ECU Awarded HRSA Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Grant

adapted from ECU News Services article by Elizabeth Willy

North Carolina’s geriatric population is the fastest growing segment of the state’s population. If projections hold, the number of adults over the age of 65 living here will double by 2030. To help address the pressure these demographic shifts will put on the state’s health care system, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is giving the East Carolina University College of Nursing a three-year, $2.5 million grant through its Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program. The grant will allow ECU to implement an inter-professional education model focusing on geriatrics, train primary care providers to meet the specific needs of aging patients, and deliver community-based programs that address the needs of older adults and their families, especially Eastern NC’s farmers, fishermen, and loggers.

“We’re building a comprehensive approach to caring for our region’s older adults,” said Dr. Sonya Hardin, the grant’s primary investigator and interim associate dean for graduate programs in the College of Nursing. “We’ve lacked this in primary care, and it’s going to become very important as we have more patients with chronic illnesses needing more specialized resources.”

Aging patients present specific challenges for the health care system. They often have multiple diseases that can complicate treatment, take more routine medications, lack support systems, and are at heightened risk for injury or death from accidents such as unintentional falls.

Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement grant objectives include:

Implementing Inter-professional Education

A cadre of nurse practitioner, physician assistants, and medical students will treat patients together at several retirement community and primary health care sites. The students also will work on virtual cases online and see simulated patients as a team. Traditionally, each discipline receives geriatric education separately; the inter-professional approach will encourage members of each field to respect the others’ strengths for better collaboration to treat patients.

Training Primary Care Providers

ECU grant participants will set up two geriatric screening offices at regional facilities where nursing professionals will assess older community members and refer them for additional care. Working with partners at the Eastern Area Health Education Center (AHEC), ECU will organize conferences and publish podcasts on geriatrics, especially for rural health care providers.

Providing Community-Based Education for Agromedicine

Older farmers, loggers, and fishermen are a special needs populations in North Carolina, where there are 50,000 farms, 1,400 loggers and 3,375 miles of coastline. Farmers, for instance, are known to continue working well past the normal retirement age. Workers older than 55...
NC A&T State University Awarded AgrAbility Grant

The North Carolina AgrAbility Partnership (NC AgrAbility) is a statewide consortium that serves and supports farmers, ranchers, farmworkers, and their family members who have disabilities. NC A&T State University recently received a 4-year grant renewal from the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) to continue the NC AgrAbility Partnership.

North Carolina is one of 24 states sponsored by the National AgrAbility Project. In addition to NC A&T State University, the NC AgrAbility Partnership includes NC Cooperative Extension, NC Agromedicine Institute, East Carolina University, NC State University, NC Assistive Technology Program, the NC Farmworker Health Program (Office of Rural Health), and Disability Partners for Independent Living.

NC AgrAbility helps eliminate or minimize obstacles that limit success in production agriculture for those with a disability. The goal is to increase the likelihood that farmers living with a disability remain actively engaged in agricultural production and daily life. NC AgrAbility serves individuals who are limited by any physical- or mental-health related disability, including amputation, arthritis, autism, hearing loss, learning disabilities, mobility limitations, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, vision loss, and chronic conditions such as cancer, respiratory illness, or heart disease.

NC AgrAbility does not provide direct funding or equipment, but works with disability service organizations and other agencies to help individuals identify or obtain financial assistance. NC AgrAbility offers services at no cost, including site visits to assess needs, technology recommendations, educational resources, education and training, referrals to service providers, and networking with peers.

Mr. John Paul Owens (336-285-4835, owensj@ncat.edu) and Dr. Fletcher Barber are project leaders at NC A&T. They encourage interested farmers and agricultural workers to take advantage of two upcoming opportunities.

“Each year, the National AgrAbility Project sponsors farmer/rancher travel to the AgrAbility National Training Workshop (NTW). The 2016 workshop is in Fort Collins, Colorado in April.” Owens and Barber invite potential applicants to contact them and visit the 2016 NTW website http://agrability.org/ntw/ for travel stipend application and conference details; the application deadline is January 31, 2016. Owens adds: “AgrAbility Projects may nominate one primary applicant, but others may be able to attend with partial funding.”

The second opportunity comes from Dr. Ari Mwachofi, associate professor in ECU Brody School of Medicine Department of Public Health. She will be conducting focus groups with minority farmers about disability. She invites interested Native American, Latino, African American, female, and other minority farmers to contact her at MWACHOFIA@ECU.EDU or 252-744-0356.

In Memoriam: PAMELA MARTIN

Pamela Lea Schafer Martin, 47, passed away on August 14th, 2015, in Asheville, NC. We remember Pam Martin as a friend of Agromedicine, farmer, and tireless advocate for AgrAbility. Pam operated Lone Willow Farm in Franklin, NC. Memorial Fund: http://pamelamartinmemorialfund.mydagsite.com/home.
Welcome Scarlett Joyner!

Scarlett Joyner joined the NCSU Department of Applied Ecology’s Extension Toxicology and Agromedicine group as an Extension Assistant. She is working with Julia Storm on the Certified Safe Farm and AgriSafe-NC Expansion project, funded by the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission. Scarlett has five years’ experience as an Agricultural Education Teacher, has served as an FFA Advisor, and holds a BS from NC State University in Agriculture & Extension Education. She grew up on a multi-commodity, family farm in eastern North Carolina. Join us in welcoming Scarlett to the Agromedicine team.

INTERESTED IN FIRST ON SCENE TRAINING?

Contact LaMar Grafft, NC Agromedicine Institute grafftl@ecu.edu, 252-744-9542

FIRST ON SCENE TRAINING:

For NC farm families and employees:
- prepares lay people for farm emergencies
- cost-share ($250/farm): first aid kits, fire extinguishers, CPR or first aid training

For EMS responders:
- prepares first responders in agricultural incident response
- cost-share ($1,250/unit): for specialized response equipment

Grants Awarded to NCAI by University of Kentucky Centers

Several NC Agromedicine Institute (NCAI) faculty and members have been awarded pilot projects from two University of Kentucky (UKY) federally funded occupational health and safety centers with a focus on agricultural and forestry communities in the Southeast. Robin Tutor-Marcom commented: “The shared missions of the NC Agromedicine Institute and UKY centers made our collaboration a natural fit.”

Receiving funding from the NIOSH-funded Southeast Center for Agricultural Health and Injury Prevention, which serves a 10-state region including North Carolina, were:

- NCA&T’s John Paul Owens for a prevention project focusing on farm safety;
- ECU’s Dr. Michael Behm for the research project: “Assessment of Occupational Safety and Health Needs and Development of Intervention Opportunities for the North Carolina Aquaculture Industry;” project collaborators include LaMar Grafft, NCAI Associate Director, Sea Grant, and NC Cooperative Extension;
- ECU’s Jessica Wilburn for an outreach project: “Fit to Farm: Protecting Agriculture’s #1 Asset – the Farmer,” with NCDA/NCSU Agricultural Research Stations collaborating;
- ECU’s Robin Tutor-Marcom for a prevention project to translate logging safety materials into Spanish, in collaboration with the Forest Equipment Operator Training School, a curriculum originally developed with NCAI leadership in collaboration with the NC Association of Professional Loggers (now Carolina Loggers Association) and others.

Funding from UKY’s Central Appalachian Regional Education and Research Center (CAREC) included:

- NC State University’s Dr. Michael Roe for his research project entitled “Agricultural and forestry workers health risks from pesticides: evaluation of global impact, epigenetic effects, and synergism directly on human systems.”

The CAREC is NIOSH-funded and addresses the needs of at-risk workers in hazardous industries common to the 177 Appalachian counties in 5 states: Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.
Dr. Ann King grew up in eastern NC, mainly in Onslow and Jones Counties. As part of a farming family, she learned the value of hard work and preserving the land. Her family worked mainly in tobacco, but also other row crops and livestock. She spent many years in the coastal area of NC also, learning the essentials of fishing and protecting the coastal environment.

Becoming a nurse was King’s lifelong dream. She began her nursing career in 1985 at Coastal Carolina Community College and then went on to complete her BSN and her MSN-Family Nurse Practitioner at East Carolina University. She later completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice at Duke University.

Agricultural healthcare became a passion quickly, including developing a farmworker visiting program through the Jones County Health Department. Each week Dr. King and an interpreter would visit a different farm in the evening and complete health screenings and primary care visits for all the farm workers as they returned from the fields, addressing the issue of access to healthcare. The team was able to help the farmworkers manage a variety of acute and chronic health conditions, including hypertension and diabetes.

Dr. King transitioned to a teaching role in 2010 as an educator in the ECU College of Nursing’s Nurse Practitioner program. Having completed the Foundations in Agromedicine (MPH 6035) course offered in conjunction with the NC Agromedicine Institute, she became a certified AgriSafe® provider. Sharing her experience and knowledge of agricultural health promotion and safety became possible through clinical learning innovations supported by ECU’s HRSA grant integrating inter-professional education and expanding the use of an existing virtual community clinic in the nurse practitioner curriculum. These innovations focus on patients with multiple chronic conditions in rural NC.

Dr. King assisted with multiple levels of nursing education specific to agricultural health, including the development of virtual agricultural workers accessing primary care in the Virtual Community Clinic Learning Environment. The virtual clinic is a Web-based learning environment similar to Second Life, a 3D virtual world. Nurse practitioners and other health sciences students work together to solve case-based health care scenarios involving patients with multiple chronic conditions. The virtual clinic gives students the opportunity to diagnose and treat a variety of illnesses and pathologies that they may not see otherwise, but doesn’t replace real-world clinical experiences. King also contributed case scenarios with an agricultural health focus to the Office of Clinical Skills Assessment and Education (OSCAE), where students interact with simulated patient actors. These interactions, and specifically the cases Dr. King developed, prepare students to care for patients who work in rural occupations in eastern North Carolina such as farming, logging, and fishing.

Along with teaching in the Nurse Practitioner program, Dr. King maintains clinical practice at WATCH, a free clinic for uninsured residents in Wayne County, and is also a Captain in the US Army Reserves as a Nurse Practitioner and Public Health Nurse. She has been able to use her expertise in agricultural health in her Army role as much as in her educator role. Dr. King currently resides in Clayton with her family. Dr. King is Clinical Associate Professor in the DNP (Doctor of Nursing Practice) Program in the Adult/Geriatric and Family Nurse Practitioner Concentrations in the East Carolina University College of Nursing. She serves as Director of the Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) grant Enhancing the Primary Care Management of Patients with Multiple Chronic Conditions through Inter-professional Education. Email: kingca@ecu.edu.

NOTE: During Dr. Ann King’s 2016 military deployment Debra A. Kosko DNP (c), MN, FNP-BC will be filling her role.

SAVE the DATE
2016 Agricultural Medicine Core Course
Keeping Rural America Healthy and Safe

2016 DATES:
MARCH 18-19: INITIAL WORKSHOP
April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6: webinars
MAY 20-21: FINAL WORKSHOP
Workshop location: Rocky Mount, NC

Contact LaMar Grafft, NC Agromedicine Institute grafftl@ecu.edu, 252-744-9542
Summer Interns Shadow AgriSafe Nurse Coordinator

The North Carolina Agromedicine Institute hosted two health professions student interns during the summer. Brenna Pruitt and Emily Thompson shadowed Jessica Wilburn, MSN as she travelled the state carrying out her role as AgriSafe-NC Nurse Coordinator.

Brenna Pruitt, a student at Barton College, is a senior majoring in Health Promotion. She learned about the NC Agromedicine Institute (NCAI) through a Rowan County Farmer Breakfast attended by her parents, who work in the school system. Brenna was able to participate in multiple Agromedicine events, observing the expansive reach of the Institute, ranging from AgrAbility client visits, AgriSafe health screenings, and negotiations with vendors for price reductions on personal protective equipment (PPE) for farmers. Brenna reflected on her experience: “It is amazing the devotion that the Institute has to farmers, fishermen, and loggers. I was impressed by all of the different resources that NCAI provides.”

Emily Thompson is a freshman at Campbell University and plans to major in nursing. Her parents are community leaders in Randolph County and are associated with Farm Bureau and Southern States. They encouraged Emily to seek out an internship as an opportunity to learn more about the unique role of nursing in Agromedicine. Emily shared: “The shadowing opportunity allowed me to see a totally different aspect of nursing that most people do not even know exists.” She too was amazed at the wealth of resources that the Institute makes available to North Carolina agricultural communities.

Jessica Wilburn found both summer interns to be very energetic and self-motivated. Jessica added: “Brenna and Emily appear to have a passion for their educational focus, and we encourage them to continue to communicate about their experience as interns with NCAI throughout their career journey.”

CONGRATULATIONS

NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Secretary Brajer has appointed Sheila Higgins, RN, MPH, COHN-S, Occupational Health Nurse Consultant in the DHHS Division of Public Health’s Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch, to be the agency’s representative on the NC Structural Pest Control Committee.

W. Gregory Cope, Ph.D., Professor, Extension Leader, and NCSU Agromedicine Campus Coordinator in the Department of Applied Ecology was appointed William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor, the highest honor or open to faculty members in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at NC State University.
Older Farmers in the Agricultural Health Study Sought for Memory in Aging Research

Duke University researchers and Agricultural Health Study (AHS) scientists at NIEHS are collaborating to study the effects of pesticide use and genetic factors on aging, memory, and dementia among participants in the Agricultural Health Study. The study is being led by Duke’s Dr. Brenda Plassman, in collaboration with Dr. Guy Potter, also of Duke, and Dr. Honglei Chen and Dr. Freya Kamel, NIEHS epidemiologists and members of the AHS Executive Committee. Dr. Plassman is a leader in the epidemiology of dementia and cognitive decline in late life. Her work has included several long-term studies of memory in aging among diverse populations.

Drs. Plassman and Potter presented an overview of the AHS Memory in Aging study at the summer meeting of the NCAI Board of Partners. Dr. Plassman commented: “After two decades of participation in the Agricultural Health Study, many farmers and their spouses are now over age 60. The study is seeking Agricultural Health Study participants, whether or not they still farm.” Plassman added, “This study will help researchers understand how a lifetime of farming may influence memory as individuals get older.”

The project plans to screen 2,500 farmer pesticide applicators from the AHS, aged 70 or older, for signs of memory loss through phone interviews. For participants whose screening shows significant signs, researchers will visit the home for a clinical evaluation and to collect samples for genetic analysis. Saliva samples will also be collected via mail from about 800 individuals whose phone assessment indicated no issues. Family members may assist in the screening if the participant has hearing or other impairments.

Questions related to the AHS Memory in Aging Study should be directed to the Duke Team at 1-866-444-2372 or 919-668-0820.

Farmworkers Festival Brings Together Wayne County Community

North Carolina Cooperative Extension held the first Wayne County Farmworkers Appreciation Festival to recognize and educate farmworkers and their families. The event was held on Sunday, September 6, 2015 at the Wayne County fairgrounds in Goldsboro, NC.

More than 500 people attended the event, including 360 farmworkers and their families. Participants visited informational booths from 21 agencies to learn about community services. Health and dental screenings were also offered. Entertainment activities included DJ Latino music, soccer, 4-H Latino Folkloric Dance Club performance, and children’s games. These activities “recognize the importance of having fun as part of workers’ mental health,” said Luis Cruz, Extension Farmworkers Health and Safety Educator, who led the event planning committee.

Wayne County Community Partners Coalition assisted in planning, while representatives from participating agencies, 50 high school and college students, and other community members volunteered at the event. Growers supported the Festival by providing transportation to workers.

Participating Agencies: AMEXCAN, Art Council, Consulate General of Mexico, Community Care for Children, ECU School of Nursing, Future Farmers of America, Greene County Health Care, Grethen Medical Clinic, Legal Aid, Liberty Tax, Literacy Connections, NC Department of Commerce, NC Farm Bureau, NCCES More in My Basket, WAGES, WATCH Clinic, Wayne County Community College, Wayne County Cooperative Extension, Wayne County Health Department, Wayne County Public Library, and Wells Fargo.

Certified Safe Farm and AgriSafe-NC Out and About:

Union County Extension, NCAI, NC Dept. of Labor collaborated on farmworker safety training.

2015 Agricultural Medicine course participants toured Patterson Farms & Market.

AgriSafe Nurse Molly Webb provides health screenings at the Hoke County Farm City Branch.

Granville County’s Currin Farm has new pesticide storage building.

AgriSafe Nurse Jessica Wilburn demonstrates ergonomic tools to the Crews, Vance County SOFFA farmers.

SUPPORT THE INSTITUTE

The NCAI invites you to help further its mission through your contributions to the following funds:

**NC Agromedicine Institute Fund** (for current and ongoing activities): Make check payable to “Medical & Health Sciences Foundation” with memo designation “NC Agromedicine Institute.” Mail to NCAI, c/o Director, 1157 VOA Site C Road, Greenville, NC 27834. Make a secure online donation at https://piratealumni.ecu.edu/ccon/new_gift.do?action=newGift. Go to ‘Click here to choose the designation(s) for your gift’ (under Gift Information in middle of page). On the next page, click Agromedicine Institute and then NC Agromedicine Institute Fund.

**North Carolina State University Agromedicine Endowment** (for long-term sustainability of Institute) OR **North Carolina State University Agromedicine Enhancement Fund** (for current and ongoing activities): Make check payable to “NCSU Agromedicine Endowment” OR “NCSU Agromedicine Enhancement Fund.” Mail to NC Agricultural Foundation, c/o Chris Wessel, Campus Box 7645, Raleigh, NC 27695-7645. Make a secure online donation at: http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/givenow

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CALENDAR

February 3-5, 2016: Southern Farm Show, State Fairgrounds, Raleigh
February 17, 2016: NCAI Board of Partners, Location TBD
March 18-19, 2016: Agricultural Medicine Core Course (initial workshop), Rocky Mount, NC. www.ncagromedicine.org
April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6: Agricultural Medicine Core Course (webinars)
April 21, 2016: Farmworker Institute, Chapel Hill, NC. www.ncfarmworkers.org/
May 20-21, 2016: Agricultural Medicine Core Course (final workshop), Rocky Mount, NC. www.ncagromedicine.org

MONTHLY AgriSafe Network Webinars. www.agrisafe.org/training/
For more, visit the NCAI calendar at www.ncagromedicine.org

For up to date announcements, event information, photos and more, PLEASE FOLLOW ALONG!

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