

TODAY'S PRACTITIONERS & *tomorrow's* TREATMENT PLANS

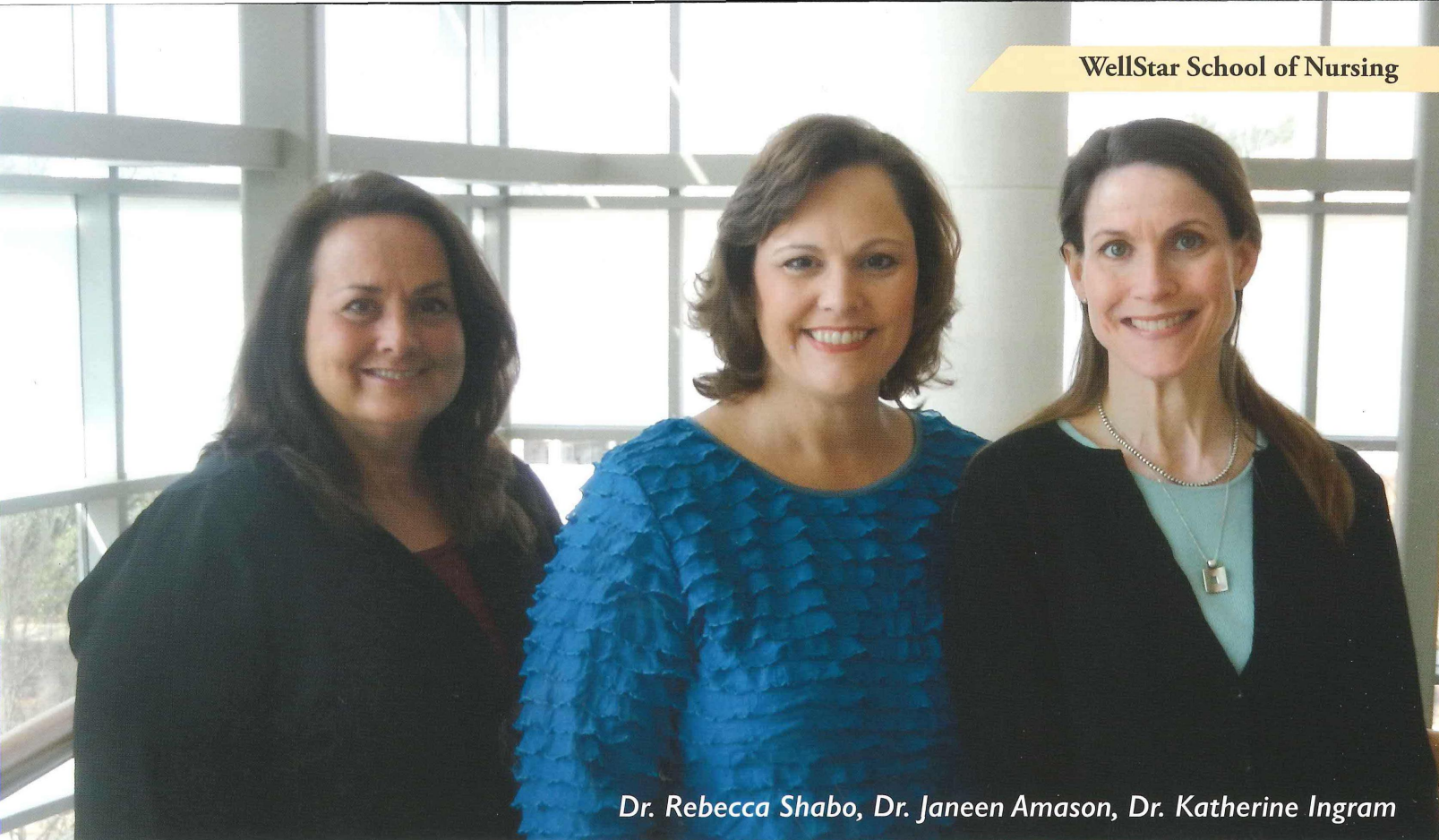
Multi-Department Research Collaboration Focuses on Gestational Diabetes

The WellStar School of Nursing educates today's nurses, nurse practitioners, nursing leaders, nursing educators, and nursing researchers for impactful and meaningful careers. In addition to educating the next generation of nursing professionals, the faculty work continuously to further scientific inquiry.

Recently, the School of Nursing joined forces with the Department of Exercise Science and Sport Management. Faculty from these units are working to advance the medical community's knowledge and treatment of gestational diabetes. Dr. Katherine Ingram, Assistant Professor of Exercise Science and principal investigator on this joint research project, completed her doctoral and postdoctoral training in obesity and diabetes research. She now focuses her expertise on the study of gestational obesity and diabetes in the WellStar College of Health and Human Services and has assembled an interdisciplinary research team with co-investigators from the School of Nursing. The team includes Dr.

Janeen Amason, Assistant Professor of Nursing, and Dr. Rebecca Shabo, Associate Professor of Nursing. Dr. Amason has been involved in the care of women and newborns since 1991. Dr. Shabo brings 30 years of experience with newborn care and pediatric obesity to the research team.

The research is titled "Impact of Abdominal Obesity and Inactivity on Maternal Metabolic Health" and focuses on gestational diabetes, which is a serious condition that occurs in approximately 10 percent of women during pregnancy and has been associated with obesity and inactivity. The researchers are examining which early measures of obesity and inactivity can serve as early clinical predictors of gestational insulin resistance, a hallmark feature of diabetes. The research will result in a better understanding of how abdominal fat accumulation and inactivity in pregnancy may serve as early indicators of gestational diabetes and will further give rise to new methodologies in the prevention and treatment of gestational diabetes.



Dr. Rebecca Shabo, Dr. Janeen Amason, Dr. Katherine Ingram

The studies have received internal support from the Office of the Vice President for Research, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), and the WellStar College. Although data collection is expected to continue throughout 2016, preliminary findings have been generated and presented by the faculty researchers at the Sigma Theta Tau 43rd Biennial Convention in November 2015 and will be presented at the upcoming American College of Sports Medicine conference in June 2016.

Preliminary data were used to support ten student research projects presented at the 2015 CETL Symposium of Undergraduate Scholars at KSU, the 2016 Southeast regional meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine, and the 2015 Peach State Louis Stroke Alliance Minority Participation Research Symposium, in which WellStar College student JaBreia James won first place for her presentation, "Is there a relationship between insulin resistance and visceral fat accumulation in pregnancy?"

Participants are recruited through nurses at a local partnering obstetrics clinic and screened by WellStar faculty. Participants visit the WellStar College human performance laboratory both during pregnancy and post-partum. In these visits, Dr. Ingram and student research assistants conduct a variety of body composition and physical activity assessments and ask the participants to complete diet and activity questionnaires. The obstetrics clinic provides blood measures to determine insulin resistance in the research participants and ultrasound measures of abdominal fat accumulation.

**A great partnership within
WellStar College and between
WellStar College and the community
undergirds this project and will lead
to new ways of helping mothers
and their babies stay healthy.**