

SUMMER 2020

RURAL HEALTH UPDATE

PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

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Preceptor Spotlight

JULIE LEYZOREK-HARE, MD

Julie Leyzorek-Hare, MD is a family practice provider at Pocahontas Memorial Hospital Rural Health Clinic located in Pocahontas County. She came to West Virginia when she was a student at Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, DC. She immediately fell in love with the land and the people. The path eventually led her to be a healthcare provider for rural communities. "My favorite thing about working in WV is the diversity; specifically, the diversity of microculture and health issues. At first glance, rural West Virginia would seem to be the last place to find diversity of perhaps anything, but in fact there are many people here from all sorts of

backgrounds residing next door to each other. We have scientists, outdoor enthusiasts, and retired government employees living, working and playing alongside multigenerational farmers, loggers and coal miners. Within this potpourri of community are wide-ranging sets of health care needs and disease," said Leyzorek-Hare. The biggest health challenges she sees are the same challenges she sees in New England, Washington, DC, Virginia and the Midwest; sedentary lifestyles and nutrition choices. "The whole world now is sitting in front of TVs, computers and smart phones, drinking soda and eating fast food. It's a pandemic and Appalachia unfortunately has not escaped this."

Dr. Hare's best advice for health profession students on their first rural rotation is to keep an open mind and be prepared to work. "We all tend to envision what something is going to be like before we step into it. My students are often surprised by the variety of problems that need to be addressed in a little outpatient clinic. Additionally, people often seek jobs "out in the country" because they believe it will be laid back and easy. Small community does not equal small patient volume."

Dr. Hare did not choose WV, WV chose her. "I came here by happenstance when I was in medical school and immediately knew I belonged here. I loved the land and the people. The vast national forests provide a sense of a world still untouched by human hands (though not historically true). And I absolutely love my job, I am never bored." If you are a medical student interested in a community-based rural rotation, please contact your campus coordinator to find out more. If you are a healthcare provider in a rural area and want to become a preceptor for future healthcare providers, please contact Molly Linkous at WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health, mlinkous@hsc.wvu.edu.



WVU is an EEO/Affirmative Action Employer — Minority/Female/Disability/Veteran. 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)

Awards

WV AHEC PROGRAM WINS 2020 EUGENE S. MAYER PROGRAM OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

The West Virginia Area Health Education Centers program was chosen to receive the Eugene Mayer Program of Excellence Award.

The Program of Excellence award is given biennially to an AHEC program that exemplifies community and university partnerships, program comprehensiveness, responsiveness to community needs, and has had a significant impact on improving access to health care for citizens in its state.

The now award-winning WV AHEC program, which is partnered with the WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health, offers online didactic and hands-on rural experiences for aspiring healthcare professionals across all disciplines. Students from all over the state of West Virginia are enrolled in the program.

The primary objectives of the AHEC grant are to support community-based education for health professions students, provide continuing education for health professionals, and provide/support programs for K-16 students that prepare students for possible careers in the health professions.

The WV AHEC program is designed to provide innovative

programming to recruit and retain quality healthcare professionals for the state. The program places an emphasis on rural and underserved areas of West Virginia. WV AHEC includes five regional centers and a central program office for the state.

"It is indeed an honor for WV AHEC and WVU to receive an award of this magnitude as it is truly a reflection of a team effort," Sandra Pope, Director, said. "We are fortunate to have a dedicated and passionate staff working together to educate and train an interprofessional workforce to address the health care needs of our rural and underserved communities."

WV AHEC was one of the original 11 national AHECs established in the 1970s and has been a member of the National AHEC Organization since NAO was founded. WV AHEC activities have consistently and comprehensively addressed AHEC program goals, as well as goals for the state.

Award recipients were recognized on July 14, during the NAO virtual annual meeting. Additionally, recipients will then be honored, in person, during a ceremony next summer.

Physical Diagnosis – Patricia Fedeles Award for Compassion

The Patricia "Pat" Fedeles Award for Compassion in Physical Diagnosis was established in 2007 and is presented to the second-year medical student who portrays ongoing compassion, friendliness, and an overall caring attitude toward patients, peers, and faculty.

Mrs. Fedeles served as coordinator for the West Virginia University School of Medicine Introduction to Clinical Medicine and Physical Diagnosis courses from 1992 until 2006 when she retired after being diagnosed with cancer. Pat truly enjoyed working with the students and strived to make each one feel special and confident in achieving his/her goals. It was important to Pat that students learned the proper "bedside manner" of patient care. Mrs. Fedeles lost her battle with cancer in 2007. This award was created in her honor to recognize the traits most important to her in a good future physician.

Pat's husband, Darrell Fedeles, continued supporting the Physical Diagnosis Courses by being a Standardized Patient until his retirement in 2012.

This year's recipient is **Paige McCaleb (shown)**. Paige is a rising third-year WVU School of Medicine Rural Track medical student. Paige has served on the leadership council for the WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health Rural Health Interest Group and has coordinated several WVU Project REACH activities, including the annual event at the Capon Bridge Festival in Hampshire County, WV. Paige's commitment to compassion and dedication make her a perfect fit for the prestigious award.



APRIL VESTAL RECEIVES WVU VP AWARD!

April Vestal, Director, WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health, was honored with an Administrative/Managerial Award from Clay Marsh, Vice President and Executive Dean, West Virginia University Health Sciences during the Vice President's Awards for Outstanding Achievement. She was nominated by Dr. Larry Rhodes, Brianna Sheppard, Christie Zachary, Jacquelynn Copenhaver, Jessica Stidham, Rose McCluskey and Dr. Trea Haggerty.

Thank you for your service to WVU Health Sciences!

BEING HOME IN WEST VIRGINIA

One of the biggest responsibilities for the staff at the WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health is rural housing. The Institute provides housing in communities where health sciences students complete community-based rotations. This includes non-West Virginia University students as well. In effort to invite students to professionally practice in rural West Virginia, the Institute accommodated 381 housing stays in 2019. These students vary in backgrounds and disciplines; in fact, students from 11 colleges or universities across 28 programs took advantage of furnished homes across the state. Rural housing coordinator for the Northern WV Region, Gerardo Patron created a blog for students to use as a resource so that they can easily find places to dine, shop and explore while completing their rotations. It is important for students to immerse themselves in not only the rural clinical settings, but also in the culture of the communities. Patron, being a natural explorer, has bicycle-packed across Europe and found that having some sense of home while on his travels made life much easier.

In a blog called "Being Home in West Virginia," Patron features towns where the Institute provides housing. The following are selected excerpts:

WHY "BEING HOME"?

Students, you are busy at the medical center and study extensively, but how will you approach your leisure time? What food can you enjoy near your clinical experience? Where can you hike? What is happening in town? We share Food, Entertainment, and Outdoor recommendations because we care that you feel settled. Then, friendships can emerge, time with your preceptor can be optimized, and you can consider yourself home.

Being Home in MARTINSBURG - ENTERTAINMENT

Southside Farmers Market - Sundays 9am-1pm, May-October - 525 Winchester Ave

Climbing New Heights - Indoor rock climbing, bouldering, yoga, and outdoor guide services

Black Draft Distillery

Shepherdstown, WV and Harpers Ferry, WV - 20-30 minutes from Martinsburg - Shepherdstown is a small college town where eccentricity charges every corner, and the Potomac flows. Harpers Ferry is smaller yet, the site where John Brown led others in a raid opposing slavery 2 years before the Civil War, where the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers converge, and where walking outside feels like a museum. Consider visiting both of these beautiful towns during your stay in Martinsburg.

[John Browns Fort in Harpers Ferry >](#)

Being Home in WHEELING - FOOD



Avenue Eats - Edgwood Neighborhood in Wheeling - A burger (*shown above**) at "The Ave" was considered the 33rd best US burger in 2015 by the Thrillist publication. Indeed, The Ave serves phenomenal burgers! I want two of them right now! Burgers are \$10-\$12/each, so I'll settle with one.

Whisk Bakery - Edgwood Neighborhood - Delightful cupcakes and other baked goods. Clearly for "treat yo-self" days when the sugar should be light and fluffy.





^ Shavers Fork

Being Home in **ELKINS - OUTDOORS**

Allegheny Highlands Trail - hike or bicycle from north Elkins all the way to Hendricks, near Thomas and Davis

Canaan Valley and Snowshoe Ski Resorts and more - 40-minutes from Elkins for hiking, mountain biking, XC skiing, downhill skiing

Otter Creek Wilderness Area - hiking just 25-minutes east of town

Monongahela National Forest (main office is in Elkins with trail maps) - Lush forests with big rocks, moss, wildlife

Swim or float in the **Shavers Fork** creek in the Stuart Recreation Area - beautiful Mon Nat'l Forest area basically in Elkins

Elkins is considered a gateway to pristine trout fishing. Gear up at **Elk Springs Resort and Fly Shop** (1-hr south)

Disc golf at Davis and Elkins College - short course great for beginners

WHY DO I LOVE WEST VIRGINIA?

I love the deep soul that these mountains engender in people; the humble confidence people share in being their true selves; the history that squeezes the heart with love and agony; the biodiversity through the countless colorful hollows; the significance of land and nature in many fascinating lifestyles; the refreshment of a waterfall splash in a swimming hole; the everlasting greenery of rhododendrons in the winter; the forest hug; bluegrass music; big rocks, ferns, and mosses; pepperoni rolls; and so forth. I am inspired by our wild and wonderful state. West Virginia is a special home on this planet.

**Note: Some photos are from before the pandemic. Please keep our rural communities safe by wearing your face coverings, and following all COVID-19 prevention guidelines!*

Please share why you love West Virginia along with suggestions of places students should visit during their clinical experiences in rural WV. Email gerardo.patron@hsc.wvu.edu.

The blog can be found by visiting <https://www.hsc.wvu.edu/icrh/students/rural-housing/rural-housing-blog-being-home-in-west-virginia/>

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R.U.S.H. RURAL HEALTH SHADOWING PROGRAM

The Rural Undergraduate Shadowing in Healthcare Program provides participants with a unique experience that offers insight into what it is like to practice a health profession in rural West Virginia.

The RUSH program is very competitive and only awards four spots per year. Participants must be a current WVU student in good academic standing planning to pursue a health career with the long-term goal of practicing in rural and/or underserved areas of West Virginia in Family Medicine or Dentistry. Selected students shadow a rural practitioner for a total of 20 hours during specific dates agreed upon by the participating practitioner and the student, and work with the WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health and the WVU Pre-Health Professional Development Office to identify other rural-related programs relevant to their chosen health profession discipline including research and service activities. RUSH students also meet one or more times with the Pre-Health Professional Development Office to put together their professional school application, which includes guidance on class choice, writing a personal statement, mock interviews, and obtaining a committee letter.

This year's RUSH-ers are:

Seth Levi Smith, a junior majoring in immunology and medical microbiology from Delbarton, who will shadow Dr. Laura Nulph at the Pendleton Community Care Health Center in Franklin.

Brianna Hodak, a junior majoring in biochemistry from Spring Church, Pennsylvania, will shadow dentists at Minnie Hamilton Health Systems in Grantsville.

Lauren Olivia Barbee, a sophomore majoring in forensic chemistry, from Concord, North Carolina, will shadow Dr. Angela Cherry at Harpers Ferry Family Medicine in Harpers Ferry.

Christina White, a junior majoring in biology and international studies from Morgantown, will shadow Dr. Joanna Bailey at Tug River Medical Center in Pineville.

For more information contact Christie J. Zachary, Program Manager of Student Outreach and Marketing, WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health christie.zachary@hsc.wvu.edu

2020 PROJECT REACH

Capitalizing on the success of two outreach trips to southern West Virginia during academic breaks in 2019, a group of students majoring in health sciences disciplines at West Virginia University will return to the southern part of the state this upcoming year.

Rising third-year medical student and a leader of the inaugural trip, Ahmed Haque, said the group, known as Project REACH has an opportunity to translate their coursework in to something concrete. The trip serves as a first step in refining their skills as future community healthcare providers by providing basic health screenings and related information in rural areas.

While the destination was neither the tropical nor exotic location typically favored by typical spring-breakers, these aren't necessarily your "typical" students. Most are pursuing advanced or terminal degrees. Haque touted it as a blossoming tradition to look forward to, especially for the first-year students who need new experiences.

"These trips are huge for students in medical disciplines because it starts the process of interacting with people in the same manner as they will as clinical practitioners. Listening, earning the community's trust and collaborating with other partners and providers are huge lessons to learn," he said. "We're receptive to feedback from the community and they seemed to appreciate our approach. Ultimately, this experience helps us understand where our future patients may be coming from as people."

Spearheaded by second-year students Haque, Luke Stover, Paige McCaleb and Levi Snedegar at the WVU School of Medicine and overseen by WVU's Institute for Community and Rural Health, Project REACH includes students from the School of Dentistry, School of Pharmacy and School of Nursing who are interested in community care in rural areas. It's not refined to a single discipline

and it's open to all interested health sciences students.

The large trips, such as this one, see students going to communities and setting up in public areas. A variety of basic medical screenings are offered, such as blood pressure, alongside some of the sound advice and best practices such as eating better, being physically active, emphasizing mental wellness and making budget-friendly, but nutritious, purchases at the grocery store.

The overall aim is to be friendly, approachable and willing to start up a conversation.

"It's a special thing because it's the first time we really get to see our worlds collide as a member of the public with our future career as a physician," he said. "We learned we want to give back and to do so early in our medical careers in an effort to expand the WVU School of Medicine's footprint through these community interactions – large and small."

The group also does monthly, smaller outreach events in the local areas. Those vary and range in focus, everything from teaching school-based nutrition outreach to volunteering at church-based recovery programs.

"We're all 'one West Virginia,' and good communication that helps address the root of medical problems is a two-way, evolving street," concluded Haque.

Haque attributes everything to the support and mentorship the WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health provides the students along with various faculty mentors, including Drs. Larry Rhodes, Treah Haggerty and Joanna Bailey.

He also emphasized the guidance that Christie Zachary, program manager for student outreach and marketing for the Institute, provided to help the trips run smoothly.

"Project REACH is a fantastic program that allows students to go beyond their comfort zones of just offering baseline clinical care. It allows them to get to the heart of practicing in a rural community. It's about understanding and respecting culture, establishing trust and realizing that healthcare in rural communities requires a broader scope of compassion and patience," Zachary said. "The students who volunteer for this program choose to do so because they want to make a difference. There is no financial incentive or requirement. They are a very special and dedicated team."

For more information about Project REACH, visit their site, or follow @WVURuralHealth on Twitter.

"IMMERSED" IN SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA

Second Year Rural Track Students

In July 2019, West Virginia University School of Medicine Rural Track students participated in an immersion trip to southern West Virginia. Throughout this trip, students were given the opportunity to experience rural medicine, as well as a chance to interact with residents to further understand the health disparities and unique challenges faced by those living in rural West Virginia. The immersion program spanned a five-day interval and contained activities such as: a visit to a black lung and respiratory rehabilitation clinic, various didactic sessions focusing on the screening process for Black Lung, and concluding the trip with a team building experience on the New River. The WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health developed this immersive experience in 2013 and it has been a continued success every year.

Outreach

TOMORROW IS MINE

Tomorrow Is Mine will be hosting its fourth session in 2021, and we continue to grow and expand. It is our goal to provide skills, knowledge and experiences that will allow the campers to dream big and instill a belief that their future is bright, while enjoying a healthy and positive camping experience. Classes and demonstrations are led by hand-picked volunteers with real life skills who serve as role models to these campers as they teach. We choose many of our volunteers from local and other small communities from around the state who have a real understanding of where our campers come from, allowing them to engage in meaningful and informed conversations with the campers. Our volunteers come from all walks of life and have a skill or knowledge to share and the willingness to do so. Educational topics focus on drug awareness, the importance of an education, vocational choices and opportunities and the value of having a dream and believing it can be achieved. Past presenters have included artists, teachers, students, physicians, lawyers, judges and firemen. On previous field trips we visited the State Capital, Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine, National Guard Armory, Organ Cave, Clay Center, Appalachian Power Baseball Game, West Virginia Outdoor Theater, New River Gorge, the Ritz Theatre in Hinton and Lake Stephens. We also provide evening entertainment. We have had magicians, story tellers, animal handlers, escape rooms, and STEM challenges to name a few. Camp classes focus on traditional summer camp activities and include crafts, cooking, sports and swimming.



COMBATING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

The WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health is partnering with the WVU School of Medicine Department of Behavioral Medicine and the Mid-Ohio Valley Rural Health Alliance to increase the capacity to treat substance use disorders, including opioid use disorder, in rural areas of the state. This work will be supported by two awards totaling \$1,748,000 to develop the infrastructure for a rural residency training track for Psychiatry and increase the capacity for rural communities to provide prevention, treatment and recovery services.

United Summit Center, WVU Medicine, Louis A. Johnson VAMC, and Community Care of West Virginia will be working with the Institute and WVU Behavioral Medicine are participating in the planning and implementation of a residency program to provide training opportunities for residents in rural areas that will include both in-person and telepsychiatry treatment modalities for patients. Dr. Daniel Elswick, MD, associate professor, psychiatry residency director, and Principal Investigator for this program said it is designed “to provide medical residents with a unique training opportunity and a better understanding of challenges our patients face when seeking care in rural settings.” Larry Rhodes, MD is providing rural expertise for this program.

The Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department, Minnie Hamilton Health System, Westbrook Health Services and Northern WV Rural Health Education Center are working with the Institute as a consortium to provide direct prevention, treatment and recovery services. This three-year project focuses on addressing the epidemic through multiple angles including alternative chronic pain management strategies, eliminating or reducing treatment costs for uninsured and underinsured patients, stigma reduction and workforce development in the region. Specific activities include increasing the number of providers actively prescribing medication-assisted treatment as part of treatment for opioid use disorder, developing new MAT programs in rural counties, increasing the number of quick response teams and peer recovery specialists available to support those entering treatment, and efforts to reduce bias around substance use disorders. The service area includes Calhoun, Gilmer, Pleasants, Ritchie, Roane, Jackson and Wood Counties. Brianna Sheppard, PhD is the Principal Investigator for this program.

The Institute is always open to partnering on grant opportunities that address rural health issues. Recent submissions, still under review by funding agencies, include a grant to support rural training and enhancement for the WVU Family Medicine Residency; a grant to address needs of the homeless in rural WV, including housing and addictions/behavioral health services; and scholarships for disadvantaged students.

by Jacquelynn Copenhaver and Brianna Sheppard

FROM CARRS AWARD RECIPIENT TO PRACTICING RURAL DENTIST

KELLY LYONS, DDS, NEWELL, WV

FAMILY MEDICAL CARE – NEWELL OFFICE

**1151 Washington Street
Newell, WV 26050**

304-459-4010

**Monday, Wednesday & Friday
8am to 4 pm**

**Tuesday & Thursday
8 am to 6 pm**

**Saturday
8 am to 2 pm**

The Community and Rural Rotation Support program (CARRS) was created in 2018 as a recruitment program for students and rural community members to meet and interact while students are on clinical rotations in their communities. Students are paired with a community mentor to work with an on-going community project/program.

Kelly Lyons, DDS was one of the first dental students to be selected for CARRS. She was headed to a practice in Tucker County for her rural clinical experience in the Spring of 2018. Her community mentor and project were Sean Freeland with Health Sciences Technology Academy (HSTA). Kelly and Sean connected with schools in the area to present dentistry as a career option to high school HSTA participants. Kelly also worked at a food pantry in Davis, WV to round out her community experience.

After her rural rotation and CARRS project were complete, Kelly shared that her experience taught her that in a rural area, people who take initiative and build programs matter as much as if not more than having a system in place. The individuals are often the ones who make it happen for the [HSTA] kids. She also strongly agreed with the following statements,

- **I would recommend this community project to other students;**
- **I would recommend this community mentor to other students; and**
- **I felt my contributions to the project had a positive impact.**

Dr. Lyons is now practicing in **Newell, WV**, Hancock County. Newell is as far north as you can get in WV and right on the Ohio River as it travels up from Pittsburgh, looping around the top of the northern panhandle to create the western boundary of WV. This region of Hancock County has designations by the federal government as a Health Profession Shortage Area and Medically Underserved Area/Low Income Population. The federal government also identifies this geographic location as rural although not all of Hancock County is considered rural.

Family Medical Care - Newell Office is part of the **Change, Inc.** Community Action Agency and Federally Qualified Health Center with offices in West Virginia and Ohio. As a Federally Qualified Health Center, Change, Inc. offers a wide breadth of services beyond dental health care, including family health, women's health, pediatrics, behavioral health, vision care, school-based health centers, pharmacy and Right From The Start. Change, Inc. also offers services to assist patients with housing, emergency support (domestic violence, child advocacy, veterans' families), transportation, meal programs and income management. So when Dr. Lyons and the dental center have a patient who needs more than just dental care, there are many in-house resources to help their patients.

HAPPY RETIREMENT, MAGGIE!

2019. Maggie's 29 years at WVU and the friendships and experience she gained were important to her. She enjoyed working at WVU and stated that she appreciated those opportunities. She also loved having the ability to work in a new and growing program that touched many communities and lives. As the Office Administrator Senior she was the "behind the scenes" person who kept all the important numbers flowing so that recruitment and retention of health professionals, outreach and other important efforts could happen. And for that, we are forever grateful. Our sincerest thanks to Maggie for being a big part of the formation and growth of the former Office of Rural Health to the Institute for Community and Rural Health! Currently, Maggie is thoroughly enjoying her retirement. Maggie, her husband John, children Jackie and Matt, and Siberian Huskies Annie and Tasha are looking forward to many future plans that include motorcycle trips, gardening and travel.

WELCOME NEW STAFF:

ANITA MARTIN, OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR SENIOR, WVU INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY AND RURAL HEALTH

Where are you from? I was actually born in Brooklyn, NY but grew up in Lima, OH. After I graduated high school, I moved to Cincinnati, OH and stayed there until I moved here in 2009. I've been in WV ever since.

Tell us a little bit about your family. I have a huge family. I am one of 6. My dad is 1 of 11 and my mom is 1 of 8. Growing up was fun with lots of siblings and tons of cousins all within walking distance.

What made you decide to join the WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health? I joined ICRH because the job description caught my attention. When I read about the institute and their mission to keep medical and dental care in rural, underserved areas I knew this was a team I wanted to be a part of.

What is your role at the institute? As the Office Administrator Senior, the budget is my first priority. However, we all work as a team to assist our students and each other.

What do you think about the state and importance of rural healthcare? Having lived here for a few years now, I've seen the disadvantages rural areas face when it comes to getting proper dental/medical care. ICRH plays a vital role in trying to serve these areas while assisting students at the same time. The goal is that these students complete their rotations with hopes that they stay here to practice in the state in those underserved areas.

What would you like to contribute to help propel the institute forward? I will contribute in any way I can to accomplish our goal. Financial knowledge is just a small piece to this puzzle. ICRH is doing awesome things for the state of WV. It would be nice to see this initiative extended to education as well.

What are your hobbies/fun things you like to do? I like doing pretty much everything. I love cooking and eating, bowling, singing, traveling and spending time with my family to name a few. The most fun thing I like doing is being a mom to my daughter and rooting on my mountaineers!

AMY SNODGRASS, PROJECT DIRECTOR, (RCORP) RURAL COMMUNITIES OPIOID RESPONSE

Where are you from? I was born in Port Clinton, Ohio. My family moved to Sioux City, Iowa during my teenage years. I graduated from Iowa State University in Elementary Education. After graduation, I accepted a teaching position in Houston, Texas. I taught in Houston for 7 years, later transferring to Parkersburg, West Virginia, where I have lived for 25 years.

Tell us a little bit about your family. I have a son, Ian, who is a Junior at Parkersburg High School. Seems like he was just entering kindergarten! His current goal is to work for the National Security Administration in the world of cyber security.

What made you decide to join the WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health? My work in rural counties has led me to my position at the WVU Institute of Community and Rural Health. For 20 years, I have been working in rural counties with the Birth to Three program to coordinate projects focusing on healthy food access to yoga in the schools.

What is your role at the Institute? My role is project coordinator of the Rural Communities Opioid Response Grant (RCORP).

What do you think about the state and importance of rural healthcare? It is amazing to learn the ways WVU is helping with the many challenges of access to care in our rural communities. Throughout my work, I have been given the opportunity to be part of grassroots organizations that have been making an impact on the health of our communities. I feel programs such as Try This WV and Wild, Wonderful & Healthy WV are key to rural counties. These programs implement teams across health care, business and residents to address the health concerns community by community.

What would you like to contribute to help propel the Institute forward? I'd like to contribute my connections to the various grassroots programs that are available to communities. This can be of an added benefit for those students that are on rotation to become involved at a community level to help address health concerns.

What are your hobbies/fun things you like to do? I love yoga and especially love teaching yoga to children. I enjoy spending time outdoors from hiking, skiing, kayaking, golfing to gardening. West Virginia certainly offers many outdoor activities. It has been a blessing living here.

WV AHEC RURAL COMMUNITY HEALTH SCHOLARS PROGRAM 2019

The WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health and the West Virginia Area Health Education Center (WV AHEC) are pleased to announce that **70 of West Virginia's best and brightest health professions students were recently accepted** into the WV AHEC Rural Community Health Scholars Program 2019 cohort, 34 of whom are currently enrolled at WVU. In 2018, the Scholars program accepted 26 students from WVU; the 2018 cohort graduated a total of 33 Scholars from this nationally recognized program in June 2020.

Selected Scholars from both cohorts have come together from nine institutions and seventeen disciplines across the state to refine their skill sets and positively impact the lives of West Virginians in rural and underserved communities. Scholars will also develop an astute understanding of how to become leaders in their professions and communities, how to best implement health care services in rural or underserved areas, and work as an interprofessional team. Concurrently, Scholars will receive supplemental training and education from experts in rural healthcare, provide meaningful patient care in the field, and gain hands-on experience.

RCH Scholars focuses on interprofessional education through clinical, didactic, and community-based lenses, and also emphasizes how each Scholar can create change and reshape the status quo for health care in his/her/their community. For more information on the RCH Scholars program, visit our website or contact us at RCH_Scholars@hsc.wvu.edu.

Please join us in congratulating the following Scholars from West Virginia University (*shown at right*)

Additional Scholars were also selected from the following institutions: Alderson Broaddus University (1), Bluefield State College (1), Marshall University (16), University of Charleston (2), West Liberty University (1), West Virginia State University (1), and the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (14).

The West Virginia Area Health Education Center is also delighted to share that in late December, Congress appropriated \$41.25 million to the Area Health Education Center Network (a \$2 million dollar increase from the current amount). As a result of this increase,

the **WV AHEC received an award of \$679,700 for the 2020-2021 fiscal year**. This additional funding will allow the WV AHEC to provide even more support to help West Virginia meet the needs of diverse populations through healthcare workforce development, particularly for those in underserved areas. The RCH Scholars program will also benefit from this increase through support with new and current opportunities for Scholars across the state.

For more information about the National AHEC Organization, visit: www.nationalahec.org.

DENTISTRY, DDS:

Matthew Dolan
 Carlie Enns
 Bailey Hollihan
 Skylar Kipps
 Nadia Mardmomen
 Misbah Muzaffer
 Seth Prince
 Payton Southall

EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGY, UG:

Mallory Brown
 Adrienne Hughes
 Sarah Osborn
 Olivia Voltaggio
 Nicholas Wentz

MEDICINE, MD:

Jessica Black
 Kadi Cooley
 Kristen Mastrantoni
 Sarah Mitchem
 Ashley Perdue
 Ashley Rose Scholl
 Landon Simpson

NURSING, BSN:

Kaitlyn Coleman

NURSING, PHD:

Kate Otu

NUTRITION/ DIETETICS, UG:

Peighton Foster

PHARMACY, PHARM.D:

Bryce Adams
 Mackenna Boone
 Maxwell DeNora
 Krystal Hughes
 Emma Platt
 Kayla Rose

PHARMACY, PHD:

Fnu (Rudi) Safarudin

PHYSICAL THERAPY, DPT:

Emily Hyler-Both
 Aaron Saunders

PUBLIC HEALTH, PHD:

Brenna Kirk

SPEECH PATHOLOGY, MSPA:

Jessica Thornburg

SERVICE AWARDS

Four WVU Medical and one Dental student were selected for the 2019-20 Institute for Community and Rural Health Service Program. Brandon Glover MS3, Savannah Lusk MS1, Luke Stover MS2 and Grace Walkup MS4 will receive \$25,000 each in exchange for a one-year commitment to practice in a rural and/ or underserved area of West Virginia. Fourth-year dental student Angela Stowers was awarded \$50,000 in exchange for a two-year commitment. Angela, a native of WV, plans to pursue practice in the Jackson County area. The purpose of the service award is to lessen the financial burden of medical and dental students and to recruit and retain them in the neediest areas of the state. Since 2011, the Institute has provided over \$2 million in scholarship funding to WVU students.



INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY
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