

UNC Family Medicine

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DECEMBER 2018

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Family Medicine Receives Two HRSA Grants

HRSA Rural Residency Planning and Development-Technical Assistance Center Award - \$2.4M



Cristy Page, MD, MPH

Led by Chair Cristy Page, MD, MPH, UNC Family Medicine along with a national team was recently awarded \$2.4 million of funding in a cooperative agreement by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy. The funding will support the development of a national technical assistance center that will engage with HRSA Rural Residency Planning

and Development (RRPD) Program awardees to help them develop new, accredited residency programs in family medicine, general internal medicine and psychiatry in rural communities in the United States.

The consortium will be led by Page and Erin Fraher, PhD, (Co-PI) at UNC Family Medicine; Mark Holmes, MD, MPH, at The Cecil G. Sheps Center; Nevin Fouts of NC AHEC, Frederick Chen, MD, MPH, of WWAMI; and Randy Longenecker, MD, of the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine and the RTT Collaborative.



Erin Fraher, PhD

“Research has consistently demonstrated that physicians tend to practice in geographic areas similar to those where they complete their residency training. This is an incredible opportunity to strengthen the residency-to-rural-practice pipeline and increase access to quality primary care across the country,” said Page.

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Faculty Development Fellowship Awarded a HRSA Grant to Support Community-Based Physician Fellows



Tommy Koonce, MD, MPH

The Department of Family Medicine received \$1.8 million from Health Resources and Services

Administration (HRSA) to strengthen the primary care workforce by training community-based physicians to lead healthcare transformation and enhance teaching in community-based settings. The project is led by Tommy Koonce, MD, MPH, Fellowship Director, Vice Chair of Education and associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine. The 40-year-old Faculty Development Fellowship offered through Family Medicine has trained over 500 physicians over the last 40 years and will expand to enroll five more fellows each year and enhance the curriculum with more content on team-based care, QI, leadership, population health, social determinants of health, policy, and education.

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Yun, Researchers Find That Private Insurance Pays More for Emergency Department Visits

Researchers at the University of North Carolina and UNC Family Medicine fellow Jonathan Yun, MD, MPH, used data from the 1996 to 2015 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey and found that, over the past 20 years, private insurers have paid more for a visit to the emergency department than Medicare or Medicaid. The work, titled “Per-visit Emergency Department Expenditures by Insurance 1996-2015,” was published in the July edition of Health Affairs.

“Health care spending now makes up at least 17 percent of our total gross domestic product,” says

Yun. “Looking at spending trends for ED visits is important because emergency department spending has made up an increasing percentage of total health costs over the last 20 years.”

Medicare and Medicaid’s large patient pools and regulatory power may give them more power than private insurance to determine payment for ED visits, which may allow for underpayment which will hurt the financial viability of many emergency departments.

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Arora, UNC Researchers Find Racial Disparities in Treatment for Heart Attack Patients

Sameer Arora, MD, a UNC School of Medicine cardiology fellow and preventative medicine resident, led a study reviewing hospitalizations

for a certain type of heart attack that occurred over a 15-year period and found consistent differences in the treatment of black and white patients.

“There are obviously more factors leading to these disparities, and possible inherent bias by physicians can’t be ruled out,” Arora said. “This study shows that

a multi-faceted approach is needed to begin changing the way black patients receive treatment.”

Arora also says more focused efforts are needed on prevention to reduce comorbidities for black patients. The study, co-authored by UNC’s George Stouffer, MD, chief of the division of cardiology, and cardiovascular epidemiologist Melissa Caughey, PhD, suggests the need for population-based strategies including more outreach within communities to improve physical activity, diet, and smoking habits.

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Becker-Dreps Lands NIH Funds to Investigate Maternal-Fetal Transmission of Zika

UNC researchers led by Family Medicine’s Sylvia Becker-Dreps, MD, Elizabeth Stringer, MD, and Aravinda de Silva, PhD, along with collaborators in Nicaragua, have been given a five-year, \$2.7 million R01 award from the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) to better understand the epidemiology of Zika virus in pregnancy and the impact the virus has on infant neurodevelopment. [Read more ...](#)

Zolotor Helps Facilitate Health Policy Boot Camp for Members of NC General Assembly

On June, 16 members of the North Carolina General Assembly graduated from the North Carolina Institute of Medicine's Health Policy Boot Camp. Adam Zolotor, MD, DrPH, of the UNC School of Medicine's Department of Family Medicine, serves as President and CEO of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine. Over the course of three sessions, the legislators learned about the drivers of health, the private insurance market, the behavioral health system, Medicaid transformation, rural health, scope of practice and more.



"In this time of hyper-partisanship, a fly on the wall during our program may not have recognized these men and women as elected officials from different parties," said Zolotor. "When these officials rolled up their sleeves to study the issues -- opioids, Medicaid, rural health, private insurance, care for older adults, etc. -- their concerns were the same. They were all focused on the health and well being of their constituents."

The Legislative Health Policy Fellows program is funded by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, Cone Health Foundation, the Commonwealth Fund, and The Duke Endowment.

[Read more ...](#)

\$2.4 million award *continued from page 1*

Consortium organizations are spread across the United States and have a 40-year track record of providing technical assistance to help rural residency programs to achieve accreditation; navigate the complex intricacies of Medicare and Medicaid funding; conduct health workforce needs assessments; perform program evaluations to ensure activities funded under the cooperative agreement are evaluated and continuously improved upon; and

National Geographic Funds Sloane, UNC Researchers to Study Retirement from U.S. to Latin America

"Retiring south within the United States has long been a trend, but more and more Americans are retiring even further south, for reasons such as climate, cost of living, lifestyle, and affordable health care," says Philip Sloane, MD, MPH, the Elizabeth and Oscar Goodwin Distinguished Professor of Family Medicine and Geriatrics. [Read more ...](#)



Kistler Receives NC TraCS Grant for A Pilot Study Assessing the Feasibility of Genotyping Mechanically Ventilated Patients in the Medical ICU



In total, 40 applications were received and 11 were chosen for funding. Awardees include investigators from UNC's College of Arts & Sciences, Gillings School of Global Public Health, School of Medicine, and NC State University.

These awards are comprised of NC TraCS funding, matched by funds from UNC Schools, Departments and Centers, and funding from partner organizations.

assess whether residency programs are producing the workforce needed for the diverse and growing health care needs of rural communities.

"There is a well-known need for health care and health care improvements in rural America. Our consortium members are passionate about addressing these issues, and most have dedicated their careers to addressing these disparities. This funding demonstrates that we are the leaders in shaping rural health policy and GME at a national level" said Page.

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Faculty News

Erica Pettigrew Physician Representative to NC Commission



Erica Pettigrew, MD, JD, MPH, assistant professor at UNC Family Medicine, was appointed by the governor to be the physician representative to the NC Commission for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Service.

Amir Barzin Receives Grant Through UNC Institute for Healthcare Quality Improvement (IHQI) for His Proposal *Malnutrition in Hospitalized Family Medicine Patients: A Model in Transitions of Care from Hospital to Community to Primary Care*

Dr. Barzin will be working with the Department of Nutrition Services to assess in a more meaningful way the malnutrition status of patients in the hospital to see if it decreases the risk of readmission. The group is also working on assessing food insecurity and how it pertains to resources that may be provided to patients that screen positive. The goal is to see if the impact on nutrition and assessment of nutritional status can impact the larger picture of hospital readmission rates.

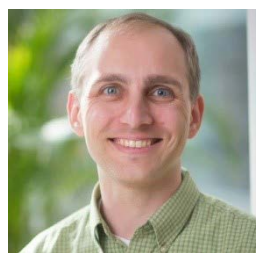
Shawn Kane Keynote Speaker at Israel Society for Sports Medicine

Shawn Kane, MD, associate professor at UNC Family Medicine, was an invited keynote speaker and chairperson at the annual meeting of the Israel Society for Sports Medicine, in Haifa, Israel, on October 18. His keynote talk was “Development of a tactical SOF unique human performance program – an important piece of human performance optimization.”



Beat Steiner Presents to Annual Conference in China

In September, Beat Steiner, MD, MPH, Senior Associate Dean for Medical Student Education at the UNC School of Medicine and professor and director of medical student programs at UNC Family Medicine, traveled to China and presented “Outcome Based Education: Model for Effective Teaching and Evaluation” to a group of 2,500 at the 20th Annual Conference of General Practice in Shenyang.



Faculty Opinion Justin Byron – FDA Should Be Equitable in Proposed Regulations on Reducing Nicotine in Cigarettes

The Food and Drug Administration has recently proposed a dramatic reduction in the nicotine content of cigarettes. This measure is expected to make cigarettes less addictive and easier to quit; studies have shown that very low nicotine cigarettes reduce dependence and increase cessation attempts in comparison with standard nicotine cigarettes. However, this proposed regulation leaves out other combustible tobacco products, such as little and filtered cigars. These products often look and feel like cigarettes, being the same length, with similar filters; the packaging and marketing also mimics that of regular cigarettes.

“Little and filtered cigars are essentially cigarettes,” says Byron. “It’s not like wrapping them in tobacco rather than paper makes them any safer. The tobacco industry has often been one step ahead of policymakers and this is a key loophole to close ahead of time to help more smokers who want to quit.”

Justin Byron, PhD is a research assistant professor with the Department of Family Medicine, and an adjunct assistant professor with the Gillings School of Global Public Health.

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New Faculty



Kristen Benninger, MD is originally from small-town Connecticut but completed her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with a focus in criminal justice at the University of Texas at Austin and her medical degree at Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, PA. She completed Family Medicine residency at the UNC. Outside of work, Dr. Benninger loves spending time with her husband, who is also a member of the UNC healthcare family, and their three young boys.

Erik Butler, DO attributes his decision to go into medicine to a traumatic experience he had as a teenager. “When I was 14, I was in a serious accident. A great doctor saved my life. The experience of being a patient inspired me to want to help others and become a physician.” Dr. Butler was in private practice in North Carolina for over 10 years before recently joining the department. He is interested in caring for patients through all stages of life, helping his patients achieve their personal health goals, make informed medical decisions, and navigate the health care system.



Maria Castro, MD is an Assistant Residency Director with UNC Family Medicine. She is working with the residency team to expand training into community health centers focused on providing high quality care for marginalized populations.

Dr. Castro is originally from Quito, Ecuador. She earned her undergraduate degree in Molecular Biophysics & Biochemistry from Yale University and her medical degree from the Medical University of South Carolina. She completed her Family Medicine Residency training and subsequently joined the faculty at the University of Kentucky Department of Family & Community Medicine. Her role there included oversight and direction of global health programs for medical students and residents, as well as directorship of Medical Student Education for Family & Community Medicine. She also served in a clinical and administrative capacity for a bilingual community health center where students and residents participated in team-based care as part of the mission to address social determinants of health for marginalized populations.



Catherine Coe, MD completed her undergrad and medical school training at the University of Washington and completed family medicine residency at UNC in June 2017. Following an additional Chief Resident Year, she joined the department as an Assistant Professor.

She worked closely to help develop UNC’s three-year MD curriculum, the Fully Integrated Readiness of Service Training (FIRST) program and currently serves as the Director for FIRST. Her academic interests include design, implementation, and evaluation of innovative curricula and pipeline initiatives for family medicine.

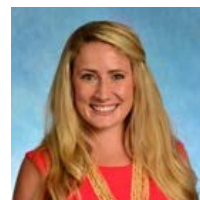
John Doughton, MD is originally from Birmingham, AL. He completed his undergrad work at the University of Notre Dame and medical school at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He completed his Family Medicine residency at UNC as well as a career development fellowship with a focus on office based procedures and point of care ultrasound. When not working, Dr. Doughton loves spending time with his wife exploring North Carolina, particularly anything outdoors.



Debbie Phipps, MD grew up in the Chicago suburbs, attended Duke University for undergrad studies, then returned to Chicago for medical school at Rush University. Her Family Medicine residency and Women’s Health

Fellowship were both completed at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. “My greatest joy and privilege as a Family Physician is to care for families at every stage. My special interests include caring for moms and mothers-to-be as well as their children. I practice shared decision making with all of my patients in order to connect them to health resources for the lives they want to lead.”

Carolyn Vaught, MD grew up on a farm outside of Florence, SC, and attended Furman University for undergrad. Her love of global public health originated from travels to Australia, Ghana, Italy, and Costa Rica, where she spent time working in hospitals and farms. She completed medical school at MUSC in Charleston, SC and chose Family Medicine because she wants to be on the front lines of medicine and believes that primary care is leading the healthcare revolution.



Family Medicine Summer Academy Introduces Students to Possibilities of Primary Care

The UNC Family Medicine Summer Academy hosted 14 recent high school graduates from rural North Carolina to expose them to medicine, introduce them to college life and to faculty mentors who can help them on their journey to a future in healthcare. In its inaugural year, students received three days of hands-on workshops, such as suturing and taking vital signs; lectures on resume writing and interprofessional practice; and spent time in clinic shadowing family medicine providers. “We want to ensure that students from rural parts of our state have an equal chance to succeed. Getting them in the door for an event like this, and also providing them with mentorship and guidance as they progress into college can help do that,” said Kyle Melvin, MD, a recent UNC School of Medicine graduate and current resident in the Department of Family Medicine, and a native of rural Beaver Dam in Cumberland County, NC. Melvin started the Family



Medicine Summer Academy along with Catherine Coe, MD, a current assistant professor of family medicine and Director of the Fully Integrated Readiness for Service Training (FIRST) program, which fast tracks medical students into rural service.

Thanks to the generosity of the Department of Family Medicine and the UNC School of Medicine’s Office of Rural Initiatives, the experience was free of charge for the students and their families.

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Adam Goldstein Quoted in *NY Times* “The Risks to Children From Adults Who Smoke”

In a recent *NY Times* article, Adam Goldstein, MD, MPH, likens children whose parents continue to smoke when they

are around to child abuse. “Society does not tolerate exposing minors to asbestos, arsenic, alcohol or lead, yet it acts as if exposing them to tobacco smoke is something different,” he said in an interview. “It is poisonous to their health. The higher the dose, the worse it is, but there is no safe level of exposure.”

In an editorial in the *Annals of Family Medicine*, he recounted a case in which “at least 10 times over three years, we counseled the family to quit smoking

around the 5-year-old patient and her 7-year-old sister, as the kids repeatedly came to the clinic for ear infections, coughing, bronchitis and asthma.” At one point, the younger child developed pneumonia and had to be on a ventilator, yet “the parents refused to engage with us about quitting smoking, pharmacotherapy for cessation, or about not letting their children be exposed to cigarette smoke,” he wrote.

In retrospect, he said, he should have contacted Social Services to report suspected child abuse; their smoking was causing physical harm.

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Giving to UNC Family Medicine

Grateful Patients – Marrianna and Jim Putnam

Marrianna Osolin-Putnam and Jim Putnam became patients of Warren Newton in 1995 after moving to NC from Silver Spring, Maryland. Throughout the next 23 years, Dr. Newton and the Putnams developed a close patient-physician bond which extended into a friendship. While Dr. Newton displayed a large knowledge



Marrianna and Jim Putnam

base and was an excellent clinical physician, what became most important to the Putnams was his communication and collaborative style of care. “The best patient-doctor relationships are reciprocal” Mrs. Osolin-Putnam stated, “it was important to Dr. Newton to not only educate patients how to be better patients, but to listen to them.” Mrs. Osolin-Putnam could see that Dr. Newton was a gifted teacher to not only patients, but to the residents and faculty that he worked with. He “focused on teaching doctors not only to talk to patients, but how to pay

attention to their needs.” When the Putnams heard about the Warren Newton, MD, MPH Endowment, they were happy to contribute. “Family Medicine is going to be increasingly important in the future because it’s the most accessible care,” Mrs. Osolin-Putnam observed, “honoring Dr. Newton’s impact on Family Medicine is important.”

The recently established Warren P. Newton, MD, MPH Endowment will support mentoring programs and activities in family medicine and primary care across North Carolina and the nation for students, residents, young faculty, and providers. Many colleagues, community members, and grateful patients have contributed to the endowment, honoring Warren’s considerable impact at UNC Family Medicine, North Carolina, and the healthcare system as a whole. Warren has recently taken over as President and CEO of The American Board of Family Medicine.

To learn more about giving to the Warren P. Newton Endowment and other Family Medicine programs, contact Brad Wilson at brad_wilson@med.unc.edu or 984-974-4467

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Introducing the Class of 2021 UNC Family Medicine Residents

Left to right: Rana Alkhaldi, Kyle Melvin, Thane Campbell, Priscille Schettini, Jake Perrin, Jewel Llamas, Greg Metzger, Collin Burks, Michael Roper-Cartier, Victoria Boggiano, Palee Myrex

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Faculty Development Fellowship

The Faculty Development Fellowship is turning 40! To celebrate, the Department of Family Medicine will host a CME conference entitled **Teaching, Leading, and Transforming Care** March 8-9, 2019. The Featured Speaker is Elizabeth Baxley, MD, who completed the Faculty Development Fellowship in 1988 and is now the Senior Vice President of the American Board of Family Medicine. Her March 8 keynote entitled **The Healthcare Delivery System as Medical Education's Foundation: Take Two on "The Clinic is the Curriculum"** will also be this year's Robert R. Huntley Lecture. There will also be a special fellowship alumni dinner on March 8.



The graphic features a blue background with white text. On the right side, there is a photograph of a university building with a clock tower, likely UNC-Chapel Hill, with trees in the foreground. The text on the left reads: "Teaching, Leading, & Transforming Care" in large font, followed by "UNC Faculty Development Conference" in a smaller font. Below that, it says "March 8 & 9, 2019" and "William & Ida Friday Center | Chapel Hill, NC". On the right side, it says "Provided by Greensboro AHEC Area Health Education Center Connecting People, Education, and Health" and "in partnership with UNC SCHOOL OF MEDICINE Family Medicine".

Teaching, Leading, & Transforming Care

UNC Faculty Development Conference

March 8 & 9, 2019
William & Ida Friday Center | Chapel Hill, NC

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For more information, please contact Dawn Morriston at dawn_morriston@med.unc.edu or (984) 974-4987, or visit <http://go.unc.edu/FDFConference>