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Georgia Southern University's Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health receives grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

December 9, 2011

Georgia Southern University's Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health has received a \$100,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support quality improvement initiatives within Georgia's system of health districts and county health departments. The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health received the grant on behalf of the Georgia Public Health Practice-Based Research Network (GA PBRN), a network of health districts created to enhance the use of public health science and evidence to meet Georgia's unique health challenges.



This grant will support research by the health districts in collaboration with the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health's faculty researchers and Center for Rural Health, directed by Russ Toal, to develop, implement and test Quality Improvement interventions. The goal of this research is to increase the effectiveness of local public health services to improve the health of the people and communities served by public health agencies. The grant will support efforts to increase the use of quality improvement techniques that are tailored for local public health agencies in Georgia.

"Many of the advances in the health of people throughout the state and the county are a direct result of public health efforts such as immunizations, reductions in tobacco use and improved sanitation," said Dr. Lynn Woodhouse, Interim Dean of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health and an investigator with the GA PBRN. She added that these life-saving public health activities during the past century are primarily responsible for the good health that most of us enjoy.



Dr. William Livingood, lead principal investigator for this research, points to the increasing public health threats of newly emerging infectious diseases and the growing epidemics of obesity and diabetes for why public health systems need to continue to improve.

Dr. Ketty Gonzalez, East Central District Director and co-principal investigator for the project, said these quality improvement research efforts will complement efforts by the Georgia Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public health systems and services. "We need to work together to improve our systems and services to meet the constantly emerging challenges to the health of people," Gonzalez said.

Nandi Marshall, a doctoral candidate and co-principal investigator for the research, said other looming problems of health disparities among rural and underserved populations for basic health issues such as infant mortality and heart disease demand improved public health systems.

The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health established a state coordinating center early in 2011 to support practice-based research; research intended to improve the public's health by focusing on real-life problems that are challenging local public health systems and communities. The National Coordinating Center for Public Health Practice-Based Research Networks, based at the University of Kentucky College of Public Health, works closely with the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health's Center for Rural Health to address major public health issues throughout Georgia.

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