

WVPBRN & COMMUNITY NEWS

A monthly newsletter brought to you by the Community Engagement Core of the West Virginia Clinical and Translational Science Institute

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Reminder: Project ECHO Launches in April

WVCTSI will be hosting a kickoff event for Project ECHO in West Virginia. [Project ECHO](#) is an interactive knowledge-sharing network that allows specialists to share their expertise with rural providers throughout West Virginia. This program will address Hepatitis-C, enabling patients to get local specialized treatment.

This event is from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. on **Tuesday, April 12** in West Virginia University's Ruby Grand Hall Salon-C of the Erickson Alumni Center. The launch will include a presentation followed by a reception.

[RSVP here](#) for this event by **April 5**.

SPOTLIGHT: Pulmonary rehab improves breathing capabilities

Chronic lung diseases are highly prevalent in West Virginia. To address this health disparity, Chaffee Tommarello, RRT and Dan Doyle, MD, from Cabin Creek Health Systems, in Dawes, WV, are leading an effort to study the effects of pulmonary rehabilitation in a rural population.

Pulmonary rehab adds value to the treatment of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), the third leading cause of death in the nation. COPD affects patients' breathing capabilities and greatly reduces activity levels and lifespans. Black lung complications, often found in coal miners, have also been reduced through rehab. Previous studies have been conducted in pulmonary rehabilitation facilities located in urban areas. Chaffee and the clinical staff aim to determine the effectiveness of pulmonary rehab in rural, clinical settings.



Grace Anne Dorney, wife of television journalist Ted Koppel, benefited from pulmonary rehab thirteen years ago when she was diagnosed with COPD and only given a few years to live. Her COPD condition improved following rehab allowing her to live a full, active life. Donations from Ted Koppel and Grace Anne Dorney, as well as Senator Jay Rockefeller and wife Sharon, Charleston Area Medical Center, Cabin Creek Health Systems, United Mine Workers of America, and the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation are offering a rehab program to many COPD sufferers in southern West Virginia. The program also includes New River Health Center in Fayette County and Boone Memorial Hospital in Madison.

This study findings have shown a 33 percent increase in meters walked during the six-minute walk test. The St. George's Respiratory Questionnaire, an instrument designed to measure overall health in chronic lung disease patients, found a significant increase in quality of life factors reported by patients. Another critical study finding is that, 22 percent of smokers in the sampled group quit during the study period.

These facilities hope to improve the lives of many in their region who suffer from COPD. Pulmonary rehab is one of the only treatments shown to improve quality of life and reduce disease healthcare costs. This study assesses the impact pulmonary rehabilitation has and aims to create more opportunities for this service in rural West Virginia.

rHeART project finds success in patient disease management

A WVCTSI funded pilot study, called rHeART, found encouraging results in improving cardiovascular health in rural patients and communities, along with showing a change in participant healthy lifestyle behavior using a community-based approach.

Dr. Paul Chantler, assistant professor of exercise physiology from the West Virginia University School of Medicine, partnered with the Roane County Family Health Care Clinic, the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department (MOVHD), the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM), the Prevention Research Center at West Virginia University, and the West Virginia Practice-Based Research Network (WVPBRN) to deliver a lifestyle intervention to the Roane County community. The WVSOM developed resource materials for participants and trained the MOVHD staff to deliver the intervention. The first rHeART program began in 2014 and was followed by a second group of participants in 2015.

Participants completed an educational program that incorporated the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet into daily food choices. Participants were also provided with information to quit smoking and to use friends and family to support lifestyle changes. Cardiovascular biomarkers and participant satisfaction survey data were collected and analyzed by the research team. Participants reported an 86 percent satisfaction score for the overall program structure and information. They also saw a 37 percent increase in meters walked during the 6-minute walk test. More than half of the participants reported behavior change due to the education given as well as noting a 22 percent decrease in weekday sitting time.

"We are really pleased with the way this project has taken shape and how the community embraced it," stated Dr. Chantler. "We were able to bring together key experts from around the state to design this intervention, and the people of Roane County were dedicated to its success. I look forward to turning my attention to data analysis so we can share what we found with the community. This kind of collaboration is what it takes to make a difference in peoples' health."

Dr. Chantler and the rHeART team hope to continue providing the intervention to Roane County and other communities throughout West Virginia.

WVCTSI announces new HOPE funding opportunity

The West Virginia Clinical and Translational Science Institute (WVCTSI) has released a [Request for Applications \(RFA\)](#) for the Health Outcomes and Policy Evaluation (HOPE) Funding Opportunity. The HOPE Program provides organization and infrastructure to health outcomes researchers throughout the state of West Virginia and serves as a catalyst for successful future external funding by increasing program competitiveness. This particular funding opportunity supports up to three projects that will use evidence-based strategies to address West Virginia health disparities in collaboration with public or private health care entities.

This open competition will support up to \$30,000 in funding per award over a twelve month project.

Submitted proposals must address WVCTSI's thematic areas of cancer, neuroscience, obesity and metabolic disease, cardiovascular disease and stroke, emerging epidemics in Appalachia (e.g., substance abuse), or the risk factors associated with those areas. Proposals should include innovative strategies or evidence-based interventions/ practices that improve the quality and/or the effectiveness of health care delivery in West Virginia.

Applications are due by **May 9, 2016 by 5:00 p.m.** EST. Applications must be submitted via email as a single PDF document to Wesley Kimble (wkimble@hsc.wvu.edu) on or before the deadline date.

West Virginia Practice-Based Research Network Community Engagement and Outreach Core

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