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## Progress for ATRN Incorporation

### Did you know?



The ATRN is making progress on incorporating into a non-profit, stand-alone organization.

The ATRN Leadership Team has drafted Bylaws, received a tax identification number, and begun work on incorporation documents. After applying for incorporation in Pennsylvania, the ATRN will submit paperwork with the Internal Revenue Service in hopes of being designated an official charitable, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization!

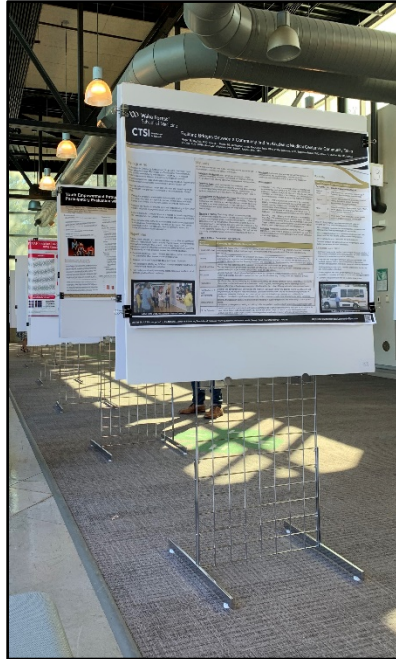
ATRN membership will consist of institutions with a Clinical and Translational Science or IDeA-CTR award, other academic institutions, community organizations, and individuals. Look for more information in the next newsletter. Your support will be vital to our success!

If you have any questions about this incorporation, please contact the ATRN Chair, Dr. Gene Lengerich at [ELengerich@phs.psu.edu](mailto:ELengerich@phs.psu.edu)

# 2019 ATRN SUMMIT



THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
CENTER FOR CLINICAL AND  
TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE



The 9th Annual Appalachian Translational Research Network (ATRN) Health Summit took place on October 14-15, 2019 at The Ohio State University in the Nationwide & Ohio Farm Bureau's 4-H Center building. During the two-day event, Ohio State's Center for Clinical and Translational Science and OSU Extension hosted 138 guests from six states across the Appalachian Region, including: Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Virginia. Among the attendees, there were community researchers from various ATRN member academic institutions and hospitals, Extension educators, and stakeholders from ATRN community partner organizations and affiliates.

The event was a success, highlighted by a keynote address delivered by Mark Holmes, PhD, from the University of North Carolina who provided a summary update of his research team's Bright Spots Community Analysis. In addition, the Summit hosted two speaker panels focusing on funding rural research projects and a multi-state collaborative research project targeting the opioid crisis in rural Appalachian communities, several breakout sessions covering a variety of topics and research projects, a poster session, and an "edu-tainment" performance over dinner that focused on Appalachian history, culture, music, and story-telling. Look for a copy of the 2019 ATRN Health Summit Summary Report on the ATRN website soon!

There is a lot to look forward to in September 2020, as Wake Forest University will host the 10th Annual ATRN Health Summit. Please contact Scott Rhodes ([srhodes@wakehealth.edu](mailto:srhodes@wakehealth.edu)) for more information on this year's event.

# CLIK PARTICIPANT'S REPORT ON EASTERN KY WATER AFFORDABILITY CRISIS RECEIVES NATIONAL ATTENTION



The Curtis Crum Reservoir in Martin County, Ky., on Oct. 2, 2018. Photo from the Lexington Herald-Leader.

A recently published report on the failing water system of Martin County in Eastern Kentucky finds that almost half of the county's residents cannot afford their current water service. Residents and county advocates are now asking for a termination in rate increases, as they are already paying some of the highest water bills in the state.

A participant of the Community Leadership Institute of Kentucky (CLIK), which empowers local leaders to address health disparities, Ricki Draper is co-author on the Drinking Water Affordability Crisis executive report. Draper, now working as the Community Engagement Coordinator for LiKEN, a non-profit organization, said there has been no coverage of the water AFFORDABILITY crisis because local and national media have mainly focused on the problem of water QUALITY in Martin County.

Through her affiliation with the Martin County Concerned Citizens organization, Draper co-authored the report with Mary Comer, deputy director and environmental attorney for the Appalachian Citizens' Law Center.

Martin County has become a prime example of rural communities struggling to maintain failing and aging water systems, especially as rural populations shrink. Even though Martin County is one of the poorest in the state, it ranks in the top ten for the highest average water bills. Despite unaffordable costs of services, the water is unsafe and undrinkable, sometimes leaving residents ill. Similar issues have garnered national media coverage due in part to the water crisis in Flint, Michigan.

"In January 2018, the water system in Martin County collapsed. Pipes froze, pumps froze, and some households went without running water for 21 days. At the same time, the Martin County Water District requested a 49% rate increase. This request for a massive rate increase was an affront to community members who didn't have running water. Furthermore, even when the water does run, a majority of customers do not trust the water coming out of their tap.

(story continued on page 4)

# CLIK PARTICIPANT'S REPORT ON EASTERN KY WATER AFFORDABILITY CRISIS RECEIVES NATIONAL ATTENTION

Almost everybody I've talked to relies almost entirely on bottled water for drinking and cooking—if they can afford it,” Draper said of the inspiration behind the report, which was covered by local media including local public radio, as well as by Morning Edition on NPR and by the Associated Press.

While the bulk of funding for the report came from the Appalachian Citizens Law Center and Martin County Concerned Citizens, Draper said that participating in the Center for Clinical and Translational Science’s CLIK program provided additional resources and other forms of support integral to the research. Through the training sessions of CLIK, for example, Draper learned how to effectively frame community individuals’ narratives and integrate stories with data.

“Being a part of CLIK has been an incredible experience. I love the integration of academic research and community work—I think each component strengthens the other. Through my involvement with CLIK, I've built meaningful and long-lasting relationships with other people and organizations committed to improving the health and vitality of eastern Kentucky. And having a mentor I can talk to about some of the more challenging academic processes is also really helpful.” Kathryn Cardarelli, PhD, director of CLIK, said that through a combination of didactic sessions, hands-on applications, and the support of UK faculty, CLIK enhances local capacity for community-engaged research and solutions.

“Community-academic partnerships are something I feel very strongly about,” said Cardarelli, “because those of us who are working to mitigate health inequities know that they are the result of dynamic multi-level factors that occur inter-generationally. In order to tackle such challenging health inequities, we as scientists cannot do it alone. We must rely on community partners to provide input in the design, implementation, interpretation, and dissemination of research into the community. These community-academic partnerships allow for research for action, and not research done for research’s sake.”



Ricki Draper, 2019 CLIK Participant

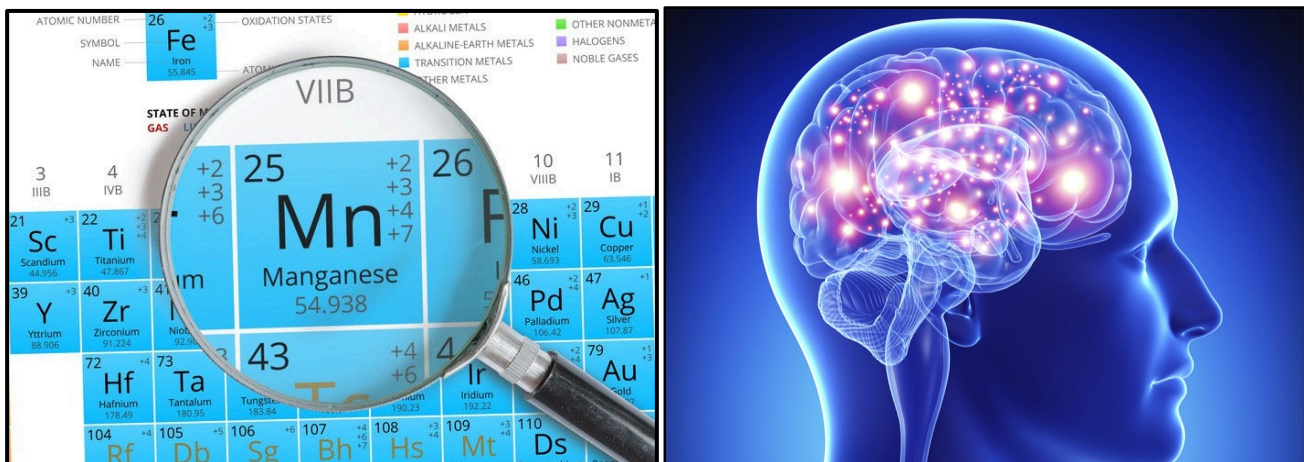
Draper echoed how essential it was that the effort be led from within the community. “This report would not have been possible without the community leaders in Martin County that direct our work and vision. Every step of this research process involved input and direction from community members. Before publishing the report, we held a meeting in the county to get feedback from people who are directly experiencing this water affordability and water quality crisis. Their input helped shape the final product, and especially the list of demands that resulted from our research,” she said.

While the Drinking Water Affordability Crisis report outlines several suggestions for alternative courses of action to address the issue, Draper hopes it will at least provide important context to community members and bring people together in action against continual increase in water rates.

“A huge part of it is that for people to recognize that they are not alone in this and that is not a personal failure that they are having trouble paying their water bills. It’s a product of the political and historical situation in the county.”

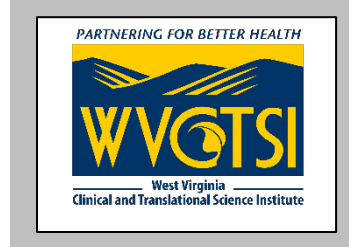
# UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI RESEARCHERS UNCOVER LINKAGE BETWEEN MANGANESE EXPOSURE AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Communities Actively Researching Exposure Study (CARES, PI Erin Haynes) is community-based participatory research with the goal of understanding the effect of manganese (Mn) exposure on children's health in Marietta, Cambridge, and East Liverpool, Ohio. The neuroimaging team (lead by Kim Cecil PhD from Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center) is using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to map and evaluate regional interactions and strength of neuronal connections within the brain.



Preliminary findings suggest higher prenatal exposure to Mn is associated with increases in connectivity in regions responsible for hearing processing, and decreases in connectivity with vision processing regions of the brain. These findings suggest that prenatal manganese exposure may influence brain development, however further investigation needs to be done to replicate these findings and understand their significance in our population.

# WVPBRN PROJECT SETS SIGHTS ON PREVENTING BLINDNESS IN DIABETIC PATIENTS



MORGANTOWN, W.Va.- When people think about the treatment and management of their diabetes, A1C tests and foot exams usually come to mind. Often overlooked is the recommended retinal eye exam. This eye exam is crucial because many West Virginians with diabetes are at risk for blindness caused by diabetic retinopathy.

Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in the U.S. for people ages 20 to 65. It is now projected that one in three Americans with diabetes will experience diabetic retinopathy by the year 2050. While the projection may be frightening, early detection reduces the risk of severe vision loss by 90 percent. This critical need for early detection and prevention of diabetic retinopathy is the key mission of the West Virginia Practice-Based Research Network's (WVPBRN) Sight Outreach Program. The program trains primary care clinical staff members across the state to use the Intelligent Retinal Imaging System (IRIS) to quickly capture images of the patient's retinas.

"Patients with diabetes are supposed to get an eye evaluation annually, however, in West Virginia only about 60% received eye care in the past year," said William Lewis, M.D., family medicine physician at Harper's Ferry Family Medicine and WVPBRN co-director. "This IRIS program removes barriers to access that often prevent people from getting these exams and can help us bring the best care possible to persons with diabetes."

The speed and ease of use makes the IRIS program convenient for both providers and patients. During routine primary care visits in participating clinics across the state, providers take a photograph of the patient's retina. This finely detailed image is then securely transmitted to a retinal specialist at the WVU Eye Institute. The entire procedure takes less than five minutes for most patients. After receiving the images, ophthalmologists analyze them for any evidence of ophthalmic pathology and deliver results directly to the patient's electronic medical record. The primary care providers also receive recommended care plans and referral paths if indicated.



"IRIS not only helps us treat our patient's eyes, it helps us comprehensively treat the whole patient," said Lewis. "If we detect early-stage retinopathy, we know we need to be more aggressive with the management of our patient's diabetes."

To date, more than 5,400 patients have been screened across the 10 participating WVPBRN sites, including WVU Medicine outpatient clinics in Morgantown, Fairmont, Reedsville, and Harpers Ferry; as well as multiple Community Care of West Virginia and Valley Health Systems sites. Of those, approximately 21% had evidence of diabetic retinopathy. Moreover, the IRIS scan detected other ophthalmic pathology such as glaucoma, cataracts, or macular degeneration in 28% of scanned patients. The data provided by the project not only led to patient improvements, but also impacted practice and policy across the state. IRIS results have influenced West Virginia Medicaid, the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA), and Highmark policies.

"I cannot state enough regarding the positive impact that this program is having for West Virginia residents," said Sally Hodder, M.D., WVCTSI director and associate vice president for clinical and translational science at WVU. "Not only is it preventing blindness and improving outcomes for diabetic patients, but the practice and policy changes that have been generated will improve early detection of ophthalmic pathology in the future."

# TRAINING OPPORTUNITY



## Community Leadership Institute of Kentucky Request for Applications

### Program Description

The Community Leadership Institute of Kentucky (CLIK) is a 4-week intensive leadership development training program offered in Hazard, KY by the UK Center of Excellence in Rural Health and the UK CCTS Community Engagement and Research Program. The Institute is designed to enhance research and capacity-building competencies in community leaders, senior staff, directors and administrators. There are up to 10 positions available for the 2020 class.

### Program Goal

The overall goal of the program is to assist leaders affiliated with organizations that engage and empower communities to reduce health disparities, leverage funding and learn how to use data to improve services and programs.

### Who Should Apply?

Community and organizational leaders, administrators, directors and other key program staff should apply. Individuals currently employed by the University of Kentucky are not eligible to apply.

### Grant Funding

Pending successful completion of the training sessions and assignments, Each participant's organization will receive a **\$2500 grant** for their participation in this competitive program and completion of their proposed project. The participant's organization must have 501c3 status or a designated lead fiscal agency (health agency or non-profit) to receive reimbursement and manage the grant award.

### Key Dates

**RFA Release Date:** February 10, 2020

**Applications due:** March 13, 2020

**Applicants Notified:** March 20, 2020

**Save the Required Training Dates:** April 6, 7, 13, 14, 28

**Save the Required Six-Month Project Update Meeting:** Fall 2020 (date to be announced)

**Save the Required Graduation Date:** Spring 2021 (date to be announced)

Download the full RFA [here](#)

## Research Fellow PHS Social Sciences Position-Full time, Staff

The Wake Forest School of Medicine CTSI program is currently looking for a research fellow/postdoc to work closely with the Program in Community Engagement (PCE). The function of the PCE is to increase the participation of community members and investigators in activities that support community-engaged research in the development, implementation, and evaluation of translational science. The community includes community members in the Piedmont Triad area of North Carolina, community organization representatives and health care providers in this region, and faculty and staff at Wake Forest School of Medicine. The Research Fellow/Postdoc assists with the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of, and writing and dissemination of findings from, PCE initiatives. This position combines research management and academic research skills. This classification requires the use of judgment and discretion in performing the assigned duties and responsibilities related to the PCE. The Research Fellow of the PCE reports to, and works with, the PCE Faculty Director.

### EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE:

Minimum Acceptable Qualifications

1. PhD degree with at least 6 years of relevant research experience
2. Demonstrated knowledge of scientific principles
3. Strong computer skills
4. Strong communication and writing skills
5. At least one letter of recommendation

### SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Prior research experience
2. Prior experience in community engagement
3. Experience beyond minimum required
4. Teaching Experience
5. Public Speaking Experience
6. Prior participation in the preparation of grant proposals
7. Peer reviewed publications and/or oral or poster presentations at national meetings

### ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

1. Work with the PCE leadership and community to coordinate the successful and timely completion of tasks that comprise the implementation, data collection, analysis, and dissemination phases of PCE initiatives to include, but not be limited to planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating community-engaged research studies, and writing and disseminating study findings.
2. Work with PCE leadership and community to ensure that all aspects of PCE initiatives and related studies are conducted in accordance with protocols and grants/contracts. Ensure that all activities comply with state and federal regulations and guidelines, as well as all requirements of the Medical School and University.
3. Draft manuscripts, literature reviews, progress reports as assigned by the PCE Faculty Director.
4. Contribute to the writing of scientific papers for publication from study results with the PCE and community partners.
5. Participate in the writing of new/additional grant proposals and assist with the budget preparation for these new grants and/or projects.
6. Coordinate and collaborate as warranted with community partners and Medical School faculty and staff to engage them in the goals of the PCE.
7. Train and instruct study personnel about community engagement, research procedures, and study protocols. Also, troubleshoot specialized equipment and apparatus as required for the performance of research activities.
8. Participate in site visits when appropriate
9. Participate in the preparation of progress reports and monitoring quality control.
10. Assist in preparation of abstracts and posters for PCE initiatives for national and local scientific meetings.
11. Attend and participate in meetings related to the planning, operation, and evaluation of the PCE initiatives, as needed.
12. Perform other related duties to the work described herein.

**WORK ENVIRONMENT:**The PCE is located in Bailey Power Plant in the Innovation Quarter; the Research Fellow will be based in 525@Vine, close to the Faculty Director's office. This is a collaborative team environment, working with the PCE staff and faculty, and research MD and PhD collaborators across the institution.

Apply [here](#)



# WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUBMIT CONTENT FOR THE ATRN NEWSLETTER?

Please email the representatives below at each partnering institution:

## Newsletter Editor:

Ashley Hall [agtayl3@uky.edu](mailto:agtayl3@uky.edu)

## ATRN Communications Group

Ian Moore [imoore3@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:imoore3@hsc.wvu.edu)

Beverly Stringer [Beverly.stringer@osumc.edu](mailto:Beverly.stringer@osumc.edu)

Sheanna Spence [smith566@marshall.edu](mailto:smith566@marshall.edu)

Jeffrey Jessberger [jeffrey.jessberger@osumc.edu](mailto:jeffrey.jessberger@osumc.edu)

Rachael Shepler [Rachael.shepler@cchmc.org](mailto:Rachael.shepler@cchmc.org)

Matthew Solovey [msolovey@pennstatehealth.psu.edu](mailto:msolovey@pennstatehealth.psu.edu)

DeWanna Thomas Hamlin [dthamlin@wakehealth.edu](mailto:dthamlin@wakehealth.edu)

Jeff M. Grever [Jeff.Grever@osumc.edu](mailto:Jeff.Grever@osumc.edu)

## Newsletter content includes:

- Researcher Spotlights
- Funding opportunities
- Seminars/Lectures
- Trainings
- Events
- Collaborations among partnering ATRN institutions
- Other—send your Communications Group representative an email with your ideas!