

— SPRING 2016 —

RURAL HEALTH UPDATE

— PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION —

ENGAGING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

In this inaugural newsletter for the WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health, our goal is to communicate with our community-based preceptors about the rural activities in which WVU is involved. Thank you for making these activities possible!

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WVU is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution. The WVU Board of Governors is the governing body of WVU. The Higher Education Policy Commission in West Virginia is responsible for developing, establishing and overseeing the implementation of a public policy agenda for the state's four-year colleges and universities. (213008)

Message from the Executive Director



This is the inaugural newsletter for the WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health (ICRH). Our goal is to communicate with our community-based preceptors about the rural activities in which WVU is involved. These activities would not be possible without you, our community partners. In the 2014–15 fiscal year, 726 WVU students from eight disciplines, along with 10 residents, engaged in community-based rotations. These training opportunities for students are critical for the recruitment of health professionals to rural areas. We thank you, our preceptors, for your dedication and support. WVU is attempting to address

the issues that rural providers face by offering partial or full support for:

- student scholarships in exchange for a commitment to practice in an underserved area of the state
 - interprofessional activities for students on their community rotation
 - health care career program for rural high school students
 - Continuing Education opportunities for health professionals in rural areas
 - the WVU Rural Track program
 - Rural Health Day, a statewide event for undergraduates with an interest in medical school.
- WVU receives some federal dollars for various activities through our Area Health Education Center grant and supplements this with state rural health funds. These activities would not be possible without support from our community partners.

Larry Rhodes, M.D.

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Student News

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

Each year, the Institute for Community and Rural Health (ICRH) awards scholarships to medical and dental students at WVU in return for a commitment to practice in rural areas of West Virginia. The intent of the scholarship is to reduce financial debt, thus enabling quality health professionals to practice in the greatest area of need. In 2015–16, the ICRH awarded scholarships to seven medical students and six dental students, totaling \$475,000. Dental students are awarded \$50,000 for a two-year commitment in a rural area, and medical students are awarded \$25,000 for a one-year commitment. Students must agree to practice in a primary care or dental health professions shortage area or in an area that qualifies as rural under the federal definition of rural urban commuting area. The first students, **Stephanie Sisler** (Class of 2012), **Garrett Butler** and **Sky Gwinn** (Class of 2014), received scholarships in 2011-12. The first of these three physicians, Stephanie Sisler, M.D., began practice in Terra Alta in 2015.

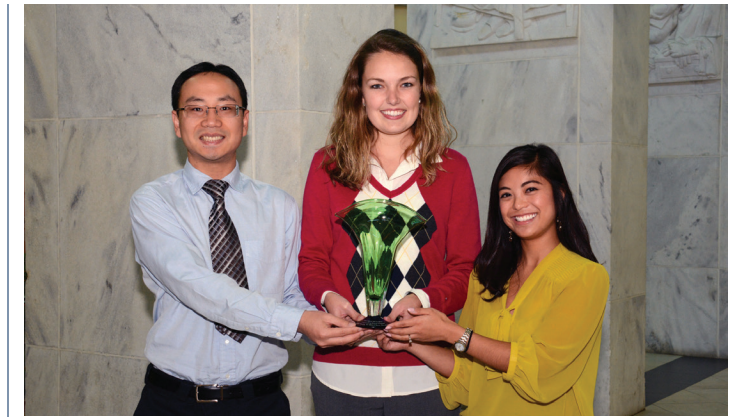


▲ Top row, left to right: Norman Ferrari, M.D., Arthur J. Ross, M.D., Larry Rhodes, M.D. Bottom row, left to right: Garrett Butler, Stephanie Sisler, Sky Gwinn

Alumni Spotlight

STEPHANIE SISLER, M.D.

The conversation is easy, like talking with an old friend. When Stephanie Sisler, a 2012 WVU School of Medicine graduate, talks about her experiences as a student and her fulfilling life as a physician in Terra Alta, she inspires those listening. Her passion for medicine and her love for her patients shine through. Sisler completed her residency in pediatrics at WVU in 2015 and has only been in practice a short time, back in the small town where she grew up. She states the rewards of practicing rural medicine far outweigh the challenges. Providing services to children at a small clinic where she is the only pediatrician, as well as at a hospital



PROJECT REACH

Three WVU medical students were honored by the West Virginia Rural Health Association as the Outstanding Rural Health Students of the Year for their work with the multidisciplinary, student-run Rural Education Alliance for Community Health (Project REACH). **Yi-Wen Chen, Colleen Beatty** and **Nicole Garcia** (pictured above, left to right) received the award at the 23rd Annual West Virginia Rural Health Conference on October 15, 2015, for their work as the co-leaders.

Started by a team of five WVU medical students in 2011, Project REACH provides health education and screenings in West Virginia, with an emphasis on rural and underserved areas. Outreach activities include blood pressure screenings, BMI and health education as well as providing brochures, toothbrushes, sunscreen and jump ropes. Since June 2014, Chen, Beatty and Garcia organized and participated in 10 outreach events with other students at festivals and food pantries in Mercer, Hampshire, Fayette, Preston, Berkeley and Monongalia counties, reaching more than 850 West Virginians.

Nicole Garcia is a fourth-year medical student from Princeton, WV. She has been able to help implement change at a grassroots level and provide healthcare by coordinating outreach events “one counseling session and one blood pressure reading at a time.” Colleen Beatty is a third-year medical student. She grew up on a farm in Pendleton County, and is interested in a career in family medicine in West Virginia. Yi-Wen Chen is also a fourth-year medical student, co-leader of Project REACH and president of the WVU Rural Health Interest Group. He plans to use his M.D. and global and public health M.S. training to address rural health disparities, function as a public health advocate and serve the underserved.

in nearby Maryland, is exactly the practice she hoped to have when she dreamed of becoming a doctor. While completing medical school, Sisler rotated with a pediatrician in Kingwood who did house calls. That experience influenced her decision to become a pediatrician. She was impressed with the care and rapport her preceptor had with patients — she wanted that. Having strong relationships with patients and the ability to know families and following them through many years of care are some of the rewards important to her as a physician. All of these things are part of primary care and rural practice. Being able to care for patients in a rural area, helping to coach her daughter's T-ball team and being part of a close-knit community are things that make up her dream job — a job she is already fortunate to have.

STUDENTS GAIN EXPERIENCE IN RURAL SETTINGS

In 2014–15, 179 WVU pharmacy students spent over 850 weeks in rural settings in West Virginia with local pharmacists as their preceptors. Across the state in 26 counties, 49 rural pharmacy practice sites opened their doors to WVU students. Students in community pharmacies work with their preceptors to ensure accurate dispensing of medication, identify potential drug interactions, adjudicate insurance claims, counsel patients on prescription and over-the-counter medications, provide immunizations and work with local prescribers to perform medication reviews for optimal treatment. Students in hospital pharmacies work with hospital-based preceptors to ensure accurate dispensing of medication to hospitalized patients, prepare IV medications, perform medication reconciliation and discharge counseling, provide pharmacokinetic drug monitoring

and recommend specific medication treatment and monitoring on patients. Some rural settings are in outpatient clinics, where students meet with patients to perform medication histories, educate patients regarding the use of their medications, counsel and encourage adherence, and recommend medication therapy, frequently for chronic disease states such as diabetes and hypertension. Some outpatient clinics also include warfarin monitoring as an extensive component of the rotation. Julie Brown served as a rural pharmacy preceptor in 2014-15 at Camden-On-Gauley Medical Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center in the town of Camden-On-Gauley.

BY THE NUMBERS (2014–15)

179 WVU Pharmacy students
 spent over **850** weeks
 in **49** rural pharmacy practice sites
 across **26** West Virginia counties



JULIE BROWN

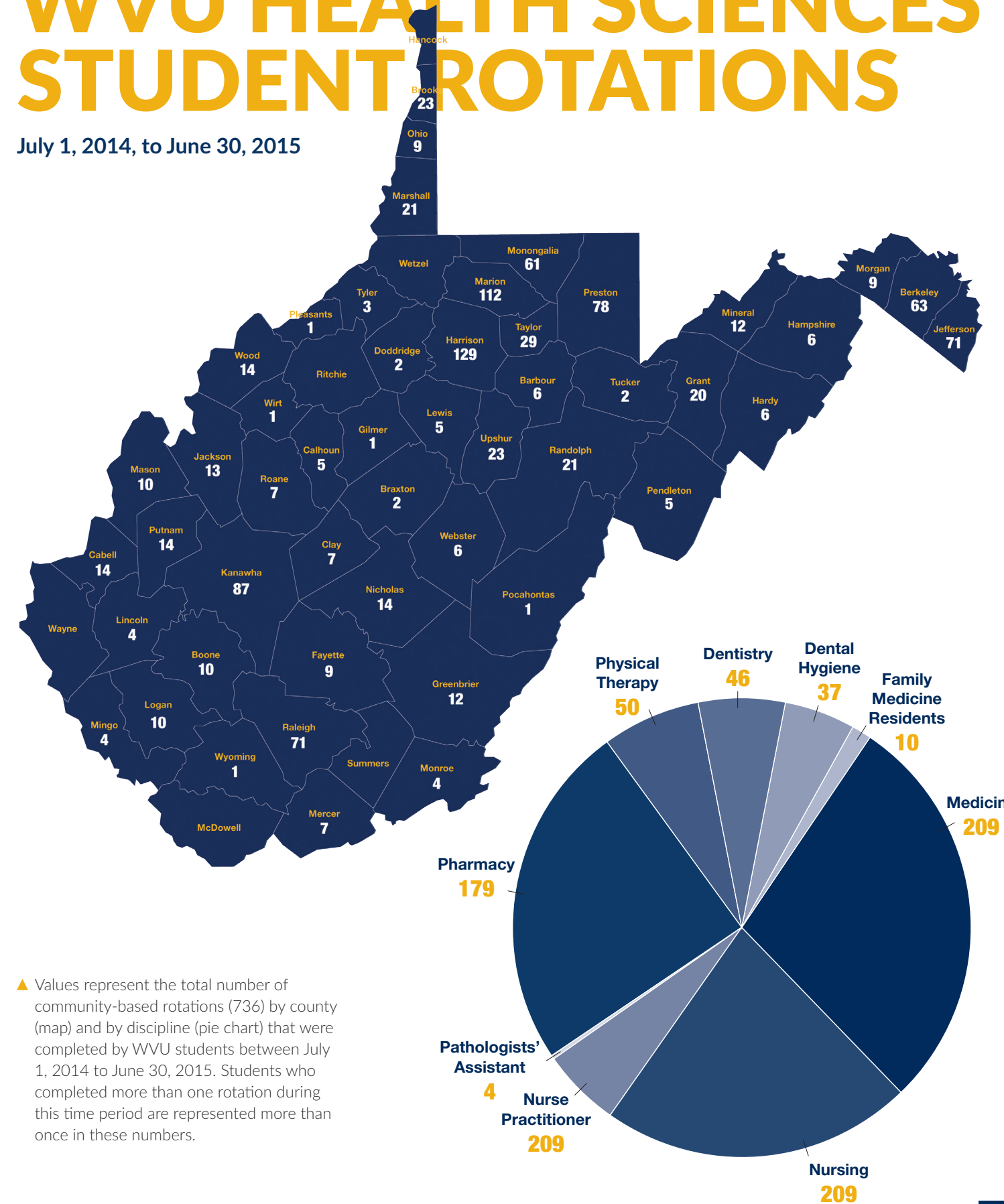
Rural life is familiar to **Julie Brown, Pharm.D.**, and giving back to a rural community has been her primary goal. She grew up in Nicholas County “in the middle of nowhere”: 15 minutes from Gauley Bridge, 40 minutes from Summersville and 35 minutes from

Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). There, she experienced the satisfaction of working in a small pharmacy where she got to know most of her patients by name. This led her to her current job at the Camden-on-Gauley Medical Center in Webster County, also an FQHC. Working in a pharmacy that is located inside the clinic walls is particularly appealing to Brown because of the opportunity to work closely with the Center’s providers, making recommendations and helping with insurance issues. The challenges she faces in her practice include patients’ limited knowledge about healthcare and the lack of insurance. When asked about the benefits and challenges of having students, she responded that the challenge is “finding enough time in the day to teach them everything I want to teach them, and the benefits are the tremendous amount of help they are and the things they teach me!” When she is not working, Brown enjoys running the trails in the Fayetteville and Summersville area, an activity that began on the cross country and track teams in high school.

Clay. She rode a bus one-way for over an hour to attend Nicholas County High School. While in pharmacy school at WVU, she had the opportunity to complete five rural rotations, including one rotation in Greenbrier County at the Rainelle Medical Center, a

WVU HEALTH SCIENCES STUDENT ROTATIONS

July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE RURAL TRACK PROGRAM FINISHES FOURTH YEAR

The WVU Department of Family Medicine received funding to start a Rural Track (RT) program in 2012. This program began with three students and has expanded to 24 medical students. Participants engage in a different curriculum than non-RT medical students. They spend three weeks with a rural preceptor the summer before they begin medical school and again in the summer between their first and second year of medical school. These summer rotations come with a stipend from the WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health. During their second summer, RT students visit a state-of-the-art Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that offers a full array of services, including a black lung clinic. In the past two years, this experience has also included a trip into a functioning coal mine (with a required pre-trip safety workshop). During their second year of medical school, RT students are assigned to a Clinical Learning Group with other RT students and an advanced psychology grad student. In year three, RT students spend four weeks with a rural family medicine physician, four weeks with a rural pediatrician and two weeks with a rural OB/GYN. In year four, students spend eight weeks in clinical rotations in a rural underserved area. RT students are not required to commit to primary care. Application to the program is made after being accepted to medical school. Visit medicine.hsc.wvu.edu/rural to learn more.



▲ From left to right: Ayita Verna, Jessica Eiser, Quintin Brubaker, Lauren Norris, Krystal Steenwyk, Alyson Leo, Stephen Stefancic and Tanner Moore



▲ From left to right: Kasandra Hutchison, Abbygale Rexroad, Cassi Dobbins, Selena McCoy, Christopher Lacy, Hanna Allen, Taylor Garrett, Kayla Lamb and Donna Roberts

MOVING ONWARD AND UPWARD

By Lew Holloway

2016 marks the sixth year that the Northern West Virginia Rural Health Education Center's (NWRHEC) successful high school pipeline program, "Moving Onward and Upward," has accepted students. A total of 35 juniors and seniors have completed the seven-month afterschool program, and of the 18 who have graduated high school, 14 have entered college or completed a certificate program in a health field.

The program is a partnership between NWRHEC, Calhoun County Middle/High School and Minnie Hamilton Health System (MMHS) that identifies students interested in health careers and provides them with extended shadowing opportunities.

The selection process includes an application and interviews with the Center's executive director, school guidance counselor and MMHS primary care nursing director. Students complete clinical rotations with providers in each of MMHS's 16 departments and return to five departments to complete additional clinical hours. MMHS staff supervise the hands-on rotations and manage the clinical activities of the students. NWRHEC staff meet weekly with students to discuss their rotation experiences, review journal entries, coordinate visiting speakers and schedule other activities. When available, health science students rotating in the NWRHEC region meet the students and share personal experiences.

In addition, students research a population health topic selected by the group and develop a presentation that they deliver to the MMHS board of directors. At the program's conclusion, students have invested a minimum of 100 hours of clinical, research and additional activity time and receive a \$500 stipend for their accomplishments.



▲ Clay Marsh, vice president and executive dean of WVU Health Sciences, tours the Cabin Creek Health Center in Dawes, West Virginia with Amber Crist.

INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY SETTING

ADVICE FROM AMBER CRIST, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL COUNTIES AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER AND DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FOR CABIN CREEK HEALTH SYSTEMS.

At Cabin Creek Health Systems (CCHS), being part of an interprofessional team isn't a special initiative just for students completing community-based rotations — it is an opportunity for students to be involved in all aspects of care, including ongoing quality improvement. Students, as part of the professional team, are immersed in conversations with colleagues from a variety of disciplines outside of the exam room, are actively involved in planning, implementing and evaluating interventions designed to improve quality, as well as examining research to ensure an evidence-based approach is being applied. Interprofessional team activities include submission of a patient centered medical home application, drug utilization reviews on poly-pharmacy patients and strategies for improving cervical cancer screening compliance. Students have access to resources and conduct extensive literature reviews to determine what types of similar programs have had success. Students benefit from the opportunity to be part of an interdisciplinary team in action. Providers benefit because students bring a new perspective and enthusiasm.

We asked Crist for her advice on how other clinical sites could implement interprofessional teams: "... make it fit within the already existing structure, don't view it as something additional; view it as an opportunity to move your organization closer to meeting a quality goal."



▲ Carl "Rolly" Sullivan, M.D., vice chair and director of the addictions program at WVU Medicine Chestnut Ridge Center

RURAL HEALTH INTEREST GROUP

The Rural Health Interest Group (RHIG) is a WVU student-organized group that has been meeting monthly since 2011. This interdisciplinary group invites speakers from within and outside of the University to discuss topics related to rural health. The RHIG became a formally recognized student organization last fall to enhance service and learning related to rural health in West Virginia. Topics in 2015–16 included addiction in rural West Virginia; financial incentive programs in West Virginia; the impact of diabetes in rural West Virginia; coronary artery risk detection in Appalachian communities; Medicaid expansion in the state; and the implementation of a community program by the Williamson Health and Wellness Center to promote healthy diet and exercise. The Williamson program was awarded the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Award in 2014.

Yi-Wen Chen, RHIG president, hopes the group will "spark students' interest in rural health and unify the many voices of professionals practicing in rural and underserved areas."

WVU RURAL HEALTH DAY 2016

Practicing a health profession in a rural area of West Virginia can be rewarding, both professionally and personally. On April 2, 2016, the first WVU Rural Health Day was held at the Health Sciences Center in Morgantown. Some 80 undergraduates had the opportunity to hear the personal stories of four physicians practicing medicine in rural West Virginia, including their journeys and what inspired them to practice rural medicine. Participants heard how to navigate the road to medical school. In the afternoon, students participated in breakout sessions where they got to talk one-on-one with primary care physicians about what it's like to practice medicine in a small town, took a tour of the HSC, learned how to suture, use a hand-held diagnostic ultrasound and dissect a knee, and even practiced delivering a baby using an OB simulator. Students from 11 different colleges and universities from West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland were in attendance. We sincerely thank all of our staff and volunteers that made this event possible and especially the rural physicians donating their time and expertise to the next generation of rural docs: Joanna Bailey, MD; Tracy Hendershot, M.D.; Judd Lindley, M.D.; King Seeger, M.D.; and Stephanie Sisler, M.D.



▲ Dr. Juddson Lindley (Beckley, WV) conducts an interactive session with students during Rural Health Day.

Save the Date!

West Virginia State Rural Health Conference
October 19–21, 2016
Chief Logan State Park