

UNH Dean Accepts Position at Penn State

By [Kim Billings](#)
UNH News Bureau

DURHAM, N.H. -- Raymond T. Coward, dean of the School of Health and Human Services at the University of New Hampshire, has accepted a deanship and endowed chair at The Pennsylvania State University.

Coward, who has been at UNH since 1997, will become dean of the College of Health and Human Development and the first incumbent of the newly endowed Raymond and Erin Schultz Chair in Health and Human Development. His appointment is effective July 1.

"Dean Coward, who is one of the country's leading gerontologists, has been a strong and effective dean for the School of Health and Human Services, and we are sorry to see him leave," said UNH President Joan Leitzel. "He has provided important and needed leadership as the faculty of this school have addressed the critical health and human service issues facing New Hampshire citizens -- from an evaluation of the state's welfare reform initiatives to improving care for vulnerable populations of children, older adults and the poor. He has been a driving force for health care issues in the state, and he will continue to have an impact on health care issues nationally."

Coward is known around the country for his research on the health status and health care of older adults, and was quoted in at least three front-page stories in *The New York Times* last year. His most recent book, *Aging in Rural Settings*, released in 1998, is based on a major longitudinal study that he directed, funded by the National Institute on Aging.

For more than three years, Coward and his team of researchers tracked the health care needs of a sample of older adults (65-plus) who varied by race, geographic region and income level. Lawmakers around the country have used the results of that research when shaping long-term policies for the elderly.

During his tenure as dean, the School of Health and Human Services has accomplished a number of important goals, including the creation of the New Hampshire Institute on Health Policy and Practice, a partnership with the state's Department of Health and Human Services and the Dartmouth Medical School. He also led efforts to create a mentoring program for untenured assistant professors in the school, as well as new HHS awards to honor faculty who make extraordinary contributions to research in their field.

Coward established the Dean's Leadership Council for the School of Health and Human Services, an external advisory group, and worked with the UNH Alumni Association to create a foundation for the development of an HHS Alumni Society.

He was active in soliciting gifts to support a new undergraduate summer fellowship in public service, a new "high tech" classroom for the renovated Pettee Hall, and a fellowship program to support undergraduate students studying health and exercise.

"This has been a very difficult decision for both me and my wife, Andrea," Coward said. "We have loved being at UNH and have enjoyed the support that we have received from everyone. UNH is a very special place with talented students and a dedicated faculty. The opportunity at Penn State, however, is truly extraordinary and represents a genuine professional challenge. It will be exciting and rewarding for me to assume a leadership role for a unit of that size and reputation."

Penn State's College of Health and Human Development has six academic departments and two schools, and has a system-wide enrollment of more than 6,000 undergraduates and nearly 450 full-time graduate students. It also has responsibility for 14 research centers and three clinical-practice facilities. It boasts a general funds budget of approximately \$26 million. Grants for externally-funded research since 1990 have grown by 80 percent and now total approximately \$20 million per year.

"Ray Coward is a nationally recognized scholar who has been an outstanding Dean of the School of Health and Human Services," said John Seavey, professor of

health management. "He has been instrumental in further developing the school's research and public service capacity, while at the same time honoring the school's strong tradition of excellence in teaching. He has worked closely with the faculty and the departments to bring us together during difficult times. He has helped the school raise its external visibility as well as raise external funds. In the time that he has been here, he has made significant contributions to the school, the university and the state of New Hampshire. We are a stronger school as a result of his leadership. I wish him all the best in his new position at Pennsylvania State University."

"Though I have only been at UNH for a few months, I have enjoyed the time Ray and I have been able to work together," said David Hiley, UNH provost and vice president for academic affairs. "The position at Penn State is a great opportunity for him, but his talents will certainly be missed at UNH."

In the next two weeks, Hiley will meet with the executive committee of the School of Health and Human Services to discuss with them a process for recruiting the next dean of the school.

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