


# **New Jersey Geriatric Education Center**



A Consortium of

University of Medicine & Dentistry  
of New Jersey

New Jersey Department of Health  
and Senior Services

Rutgers University  
Center for Children and Families

Raritan Bay Medical Center



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## BACKGROUND

The New Jersey Geriatric Education Center (NJGEC) was initiated in 1990, through federal funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Professions (DHHS-HRSA, BHP) and is currently funded under a



Anita Chopra, MD, FACP, CMD  
Project Director

5-year grant. It joins a network of 47 GECs nationwide. The role of GECs is to foster interdisciplinary and collaborative relationships involving several health professions schools and health care facilities, in order to train health professions' faculty, students, and practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention of disease, disability, and other health problems of the elderly.

All GECs are required to fulfill the following 5 statutory purposes:

- Improve the training of health professionals in geriatrics, including geriatric residencies, traineeships and fellowships
- Develop and disseminate curricula on the treatment of health problems of elderly individuals
- Support the training and retraining of faculty to provide instruction in geriatrics
- Support continuing education for health professionals who provide geriatric care
- Provide students with clinical geriatrics training in nursing homes, chronic and acute care hospitals, ambulatory care centers and senior centers

## CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

The NJGEC is a consortium of institutions administered through the New Jersey Institute for Successful Aging at the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey-School of Osteopathic Medicine (UMDNJ-SOM). Anita Chopra, MD, FACP, CMD, serves as Project Director for the NJGEC. In addition to the UMDNJ-SOM, the NJGEC consortium partners include: the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJHSS); Rutgers University School of Social Work (RUSSW); and Raritan Bay Medical Center (RBMC).

## CONSORTIUM SITE LEADERS

Ada Saperstein, MS – Center for Children and Families, Continuing Education and Professional Development Program at Rutgers University  
Geraldine Mackenzie, MSS – New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services-Division of Aging and Community Services  
Linda Bullock, MPH – Raritan Bay Medical Center  
Pamela Basehore, MPH and Elyse Perweiler, MPP, RN – NJGEC Associate Directors, New Jersey Institute for Successful Aging

## CONSORTIUM ADVISORY BOARD

The Consortium Advisory Board (CAB), comprised of NJGEC core project staff, Consortium Site Leaders and a 12-member Expert Advisor Panel representing leaders from academia, the community and government, meets semi-annually to provide guidance, information, and assistance to consortium partners to aid in project success. At varying times throughout the year, Dr. Thomas Cavalieri, Director of the New Jersey Institute for Successful Aging and former Chair of the NJ Commission on Aging, Convener of the Expert Advisor Panel, will call special meetings of the Panel to seek input, network across disciplines, and foster new collaborations to advance any new or proposed aging-related initiatives that will have broad statewide impact.

## SPECIAL PROJECT INITIATIVES

Each of the NJGEC consortium partners has undertaken a special project initiative to be completed during the five-year grant cycle (7/1/05-6/30/10), based on identified needs for aging-related education and training. The focus of all NJGEC projects for this grant cycle is on "Aging and Disease: Optimizing Outcomes" (ADOO) across populations and settings and using varied interventions.



## **UMDNJ-SOM NEW JERSEY INSTITUTE FOR SUCCESSFUL AGING**

- **Faculty Development Initiative** – A 160 hour Geriatric Interdisciplinary Faculty Training (GIFT) Program will be offered to health care faculty of multiple disciplines, beginning in 2006. The program offers the flexibility of on-line learning and advanced technology, teleconferencing, and an optional interdisciplinary practicum at the New Jersey Institute for Successful Aging. Curriculum includes topics such as Approaches to the Older Adult; Social and Health Care Policy; Managing Disease in Older Adults; Pain, Palliative Care and Role of the Interdisciplinary Team at the End of Life; Cultural Competence and Health Care Literacy; and Contemporary Teaching Methods in Geriatrics.
- **Geriatric Curriculum Initiative** – In response to the changes in medical and health professions education, NJGEC activities will be directed at restructuring undergraduate medical school curriculum. This new “3-C”

Curriculum (competency-based, case-based, clinical presentation) for 3rd year medical students will include simulated patient experiences; expanded didactic and clinical experiences across the care continuum; cultural competence and health care literacy; geriatric-related supplemental materials; and on-line learning. To accommodate increased demands for geriatric training and clinical experience, a clinical practicum providing interdisciplinary experiences for faculty, physicians, nurses, psychologists, pharmacists and other health professionals will be offered.

- **Interdisciplinary Training on Geriatric Syndromes** – To enhance delivery of quality care to the elderly, the role of the interdisciplinary team in assessment and management of common geriatric syndromes will be offered to health care professionals in the acute care setting and those affiliated with a local faith-based organization.

## **RARITAN BAY MEDICAL CENTER (RBMC)**

- **Clinical Pathways Project** – Providing care of the highest quality to older individuals in the hospital setting requires an interdisciplinary team approach and a staff skilled and knowledgeable in principles of geriatric care. Over a period of 5 years, clinical pathways and related assessment and intervention tools will be developed and implemented for 5 common geriatric syndromes, including dementia, falls, depression, incontinence, and delirium at RBMC.

## **NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES (NJDHSS)**

- **Health Literacy Project** – Imbedding health literacy as a standard of practice within New Jersey's 21 county Offices on Aging, local health departments and community-based agencies requires that health professionals and support staff have increased awareness about health literacy and its impact on health status. This project will focus on strategies for more effective communication. A multidisciplinary cadre of health professionals working in areas serving primarily non-English speaking elderly will be trained to deliver literacy programs to community-dwelling older adults to improve their health literacy skills.

- **Cultural Competency Project** – Health professional staff awareness of cultural traits and values that are directly linked to positive outcomes is necessary if we are to influence health care in older minority populations. Training in cultural competence and cross-cultural clinical assessment skills will be provided for hospital social workers and discharge planners; DHSS-Division of Aging and Community Services Office of Community Options staff; community agencies, care managers, outreach workers and information and assistance specialists, to help ensure that services are delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.

## **RUTGERS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK (RUSSW)**

- **Cultural Competency and Health Literacy Training Module** – A new Gerontology Certificate in Senior Housing Issues is being developed in response to the need for training social workers and other staff working in senior citizen housing. This new program will train health professionals how to best communicate and interact on health-related issues with their residents. An additional one-day training on Cultural Competence and Health Literacy will be offered free of charge. It will serve as a career ladder option to social workers and multidisciplinary staff and count as an elective in the new certificate program.

## **OTHER EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS**

In addition to the special initiatives that are the focus of the current grant cycle, the NJGEC provides a variety of continuing education and training programs throughout the year. These programs may be offered independently or in collaboration with other agencies, organizations or institutions. Topics cover a wide range of areas, including Alzheimer's disease, palliative care, chronic pain, osteoporosis, ethical/legal issues, and an array of other aging-related topics.

