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From: Missouri Area Health Education Centers

Partnerships for Healthier Aging -- ATSU, SLU, & MAHEC

Gathered in a classroom, 13 elderly individuals watch a demonstration on safely getting up after a fall. One elderly participant (Joe) eagerly offers to do a return demonstration of the skill. Other group members applaud his successful effort, note “Joe’s” improved muscular strength, and enthusiastically attribute it to the class.

Developing a falls prevention initiative has been a priority for the A. T. Still University (ATSU) Aging Studies Project (ASP). As a first step on the Missouri campus, ATSU ASP convened several partner agencies to form a community coalition to increase awareness of falls and resources for reducing falls. Falls are a serious health issue for elders and a huge cost for the US healthcare system. The class described above, A Matter of Balance (MOB), is an evidence-based program designed to reduce fear of falling, increase activity levels of older adults, and help them view falls and fear of falling as something controllable. MOB is one of the programs selected for implementation by the coalition and partially supported by a new partnership between Saint Louis University (SLU) and ATSU.

The ATSU AHEC and Aging Studies Project are partners with SLU in a federally-funded Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) aimed at improving health of Missouri’s elders by increasing education for professionals, health professions students, and elders across the state. High Priority GWEP initiatives include:

- Disseminating information on the SLU Rapid Geriatric Assessment and expanding resources for out-patient geriatric assessment by interprofessional teams of students.
- Providing local and distance learning lectures, workshops, and conferences for students, primary care professionals, and community members.
- Partnering with agencies involved in a local Senior EXPO (AAA, NRMC, RSVP and CLAIM) to provide a combined Senior EXPO and Health Fair engaging health professions students in service learning.
- Introducing Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) – A new medication free, evidence-based therapy for individuals with dementia. Using a consistent meeting structure, participants are led through sessions that help them recall experiences from their past, link with more contemporary timeframe, and better connect with caregivers, family, and friends. Initial treatment involves 2 sessions a week for 7 weeks with the option of once weekly maintenance sessions.

Through the GWEP, SLU and ATSU are collaborating with regional AHECs to enhance local geriatrics care and education resources, especially in rural and underserved areas.

MAHEC: Connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health



At the MOB class, Barbara Stone, PT, MPH, demonstrates a safe method for getting up after a non-injury fall

MAHEC is a partnership of seven locally-governed organizations and three university-based health professions education programs working statewide to increase the number of Missouri youth entering stable, high-paying jobs as healthcare professionals and the number of professionals caring for underserved populations.

The MAHEC partners include:

- A.T. Still University – Kirksville
- University of Missouri – Columbia
- Saint Louis University
- Northeast Missouri AHEC – Kirksville
- Northwest Missouri AHEC – St. Joseph
- West Central Missouri AHEC – Lexington
- Mid-Missouri AHEC – Rolla
- East Central Missouri AHEC – St. Louis
- Southeastern Missouri AHEC – Poplar Bluff
- Southwest Missouri AHEC – Springfield