



GRECC Education Programs Offer Value to Veterans, Trainees and Providers

...what follows is a small sampling of initiatives from among the many Educational Activities currently underway in VHA's Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Centers (GRECCs).

Eastern Colorado GRECC: Interprofessional Case Conferences - Associated health professional trainees such as social work, pharmacy, occupational health, and psychology get together with Geriatric Fellows and participate in a monthly Interprofessional Case Conference. Information from an actual case that is specific to a given discipline, like pharmacy, is provided to the associate health trainees and clinically-relevant information is presented to fellows such as pharmacological aspects are provided to pharmacy residents. Trainees must ask one another questions necessary to elicit other information, which will allow the team to co-create an appropriate care plan. Preceptors observe and provide feedback. This method has been implemented with all of the GRECC trainees. Feedback from trainees has been extremely positive as they feel that this activity enhances their training experience. For more information, contact Kathryn Nearing, PhD at kathryn.nearing@ucdenver.edu or by phone at 720-475-6234.

Salt Lake City GRECC: Rocky Mountain Geriatric Conference - The Salt Lake City GRECC hosted the 15th Annual Rocky Mountain Geriatrics Conference held August 28-29, 2017, titled "Getting to the Heart of Aging: An Inter-professional Approach to Cardiovascular Health." The focus of the conference was on patient centered approaches in cardiac care specifically related to older adults. The conference planners utilized technological innovations to promote distance learning modalities (web-streaming) that allowed participants to participate remotely. There were thirty-two participants who attended in person, ninety-seven that participated through Adobe Connect video, and eleven that attended from other VISNs around the country. For more information contact, Jorie Butler at Jorie.butler@va.gov or 801-582-1565 x. 1964.

New England GRECC: Home Safety Workbook - Dr. Lauren Moo led the modification and dissemination of "*A Guide for Families: Keeping the Person with Memory Loss Safer at Home*," a home safety workbook for caregivers of Veterans with dementia. The workbook is extremely popular among clinicians and caregivers. It is a stand-alone, self-paced educational workbook with practical tips for home safety written with literacy considerations. The workbook is 508 compliant for distribution and available on the GEC internet site: https://www.va.gov/geriatrics/docs/home_safety_booklet_8-1-17.pdf For more information, contact Dr. Lauren Moo; lauren.moo@va.gov or 718-687-2596.

Caring for Older Adults and Caregivers at Home

Caring for Older Adults and Caregivers at Home (COACH) model, developed by the Durham VA GRECC, is a home-based dementia care program serving Veterans with dementia living at home. It is an innovative model of care that provides support and education, including attention to behavioral symptoms, functional impairment, and home safety, on a consultation basis. The program has a holistic approach to enable veterans to live at home for as long as possible and help caregiver to reduce their level of burden.

Services: Are provided by a geriatric social worker and a geriatric registered nurse with the support from an interdisciplinary team including a geriatrician, geriatric psychiatrist and geriatric pharmacist. The registered nurse and social worker perform a comprehensive medical and psychosocial assessment; including a home safety evaluation; assessments of patients' behaviors, cognitive and functional abilities; medication review; caregiver stress and family resources, caregiver's health literacy; and a plan to improve caregiver support.

Impact: Frail Veterans with dementia have a high risk of being institutionalized and that risk increases every year as the disease progresses. Their caregivers are often exhausted and isolated and struggle to manage those symptoms. Having access to a group of professionals that offer support, education, training in dementia care at home and assistance to obtain resources alleviates caregivers burden and decreases safety hazards. The program has increased access to dementia care and increased access to VA and community resources. COACH has served over 550 veterans and their caregivers over the past six years. Caregivers have expressed high level of satisfaction with the program reaching 100% of satisfaction.

Program Goals:

1. Increase access to care to older veterans with dementia
2. Reduce cost of nursing home placement
3. Reduce caregiver burden
4. Reduce safety hazards in patients with dementia

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