

# Featured Nurse Leader

## Mary Ellen Wewers, Ph.D., M.P.H., FAAN



Mary Ellen Wewers, Ph.D., M.P.H. R.N., is our Featured Nurse Leader. She serves as the Co-Director of the Nursing Center for Tobacco Intervention at The Ohio State University. The Center is funded by the American Nurses Foundation and has as its goal the dissemination of information pertaining to tobacco dependence prevention and treatment for use by clinicians.

Dr. Wewers completed her Ph.D. in nursing at the University of Maryland in Baltimore and has a master's degree in public health from Harvard University. She is a Professor in the College of Nursing at Ohio State University, and also has an appointment in the School of Public Health. Dr. Wewers is currently on leave from the University and will complete a Cancer Prevention Fellowship at the National Cancer Institute in the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences, Tobacco Control Research Program in August, 2000.

As an adult nurse practitioner, Mary Ellen has a long history of caring for patients who smoke. Her initial interest in tobacco resulted from her experiences with patients in the respiratory intensive care unit who were generally in acute respiratory failure. From there, she began to develop a smoking cessation practice and returned to doctoral study for training in smoking-related research. Her dissertation research examined correlates of relapse among American Lung Association Freedom from Smoking participants.

After joining the faculty at Ohio State, Mary Ellen was awarded a Clinical Investigator Award (K08) from NIH to examine the role of opioid peptides in nicotine reinforcement. This work continued in a FIRST Award from NIH (R29) that characterized opioid receptors in human and animal models of nicotine dependence.

Dr. Wewers has a concurrent interest in the effectiveness of tobacco cessation interventions delivered by nurses. She served as a member of the AHCPR [now Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)] Expert Panel that developed the Smoking Cessation Clinical Guideline in 1996 and is now a member of the panel that has reconvened to update the original guideline. Her publications in the area of nurse-managed treatment include investigations that have evaluated nurse-managed interventions among patients with smoking-related diseases such as coronary artery disease and cancer, during pregnancy and after diagnosis with HIV. Most recently, Dr. Wewers is conducting an NIH funded (R01) study of tobacco use and other risk factors among rural Ohio Appalachian residents. A focus of this study involves the creation of novel approaches for the delivery of health promoting behaviors, such as tobacco use prevention and treatment, among this vulnerable population.

Dr. Wewers is excited about the renewed interest in tobacco prevention and treatment that is present among nurse clinicians and researchers. To address this national and international health problem, the College of Nursing at Ohio State has assembled a team of faculty, graduate students and staff to conduct tobacco-related research.

Dr. Wewers invites further questions about clinical and research opportunities at the Nursing Center for Tobacco Intervention. Inquiries can be directed to her at [wewers.1@osu.edu](mailto:wewers.1@osu.edu)

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