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HIV Conference to Bring New Strategies to Rural Health Care

AUGUST 14, 2014



Georgia Southern University will host health care professionals from around the Southeast for the third annual, Rural HIV Research and Training Conference beginning Friday, Sept. 12, at 7:45 a.m., through Saturday, Sept. 13, at the Coastal Georgia Center in Savannah, Georgia. This year's conference will focus on how to engage rural communities with fewer resources.

The two-day conference will bring together a variety of professionals to address HIV and AIDS prevention, intervention and care. Key speakers and participants will share innovative strategies and discuss unique challenges in an effort to

foster advocacy and build community partnerships.

"At this conference there will be nationally recognized speakers who will share evidence-based strategies for improved quality of life, professional care, and empowering environments," said Fayth Parks, Ed.D., conference chair and College of Education professor.

Catherine Wyatt-Morley, founder and chief executive officer of Women on Maintaining Education and Nutrition (WOMEN) will be the keynote speaker. Wyatt-Morley is a three-time, internationally acclaimed author and mother living with AIDS. WOMEN provides HIV testing, counseling, support and nutrition services for people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS.

"Though we're located in the South of the United States, we really would like for women around the world to know that they have a sister in the fight," said Wyatt-Morley.

Other featured speakers will include Gregory S. Felzien, M.D., AAHIVS, from the Georgia Department of Public Health Department's of Infectious Disease and Immunization, Sally Jue, MSW, from the American Psychological Association Office on HIV and AIDS and Patt Gunn, master storyteller from the Geechee Institute.

According to the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, a non-profit organization that focuses on national health issues, rural residents face an even higher risk for HIV and AIDS due to fewer

resources for education, prevention and treatment. Higher poverty levels in the South can be considered one of the contributing factors to an increase in HIV and AIDS diagnoses. In 2011, seven out of 10 states with the highest HIV diagnosis rates were from the South and out of those states, Georgia ranked number six on the list, accounting for around five-percent of new HIV diagnoses per year.

The University's College of Education and Division of Continuing Education will partner with the Southeast AIDS Training and Education Center at Emory University and Georgia Department of Public Health to host the conference.

Early registration fees are \$145 and will increase to \$160 on August 22. Registration is highly encouraged.

For more information on the conference or to register, contact the Georgia Southern University Division of Continuing Education at (912)–478-5555 or visit www.georgiasouthern.edu/conted.