In August, the UF Institute on Aging celebrated the realization of a dream and the beginning of a new era of innovation and excellence in research, education and patient care, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony for our new facility.

Sen. Bill Nelson was our keynote speaker and we were joined by president Bernie Machen and other UF leaders.

Our modern, environmentally friendly new space brings together researchers and clinicians from various fields of expertise, facilitating the kinds of cross-pollination of ideas that drives scientific progress. The building houses basic science and clinical research as well as clinical practices, both figuratively and literally shortening the distance from bench to bedside.

A National Institutes of Health grant to the UF Institute on Aging was the foundation for the project. UF’s leaders expanded on that initial investment to include a new home for the UF Clinical and Translational Science Institute and several departments. The building boasts features that conserve energy, reduce waste and promote the well-being of faculty and staff. Long hallways, internal stairs and treadmill desks encourage movement throughout the day; glass walls provide serene views of Wilmot Gardens; and bike racks and showers make biking or running to work a pleasant option.

We are energized in our pursuit of new discoveries that will lead to new therapies, better health and greater independence for older adults throughout Florida and beyond. Thanks for being our partner on this exciting journey.

Sincerely,

Marco Pahor, M.D.
Director, UF Institute on Aging
NEW PEPPER JUNIOR SCHOLARS NAMED

Philip Efron, M.D., is an assistant professor of surgery and anesthesiology in the UF College of Medicine. He co-directs the surgery department’s Laboratory of Inflammation Biology and Surgical Science. His research focuses on inflammation and immunology in severe injury and infection. As a Pepper Scholar with funding from a UF Older Americans Independence Center Pepper Pilot Study grant, he is investigating how the immune system works in older adults to counteract severe blood infection and trauma.

Natalie Ebner, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of psychology in the UF College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Her research focuses on how and why socially relevant information such as age and goals — and related emotions — affect attention and memory in adults of different ages. She is a Pepper Scholar and a faculty affiliate of the UF Cognitive Aging and Memory Clinical Translational Research Program.

IOA GOES TO WASHINGTON

UF Institute on Aging Director Dr. Marco Pahor and other faculty and staff traveled to the nation’s capital May 23 at the invitation of Sen. Bill Nelson, to take part in a Healthy Aging Expo hosted by the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging. The event marked the 50th anniversary of Older Americans Month, initially designated as Senior Citizen’s month by President John F. Kennedy. The event helped to educate members of congress and their staff about innovations in technology and health care that can help improve the health and well-being of older Americans.

BRAIN RESEARCHER JOINS UF INSTITUTE ON AGING

Adam J. Woods, Ph.D., has joined the UF Institute on Aging and the department of aging and geriatric research as an assistant professor. Within the Cognitive Aging and Memory Clinical Translational Research Program, he leads the electrophysiology core, a multidisciplinary team that explores the link between brain function and various processes in the body.

Dr. Woods comes to UF from the University of Pennsylvania, where he was a postdoctoral fellow. He earned his doctoral degree in cognitive neuroscience at George Washington University and his bachelor’s degree in psychology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.
GERIATRICIANS TEAM UP WITH TRAUMA AND SURGERY SPECIALISTS

Older patients admitted to UF Health Shands Hospital now have a special service that’s helping them get through their hospital stay and back home safely. UF Health geriatricians have teamed with critical care and surgery specialists to tailor care for older adults in the trauma, orthopaedic surgery and hospital medicine units.

Older adults fare much worse than younger patients after major injury or infection, research shows. And since trauma treatment guidelines are generally based on studies of younger people, they may not yield the same results for older adults.

But geriatricians can help improve the care and outcomes of hospitalized older adults. They are well-equipped to address age-related conditions such as dementia, delirium, depression, falls, fractures, osteoporosis, use of too many medications and failure to thrive.

With the new service, geriatricians will work with other physicians, nurses, case managers, social workers and family members to determine the best treatment plan and ensure that patients have the help they need after leaving the hospital.

“This team approach gives older patients the best care and the highest chance for a meaningful recovery,” said Dr. Laurence Solberg, chief of geriatric medicine.

CANCER DRUG BEING STUDIED FOR POSSIBLE DISABILITY PREVENTION BENEFITS

Low doses of a common cancer drug might help improve brain and physical function and reduce pain and inflammation in older adults. UF Institute on Aging researchers are now testing the drug methotrexate, which works by reducing inflammation in the body. Chronic inflammation is thought to play a key role in the onset of decline and disability associated with aging.

“More and more older adults are being diagnosed with chronically high levels of inflammation, so we urgently need new therapies that can help this population live healthier, more independent lives,” said Stephen Anton, Ph.D., the study’s lead investigator.

The study will examine the effects of low doses of methotrexate among 45 adults aged 70 or older who have mild to moderate physical impairment. The study is funded jointly by the National Institute on Aging, through the UF Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center; and by the McKnight Brain Research Foundation, through the UF Cognitive Aging and Memory Clinical Translational Research Program.

For more information or to enroll, call 866-386-7730 or 352-273-5919 and ask about “The ICE study.”
Unlocking life’s mysteries — particularly the secrets of how long and how well we live — is the distinct focus of the University of Florida Institute on Aging. Our scientists and physicians are dedicated to achieving a better understanding of the biological mechanisms of aging and of how we can maintain or enhance our physical independence and cognitive abilities.

PRIVATE PHILANTHROPY IS ESSENTIAL TO OUR WORK. YOUR GIFT, REGARDLESS OF SIZE, CAN MAKE THE CRITICAL DIFFERENCE IN FUNDING NEW SCIENTIFIC ENDEAVORS.

Imagine discoveries that fuel positive cellular changes or lead to new therapies to help rehabilitate aging bones and joints . . . private philanthropy makes all this and much more possible.

To learn more about how you can invest in a healthier and more independent tomorrow for us all, please contact Mary Ann Kiely at 352-273-8620 or email mkiely@ufl.edu.