



EvidenceNOW:

Learn More & Get Involved

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. To prevent heart attacks, health care professionals can work their patients to adopt the ABCS of cardiac disease prevention: Aspirin use by high risk individuals, Blood pressure control, Cholesterol management, and Smoking cessation. New evidence continually surfaces about how best to deliver the ABCS. The goal of EvidenceNOW is to ensure that primary care practices have the latest evidence and that they use it to help their patients live healthier and longer lives. Heart of Virginia Healthcare is one of seven cooperatives funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ) EvidenceNOW initiative. EvidenceNOW aims to transform health care delivery by building critical infrastructure to help smaller primary care practices, which often do not have internal resources for quality improvement, apply the latest medical research in the care they provide. Aligned with broad U.S. Department of Health and Human Services efforts for Better Care, Smarter Spending and Healthier People and Million Hearts®, this initiative will focus on helping thousands of primary care practices use the latest evidence to improve the heart health of millions of Americans.



In 2015, EvidenceNOW established seven regional cooperatives composed of public and private health partnerships and multidisciplinary teams of experts. The cooperatives span 12 states that deliver health care in a range of metropolitan and rural settings and serve diverse populations.

Virginia's cooperative, Heart of Virginia Healthcare is a physician-directed initiative led by faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine in partnership with Eastern Virginia Medical School, University of Virginia School of Medicine, and Virginia Tech-Carilion School of Medicine. The Virginia Center for Health Innovation, VHQC, George Mason University, and Community Health Solutions are providing program management, practice coaching, and evaluation expertise. The name of the collaborative reflects the core principles that heart health is a top priority for individuals and communities, and primary care is at the heart of effective healthcare.

Practices that are accepted into the initiative will receive free personalized coaching on optimizing their practice model and culture, while integrating the latest cardiovascular evidence based medicine. Anticipated outcomes include increased quality, satisfaction and revenues.

Applications are currently being accepted for practices that want more control and better outcomes. Eligible practices are small to medium-sized primary care practices with 10 or fewer FTE clinicians (includes physicians, nurse practitioners or physician assistants) that utilize an EHR. Please visit our website at www.heartofvirginiahealthcare.org or contact recruitment director, Shelley Stinson, at 540-798-8138.

The Department welcomes Sebastian Tong, MD MPH

I am excited to join the VCU Department of Family Medicine and the ACORN team as a family medicine physician and researcher. Originally hailing from Toronto, Canada, I migrated south to pursue my medical training at Boston University School of Medicine and my graduate public health training in health care policy at Harvard School of Public Health. I then proceeded to complete my residency training at the Lawrence Family Medicine Residency (Lawrence, MA), which combined experiences at a Federal Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and local community hospital.

Currently, my clinical practice is based out of Hayes E. Willis Health Center, which is in an underserved community in south Richmond. I teach both VCU medical students and Chesterfield family medicine residents, who rotate through our clinic. I also round on obstetrics at the VCU Medical Center. Having an interest in medication assisted therapy for opiate addiction, I have a waiver to prescribe buprenorphine (Suboxone) and aim to start a buprenorphine treatment program at VCU.

My research interests include integrating addiction medicine and behavioral health in primary care; reducing health disparities for underserved populations; and improving family centered maternity care practices. I also plan to work with



the rest of the ACORN team to better engage practices, clinicians and patients in our research process, from developing research questions to participating in studies to disseminating important clinical findings. If you are interested in discussing any particular research idea or in collaborating on a project, please feel free to email me at sebastian.tong@vcuhealth.org. I look forward to working with all of you in the coming years!



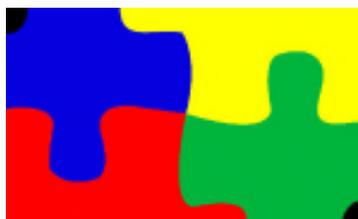
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Abstracts available online



Grants launch Integrated Behavioral Health at H E Willis Health Clinic



A collaborative effort between the Psychology Department at VCU, the Psychiatry Department and the Department of Family Medicine has resulted in two grants to fund the initiation of integrated services at Hayes. Preliminary data showed that the safety net patients, including both adults and children, at Hayes E. Willis (HEW) were being substantially undertreated for mental health issues -- largely due to limited access to services. The Richmond Memorial Health Foundation also contributed \$100,000 to hire a full-time bilingual master's level social worker to coordinate the integrated care program and provide services. That grant will support a bilingual family navigator in the second year of funding as well. Since it began in mid-July of 2015 the integrated behavioral health clinic has already proven to be a big success from the perspective of patients, physicians, and doctoral trainees. Trainees are able to expand their skills as they work to meet the diverse needs presented by this population. This experience has developed a spark in many students to seek out a career path designed to meet the behavioral health needs of a population with limited access.

The HEW staff who spearheaded the grant were Drs. Kate Neuhausen and Mark Ryan, Medical Director. Dr. Bruce Rybarczyk, VCU

Psychology Department and Director of the Primary Care Psychology Training Collaborative (PCPTC) at VCU, is the director of the two grants. The PCPTC began its work in 2008 and is now located in five different safety net primary care clinics across Richmond. The embedded services provide brief behavioral interventions for both mental health problems (e.g., depression and anxiety) and health behavior problems (e.g., insomnia, chronic pain, obesity, and adherence). The PCPTC has delivered over 10,000 sessions of pro bono psychological care by more than 75 doctoral trainees to safety net patients and recently received the 2015 VCU overall Community Engagement award. HRSA has funded the PCPTC since 2010 and future funding will incorporate long-term support for the HEW clinic site.

The clinicians have already seen benefits from the collaboration, both in the direct provision of care that was previously unavailable as well as greater insight into patients' needs, and available resources. *Provided by: Dr. Bruce Rybarczyk*

Mike Rodriguez, MD

NAPCRG First Timer & Stipend Recipient

Primary care researchers from throughout the U.S. and Canada stared down the threat of the most powerful hurricane in recorded history as they descended upon Cancun, Mexico for the 44th annual North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) convention this past week. They were joined by colleagues from over 20 other countries who made the journey – many were there for the first time. This was my first time at NAPCRG, having received one of several stipends that are offered to first-time attendees and designed to help knock down any financial barriers for budding researchers who want to get exposure to the field of primary care research.



The conference is designed to serve as a conduit for the massive exchange of new ideas between researchers, clinicians, policy-makers, and students alike. Participants were treated to a plethora of concurrent 15 minute paper presentations, workshops and poster presentations punctuated by plenary sessions with distinguished guests such as Dr. Michael LeFevre – immediate past chair of the USPSTF. The designers of the conference have purposefully created a safe and nurturing environment for academicians and clinicians to collaborate in the research process.

I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to interact with the presenters in a relaxed setting to learn their personal motivation for their research pursuits. The responses were as varied as the topics. Many were motivated by specific life events such as the loss of a loved one while others simply enjoyed the academic process. All underscored the belief that primary care clinicians should take an active role in shaping the future of healthcare delivery by digging deep into the science that forms its foundation.

Although I was not a contributor at this event, I couldn't help but feel a sense of pride to be associated with the highly-respected ACORN team which was well represented at this conference.

I am grateful to the ACORN team for their assistance in making this experience possible. I am particularly grateful to Alex Krist and Paulette Kashiri for presenting this opportunity to me and for making me feel like one of the family! Mike Rodriguez, MD, Broadlands Family Practice



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