JoEllen Wilbur, PhD, APN, FAAN, joined Rush University in 2007 as the College of Nursing’s Professor and Independence Foundation Chair in Nursing. She has been the associate dean for research in the College of Nursing since 2008.

For the past three decades Wilbur’s research has focused on the development of culturally sensitive, community-based interventions to increase physical activity and improve the health of women. In the 1980s, she began examining midlife symptoms within the context of women’s lives.

She applied her family nurse practitioner expertise to develop a program of health promotion research to test the effects of using physical activity as a nonpharmacological alternative to hormone replacement therapy for midlife symptoms. Also, she modified one of the predominately male-oriented self-report measures of physical activity to reflect the uniqueness of women’s lives. Publications from this work were among the earliest to address the benefits of physical activity for women’s health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention awarded Wilbur funding to become part of the Women’s Cardiovascular Health Network, which focused on identifying the influence of personal and environmental determinants of physical activity in diverse women across the United States. Seminal findings were published in Women's Health and the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Active Living Research program provided the opportunity to collaborate with a civil engineer and public health experts in global information systems to assess the influence of neighborhood environmental factors on participation in physical activity and the health of women.

Wilbur’s early work informed the development of the Women’s Lifestyle Physical Activity Program, a cost-effective, evidence-based behavior change intervention tailored to increase physical activity adherence and improve cardiovascular outcomes for African American women. The program has been disseminated and modified for communities in the U.S. and abroad. Current testing of components of the intervention are being done in four National Institutes of Health (NIH) clinical trials, including with African American women who have asthma, in pregnant women at risk for pre-eclampsia, a SMART design with working women and with older women with cardiovascular disease.

Since 1987, Wilbur has been continuously funded by the NIH as a principal or co-investigator. Her research has been published in over 160 publications. Her many mentees include NIH NRSA predoctoral fellows, NIH Research Career Develop awardees, a Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women’s Health Scholar, a Rush University Kellogg Scholar and a Robert Wood Johnson Faculty Scholar.

“Dr. Wilbur has instituted mechanisms to enhance the research productivity of the entire college,” says Shannon Hallway, PhD, RN, assistant professor, College of Nursing, and one of Wilbur’s mentees. “Among them are the use of think tanks, mock reviews, intensive mentoring of junior faculty in the grant writing process, research workshops and remodeling space for research projects.”

Wilbur was named to the Sigma Theta Tau Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame in 2013. She is also a member of the National Advisory Council for National Institutes of Nursing Research at the NIH, which is an appointment made by the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services.
Faculty Recognition Reception Honorees

Congratulations on your appointments and promotions.
The following is a list of new professors named this past academic year.

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Rush Medical College

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Obstetrics and Gynecology
Rush Medical College

Beth Staffileno, PhD
Adult Health and Gerontological Nursing
College of Nursing

Dean Toriumi, MD
Otorhinolaryngology
Rush Medical College

David Changli Wei, MD, PhD
Internal Medicine
Rush Medical College

William Whittier, MD, FASN
Internal Medicine
Rush Medical College

James Wyatt, PhD
Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Rush Medical College

Charlotte Bai, MD, FACC
Internal Medicine
Rush Medical College

Sindhura Bandi, MD
Internal Medicine
Rush Medical College

Edward Blazek, PhD
Radiation Oncology
Rush Medical College

Brandon Barton, MD, MS, FAAN
Neurological Sciences
Rush Medical College

Jay Behel, PhD
Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Rush Medical College

Faraz Bishehsari, MD, PhD
Internal Medicine
Rush Medical College

Rene Carizey, DO
Emergency Medicine
Rush Medical College

Christopher Codispoti, MD, PhD
Internal Medicine
Rush Medical College

Heide Cygan, DNP, RN, PHNA-BC
Community, Systems and Mental Health Nursing
College of Nursing

Manju Daniel, PhD, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC
Community, Systems and Mental Health Nursing
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Jennifer Earvolino, MD
Internal Medicine
Rush Medical College

Robert Feldman, MD
Emergency Medicine
Rush Medical College

Brian Forsythe, MD
Orthopedic Surgery
Rush Medical College

Grant Garrigues, MD
Orthopedic Surgery
Rush Medical College

Eileen Giardino, PhD, MSN, APRN
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesia Program
College of Nursing

Yasmeen Golzar, MD
Internal Medicine
Rush Medical College

Michael Gottlieb, MD
Emergency Medicine
Rush Medical College

Nicole Heath, PhD
Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Rush Medical College

Tarlan Hedayati, MD
Emergency Medicine
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