida's Department of Health.

"The goal of this new center is to help local, state and federal government in its quest to protect the public," Brooks said. "Our current health care system has little in the way of prepared materials and training modules on weapons of mass destruction and terrorism for practicing health professionals. To remedy that, the center will focus on the development, dissemination, and evaluation of educational materials and programs."

Besides educating doctors, nurses and emergency workers, and the institutions in which they practice, the center will study ways to educate the general public. It will seek to assist city and county governments with public information and awareness efforts, and to educate the public directly through Web sites, e-mail, printed materials and other methods.

FSU Provost Larry Abele said the center is a good fit for the FSU College of Medicine.

"This center is very much in keeping with the mission of the FSU College of Medicine in that it will have a statewide impact at the community and individual level by helping to educate the medical community and the public, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of health care in Florida," Abele said.

The center's 13-member board will include experts from FSU and around the state in fields such as infectious diseases and microbiology, environmental toxicology, emergency response, public health, social work, criminology and population studies. The board will meet regularly to plan, implement and evaluate grants and projects related to weapons of mass destruction and bioterrorism. The center plans to apply for state and federal funding as it becomes available. The members of the Advisory Board are: Thomas Blomberg, Ph.D., FSU associate dean and professor of criminology and criminal justice; Janet Dilling, M.P.A., director of the Florida Public Affairs Center and the Askew School's Emergency Management Certificate Program; Diane Harrison, M.S.W., Ph.D., associate vice-president for academic affairs and dean emerita of the FSU School of Social Work; Richard Hornick, M.D., academic chairman of the internal medicine residency program at Orlando Regional Medical Center; Richard Hunter, Ph.D., President & CEO of Food Technologies Inc. in Mulberry, Fla.; Myra Hurt, Ph.D., associate dean of student affairs and professor of biology at the FSU College of Medicine; John Kelsay, D.Min., Ph.D., FSU professor of religion and author of a number of books and articles on Islamic thought and culture; Kathy Mason, R.N., Ed.D., dean of the School of Nursing at FSU and former head public health nurse at the Florida Department of Health; Richard Rasmussen, vice president for legislative affairs for the Florida Hospital Association; David Sly, Ph.D., professor in the FSU Center for the Study of Populations and senior research fellow at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Christopher Teaf, Ph.D., associate director of both the Center for Biomedical and Toxicological Research and Waste Management and the Institute for International Cooperative Environmental Research at FSU; John Todaro, R.N., REMT-P, director of education for the Florida Emergency Medicine Foundation; and Bernd Wollschlaeger, M.D., the Governor's appointee to the Florida Domestic Security Taskforce and chair of the Florida Medical Association's Taskforce on Emergency Preparedness.