

In this Issue

Health Summit..... 1
 Contacts 2
 WV University..... 2
 Univ. of Cincinnati 3
 The OSU.....4
 Univ. of Kentucky.....5
 Ohio University.....6
 ATRN Team.....7
 ATRN Webpage.....8
 ATRN Contacts.....9

2014 ATRN Annual Health Summit Addressing Health Disparities in Appalachia



Dr. Gregory Jicha, clinical director of University of Kentucky's Disease Center

Access to specialists for the patient is challenging with the travel for appointments with specialist. Dr. Jicha explained that he “can ‘travel’ to a different city every hour and provide care to patients through Telemedicine.” During telemedicine appointments, medical experts can talk about the patient’s history, administer cognitive tests, and even observe patients walking or performing tasks to diagnose them. The goal of the program is to provide high level care and cognitive evaluations to rural areas by partnering with primary care physicians and clinics in rural areas. If rural residents had better access to specialists who can detect the early symptoms of the disease, its onset could be delayed.

Todd Gress, a professor at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia, presented a study about a pilot test of a text-message reminder system to advance diabetes awareness, compliance and education. The advancing telemedicine strategy and these other research agendas should serve as a reminder that gifted researchers are searching for ways to improve rural health. The passion of these dedicated researchers will help solve the issues facing our region. These are not small problems and will take the collaboration between the ATRN partners help expand the research environment and help improve the health of the Appalachian communities in our network area and overcome disproportionately health issues.

“Telemedicine really is the wave of the future.”

Dr. Gregory Jicha

With the health disparities that challenge the Appalachian Region of the tri-state, Dr. Gregory Jicha, clinical director of the University of Kentucky’s Disease Center, discussed the challenge of access to health care, especially when you need a specialist. Dr. Jicha’s specialty is Alzheimer’s Disease and he noted that mortality rates for prostate cancer, breast cancer, heart disease and HIV are going down, the rates for Alzheimer’s are going up and by 2020 it is estimated that 5.6 million American’s could be affected by it. Rural areas have high incidents of the condition, and the onset of dementia averages four years younger in rural areas than in urban areas.





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Dr. Dino co-developed the Not On Tobacco (N-O-T) teen smoking cessation program that was adopted by the American Lung Association in 1998.

West Virginia University Partnerships: Community Engagement Building Strong Partnerships

Dr. Geri Dino is a professor in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, West Virginia University School of Public Health. She has been the PI/ Director of the West Virginia Prevention Research Center (WV PRC) since 2000 and is Director of Community Engagement and Outreach Core for the WV Clinical and Translational Science Institute. She has had over a dozen years of experience building alliances and leading public health missions that bring together researchers, clinicians, communities, and state and national partners to conduct and translate community-driven research to inform public health policy and practice.

As a researcher, she uses community-based participatory research methods to reduce chronic disease behavioral risk factors, particularly with teen tobacco use and with underserved, rural populations. Dr. Dino has over 15 years of continuous external research funding from federal, state, and private agencies. She has an internationally-recognized program of research and publication in adolescent smoking. She co-developed the *Not On Tobacco* (N-O-T) teen smoking cessation program that was adopted by the American Lung Association (ALA) in 1998. N-O-T is a federally-recognized Model program, and the most commonly used packaged teen smoking cessation program in the US. The ALA projects that N-O-T has reached over 300,000 teen smokers since 2000, with about 1 in 5 reporting quitting at the

end of the program.

Dr. Dino's research interests also include practice-based research, and implementation and dissemination science. She continuously involves graduate students in her research and research translation. Her recent courses include Research Translation for Health and Public and Community Health Leadership and Management. Dr. Dino also has expertise in participatory program and systems evaluation. She was Co-Chair of the CDC's national Prevention Research Centers evaluation project, was PI of a multi-year state-funded project to evaluate WV's Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention program, and was Co-PI on a project to evaluate the WV Healthy Lifestyles Act directed toward



childhood obesity.

She is also part of the WV PRC's multi-year evaluation of WV's Tobacco Program that provides the state health department with ongoing policy and practice recommendations. She provides consultation to state and national organizations on strategic planning, evaluation, community engagement and community-based research, and teen smoking prevention and cessation.



University of Cincinnati: Community Engagement: A Strong Partnership



Sarah Elam, Community Outreach and Engagement Core Program Coordinator

Sarah Elam is the Community Outreach and Engagement Core (COE) Program Coordinator at University of Cincinnati, Department of Environmental Health. She works to translate and communicate environmental health science to a wide variety of community audiences. The COEC, within the Center for Environmental Genetics (CEG), is funded by the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and strives to engage populations that are affected by environmental exposures and provide education to raise awareness in communities.

The theme of the UC CEG is to develop an understanding of the complex relationships between genetic susceptibility factors and environmental exposures. Shuk-Mei Ho, PhD, is the Director of the CEG and the Chair of the Department of Environmental Health. University of Cincinnati Center for Environmental Genetics NIEHS Funded P30ES006096.

The COEC is led by Erin Haynes, DrPH who oversees the COEC functions, serves as an expert in community engagement for the CEG, and provides opportunities for collaboration among CEG researchers, public health decision-makers, and community members.

The COEC serves as a bi-directional resource for information and expertise to surrounding communities, stakeholders, and Center members to further scientific collaborations and dissemination of research results.

“Our key objective is the translation of research information into knowledge for

communities and our target audiences include community members and key opinion leaders, health care professionals, and public health policy makers.” Elam said. The COEC Stakeholder Advisory Board identifies areas where CEG science can be applied to local environmental health issues, it provides recommendations for new public health policy and implementation strategies, and it determines the best mechanisms to provide education and outreach to each target community.

Recently, community outreach effects have included lead exposure, training scientists to translate research to communities and journalists, and Unconventional Natural Gas Drilling (UNGD). The COEC partnered with the University of Rochester and the University of North Carolina on a community health information needs assessment. This project assessed and gaged the public’s concern of potential public health effects related to UNGD.

The COEC is also partnering with Oregon State University (OSU) to test air quality related to UNGD in eastern Ohio. This research project addresses a major research gap in our understanding of air quality associated with UNGD, while engaging affected community stakeholders. The project has a heavy emphasis on community engagement, while testing air quality and passive and personal air sampling devise.

“We are excited to be partnering with OSU to test air quality in eastern Appalachian Ohio,” Elam said. “Hopefully this research will help us understand how the air is affect by the different stages of UNGD and how that may potentially impact human health.”

Follow the COEC
on Facebook at
[@UofCincyCOEC](#)
and on Twitter at
[@UC COEC](#).





The Ohio State University Partnerships: OSU Building Powerful Relationships, ATRN commitment

Establishing mutual respect and trust is crucial in building partnerships.

Building powerful partnerships was the goal of Ohio State University when they started working with six institutional partners to form the Appalachian Translational Research Network. Wanting to expand research out into the Appalachian region, they realized they needed to go into the communities and build relationships. Building the relationships would require support from the community. Making the communities an integral part of expansion efforts was crucial. They committed to the program and hired a full-time program coordinator for the ATRN program and investment from OSU.

Beverly Stringer was added to the ATRN program in June 2012. With her being born, raised and living in southeastern Ohio gave her a unique experience and understanding about the culture and communities. She hit the ground running. From her past experience from working in Hospice, she witnessed first-hand the progression of diseases on people. Beverly is dedicated to helping expand research and help the people of Appalachia to battle their health disparities and improve the environment for healthy lifestyles.

Traveling around 14 counties and meeting with community members, helping to identify their needs and building partnership with community partners and community organizations and leaders has helped the

ATRN build from 5 counties to 14 counties and from 2 community partners to 32 community partners and continues to steadily grow. Meeting with community partners and community organizations and leaders in their own setting helps build trusting relationships and helps facilitate an environment that builds substantive partnerships that result in benefits for both researchers and communities.

Trusting community partnerships are not built overnight, but develop over time and with shared activities and respect for each other. Beverly works on her partnerships with continuous interaction and becoming a part of the communities. She stays busy with visits, health fairs, interviews, the ATRN Website, newsletters, membership on coalitions, and forging new ways to make contact with researchers and community partners. A common thread in all the partnerships is wanting to help improve the health of the community.



Do you have information for future newsletters or are you interested in becoming a *community partner*? Email us at

Beverly.stringer@osumc.edu.





University of Kentucky Partnerships: Building Partnerships with Health Coalitions and Community Advisory boards



Beth Bowling, RN

Beth Bowling, RN, is a Rural Project Manager at the University of Kentucky (UK) Center of Excellence in Rural Health (CERH) in Hazard. In this role she provides research coordinator support throughout southeastern Kentucky for the UK Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS), Community Engagement and Research Core, to address health disparities in Appalachia.

A native of Perry County, Bowling worked for more than a decade in hospital public relations and marketing in eastern Kentucky before joining the research and community engagement team at UK CERH and CCTS. Her extensive work in health care throughout the region has been instrumental in connecting investigators with community partners for research projects. Since she began her post with UK in 2008 Bowling has provided coordinator support for numerous projects in the form of recruitment, consent, data collection, intervention and assistance with dissemination of research findings.

Bowling holds a bachelor of arts in public relations from Eastern Kentucky University and an associate degree in nursing from Hazard Community and Technical College. She is a member of the National Rural Healthcare Association, the Kentucky Rural Health Association, the Kentucky Appalachian Rural Rehabilitation Network and numerous local health coalitions and community advisory boards.

Mary Horsley, RN, CCRP currently serves as the Clinical Trials and Telemedicine Director at St. Claire Regional Medical Center in Morehead, KY. She currently oversees the clinical research department in the Center for Health Education & Research as well as St. Claire TeleCare. She also serves as the research study coordinator for the UK Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) community engagement

core and provides research support for Morehead and the surrounding counties. A native of Rowan County, Kentucky, Mary is a registered nurse with 30 years of experience including emergency medicine, primary care, telemedicine and research.

St. Claire Regional Medical Center set forth a goal in 2005 to incorporate research opportunities into its portfolio of patient services; Mary was quickly identified as the ideal candidate to take on the challenge of being part of the team to develop the research program. Mary's research experience dates back to 2000 when she assumed the role of the clinical coordinator in the Telemedicine Department at St. Claire Regional. Although she was not the primary research coordinator for telemedicine research activities she did serve as study staff responsible for discussing telemedicine research activities with subjects as well as obtaining consent. Since August of 2005, Mary has spent countless hours as a Research Study Coordinator managing all aspects of study initiation, conduct, and closeout at St. Claire Regional. In 2006, St. Claire began to further develop their research portfolio; conducting several oncology therapeutic intervention studies simultaneously; including Investigator-Initiated and Industry sponsored trials. Mary has been proactive in identifying and mentoring additional healthcare professionals in the conduct and management of research at St. Claire Regional Medical Center.

She is a member of the American Telemedicine Association, Kentucky Rural Health Association and the Society of Clinic Research Professionals (SoCRA). She also serves as the caregiver support group facilitator for the Alzheimer's Association for Rowan and surrounding counties.

UK's community engagement program is strong with Beth Bowling and Mary Horsley on their team!



Mary Horsley, RN, CCRP





Ohio University Partnerships: OMNI—1 of only 5 in the World!

*“This is the best
experience I have
ever had!”*

The Ohio Musculoskeletal and Neurological Institute (OMNI) at Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine is currently participating in a major pharmaceutical clinical trial, investigating the effects of a new myostatin-inhibitor medication. Ohio University is one of only five sites in the world, along with Harvard University, Tufts University, Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Florida, selected by Regeneron Pharmaceuticals and Sanofi to conduct both the Phase 1B and Phase 2 trials of the medication. OMNI Executive Director, Dr. Brian Clark, Ph.D., who rounds out the leadership of the Athens-based team by serving as Co-Principal Investigator, along with OMNI Medical Director, Dr. Timothy Law D.O., M.B.A., who is the Principal Investigator of these studies.



Dr. Clark states, “These studies represent the first phase 1 and 2 drug trials ever conducted at Ohio University, which has been great as it has resulted in OMNI forming numerous local partnerships to ensure the successful completion of the study.” Clark continued, “We are currently one of the highest enrolling sites in the nation, which considering the elite group of scientists that we are collaborating with, places us in very good company.” OMNI’s participation in this

investigation has been made possible by partnerships with OhioHealth O’Bleness Hospital’s Radiology and Pharmacy departments, OhioHealth Heart & Vascular Physicians, Ohio University Therapy Associates, and Ohio University WellWorks.

Participants in the study are 60+ years of age for Phase 1B and participants in the Phase 2 trial are 70+ years of age. Phase 1B includes 12 study visits, medical imaging, and strength and physical function testing. Participants in the Phase 2 trial includes 11 visits, randomized into 1 of 4 drug treatment groups which one group will be the placebo. To learn more about the study please email omni@ohio.edu or call 740-566-OMNI (6664).

Dr. Clark says this is the “best experience he has ever had.” Getting involved with the

community and the participants, he has built serious ties and does what he can to help the participants long-term. Through their efforts with the community engagement program at Ohio University, he partnered with community ambassadors. The community ambassadors were selected due to their past experience to help spread the word about the program. Dr. Clark has built some close relationships with the community ambassadors and credits the success of participation with the program to the community ambassadors. The partnerships has helped this project be one of the best experiences Dr. Clark has ever had!

Do you have information for future newsletters or are you interested in becoming a *community partner*? Email us at

Beverly.stringer@osumc.edu.





ATRN Leadership Team Team work moves the Network Forward

“The ATRN works to expand the research environment in Appalachia of the tri-state area of Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia!”

The Appalachian Translational Research Network’s Leadership Team has been very busy these past months working on many activities and projects to move forward with their goals.

A new look was created for the **ATRN** with a **new logo**. The team felt the new look was better suited to reflecting the Appalachia Region with the rolling hills they are well known for in this area.



Another move forward included the building of an **ATRN Webpage** to be useful for the institutional partners, researchers and community partners. This is a wonderful way of sharing information about the ATRN, activities and a way to educate those involved with the network.

The creation of the **ATRN Community Engagement Coordinators** was formed to assist with the smooth flow of collaboration between the institutional partners and across state lines. Even though we are three separate states, we share a lot of the same health disparities and challenges. Together we can work on finding solutions. The community engagement coordinators are featured in this issue of the ATRN Newsletter.

The **Annual ATRN Health Summit** is rotated with the six institutional partners: Marshall University, Ohio University, Ohio State University, University of Cincinnati, University of Kentucky and West Virginia University. The 2014 ATRN Health Summit was hosted by the University of Kentucky.



Activities within the Appalachian Translational Research Network are shared with partners by a bi-annual **ATRN Newsletter**, which is published in the Spring and Fall of each year. This publication helps disseminate the efforts of those involved with the ATRN and the institutional partners. Working together we can help improve the health of the community!

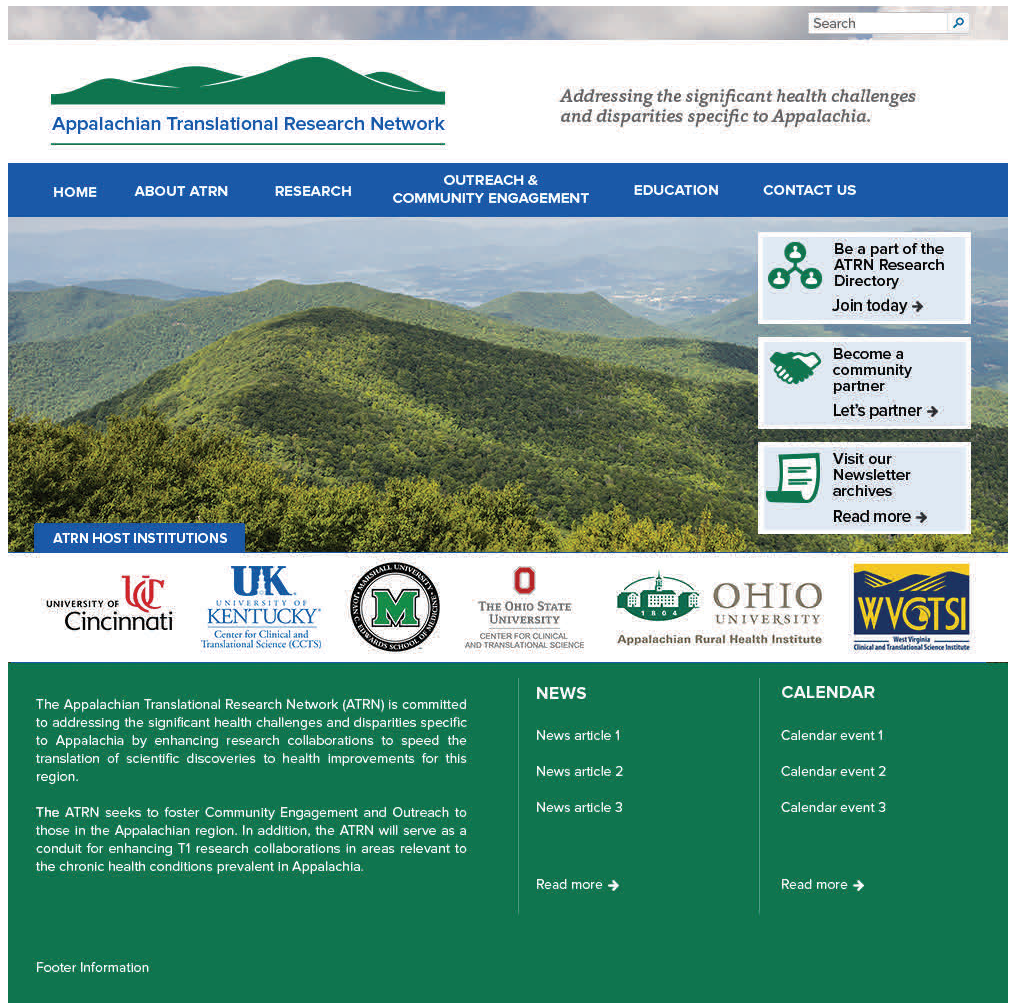
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ATRN Webpage Development In Progress



Do you have information for future newsletters or are you interested in becoming a *community partner*? Email us at

Beverly.stringer@osumc.edu

The ATRN has been very busy the past few months working hard on developing the ATRN Web Page. The new ATRN logo was created and implemented with the new Webpage.

Phase One of the Website has been completed and is ready for kick-off soon . Please watch for more details as they come available. In Phase One the institutional partners and community partners, newsletters and communications were included. -

Phase Two will include the Researchers and education modules. There will be links directly to each institutional partner and each community partner, so you will be able to find more information about each.

Our goal is to have a Webpage that will benefit all of us from institutional partners to community partners to researchers.

We look forward to sharing more details about the webpage as we progress!

www.appalachianresearch.org



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