**Free wellness coaching program helps students find balance**

Welcome back students! UPTurn, a free health and wellness coaching initiative, is open to all PHHP students. Advisers create individualized plans to help students manage stress and thrive on campus. [Read more](https://phhp.ufl.edu/2025/06/04/phhp-wellness-initiative-helps-students-find-balance/)

**Sherrilene Classen steps down as occupational therapy chair**

During her eight-year tenure, the Department of Occupational Therapy has quadrupled faculty, increased enrollment by 60%, launched the first Doctor of Occupational Therapy program at a Florida public institution, created a clinical driving rehabilitation program and exceeded its own vision of success. [Read more](https://phhp.ufl.edu/2025/08/07/sherrilene-classen-steps-down-as-department-of-occupational-therapys-leader/)

**Surgery past 65? Brain health screening can aid recovery**

Pre-surgery evaluations typically don’t include it, but research indicates a patient’s cognitive, memory and mental health status before surgery is an excellent indicator of post-surgical complications. [Read more](https://phhp.ufl.edu/2025/07/31/surgery-past-65-brain-health-screening-can-aid-recovery/)

**New AI tool predicts risk and sheds light on development of complex diseases**

Results of a study conceptualized and designed by epidemiology faculty member Sai Zhang show a new dual-purpose AI model can predict the risk of complex diseases such as Alzheimer’s and Type 2 diabetes while also helping scientists understand how those diseases develop in the body. [Read more](https://phhp.ufl.edu/2025/07/25/new-ai-tool-predicts-risk-and-sheds-light-on-development-of-complex-diseases/)

**Virolologist’s cat helps discover new virus — again**

Pepper the cat, who belongs to PHHP professor John Lednicky, has again contributed to the discovery of a new virus by dropping a shrew at his owner’s feet. Testing revealed the shrew had a previously unidentified strain of orthoreovirus. [Read more](https://phhp.ufl.edu/2025/07/09/scientists-cat-again-helps-discover-new-virus/)

**40 Gators Under 40 applications now open**

Since 2006, the University of Florida has honored outstanding young alumni whose achievements positively impact The Gator Nation through remarkable professional success, unwavering commitment to service and a deep connection to UF. Applications for 2026 honorees are due Monday, Sept. 8. [Read more](https://connect.ufalumni.ufl.edu/events/40gatorsunder40)

**Register now for PHHP’s Alumni Reunion Tailgate**

Registration ends Oct. 3 for PHHP’s annual Alumni Reunion Tailgate on Oct. 18. There will be food, games, music and fun for the whole family prior to the Florida Gators taking on the Mississippi State Bulldogs at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium. [Reserve your space now!](https://web.cvent.com/event/b3d24891-adb3-4c51-99f6-3030de990775/regProcessStep1)

**Alumni updates**

**Kyle C. Johnson**, master’s in public health (environmental health concentration) ’15, received a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Mississippi State University in 2019 and completed a residency at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. He is currently a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences at Texas A&M. He achieved diplomate status and board certification by the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine earlier this year.

**Sonam Ongmu Lasopa**, Ph.D. in epidemiology ’15, has been awarded the Keshav Desiraju Memorial Award for Outstanding Public Service in Mental Health from the Indian Law Society’s Centre for Mental Health Law & Policy. She was recognized for contributions to advancing mental health in the state of Sikkim, in northeast India, where she serves as the state program coordinator for the District Mental Health Programme. [Read more](https://cmhlp.org/keshav-desiraju-memorial-award-recipient/recipient-2025-2/)

Choice Rehab Connections, a company owned by **Chris Simms**, doctorate in physical therapy ’08, has been named to the 2025 Inc. 5000 list of the fastest growing private companies in the U.S.