

June  
2019



## 6th Annual WVPBRN Retreat: Recap

### Inside this issue:

- Retreat Recap 1
- WVPBRN Spotlight 4
- NAPCRG 2019 5
- Member Spotlight 6
- Appalachian Node 7
- Announcements 7

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual WVPBRN Retreat was held last month at Stonewall Resort. This year's retreat was bigger than ever before! With nine different health systems and 12 institutions represented in attendance, the opportunities for collaboration and discussion were plentiful.



The retreat kicked off Thursday evening, May 16, with a dinner cruise around Stone-

wall Jackson Lake. Attendees enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, networking, and the cool West Virginia breeze as Stonewall Resort's Little Sorrel cruised around the lake for two hours.



WVPBRN Co-Directors Bill Lewis and Jennifer Boyd kicked off Friday morning with an introduction and an ice breaker that encouraged

attendees to approach someone they didn't know and ask about their research or area of focus. This allowed an opportunity for future collaboration among the Network.

WVPBRN staff then presented the *WVPBRN Six Years of Progress*, an overview of the progress made since the Network's inception as well as an idea for

what is to come. The WVPBRN is now at a resounding 95 sites around the state, made up of 72 Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) clinical sites, 20 academic-based health centers, two rural health clinics, and one critical access hospital. Since last year's retreat, the WVPBRN has added nine sites, submitted 19 grant applications, was awarded seven externally funded grants, received eight WVPBRN CORE Survey submissions, and currently has 12 new projects in development.

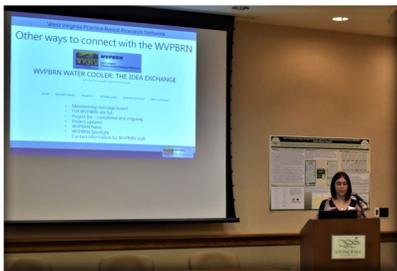


New Steering Committee members and Protocol Review Committee members were then announced. Joining the WVPBRN Steering Committee this past quarter were Amber Crist, MS, of Cabin Creek Health Systems and Emma White, RN, of the WV Primary Care Association (WVPCA). Joining the Protocol Review Committee were Mike Grome, PA-C, of Marshall Health, Sara Chua, MD, of St. Joseph's Hospital/ WVU Medicine, Courtney Hereford, MPH, of the WV School of Osteopathic Medicine, and Traci Jarrett, PhD, off West Virginia University (WVU).



A portion of the WVPBRN overview presentation focused on the Network's new dissemination efforts as well.

## 6th Annual WVPBRN Retreat: Recap



Over the course of the past year, the WVPBRN has developed an online social media presence through Facebook, Twitter, and the WVPBRN Water Cooler message board platform. This has provided an

opportunity to engage and update Network members on things happening throughout the Network in a timely manner as opposed to waiting until the quarterly newsletter or annual retreat. The WVPBRN Water Cooler provides an outlet for members to pose potential research ideas they have and see if others around the state are noticing or pondering the same thing, or are interested in a collaboration. Additionally, the WVPBRN Water Cooler has an up-to-date running list of Network sites around the state, a “News” tab with project updates and opportunities, and the WVPBRN Spotlight nomination portal.

The overview also touched base on the WVPBRN CORE Survey, which just wrapped up its second year at the start of June. Two of the three CORE projects from 2018 were presented as posters at this year’s retreat. The CORE Survey provides a competitive opportunity for clinicians and researchers to survey the Network on their project proposal ideas in a comprehensive survey consisting of the top-three selected proposals, as opposed to asking members to take multiple varying surveys throughout the year. Results of this year’s survey will be shared with the Network in the coming months.



Following the overview was a surprise presentation to highlight Stacey Whanger for all of the hard work she puts towards the WVPBRN. Staff came up and acknowledged her dedication and

drive, as well as shared funny stories before presenting her with a customized WVPBRN Certificate of Achievement.

Following the award, some of the WVPBRN’s newly funded projects were then presented to the retreat attendees. Jessica Wright, MPH, of the WV Bureau for Public Health, presented on the 1815 CDC Grant focusing on diabetes in

West Virginia. Sally Hodder, MD, Director of the West Virginia Clinical and Translational Science Institute (WVCTSI), provided an overview of the Harm Reduction Community

Survey and Interview Project that is surveying women in Fayette and Kanawha Counties to assess perceptions of addiction and its impact on communities. Judith Feinberg, MD, of WVU, then delivered a presentation on the NIDA CTN Appalachian Node – a collection of substance use disorder studies, particularly surrounding the opioid epidemic, that are offered to the Network.

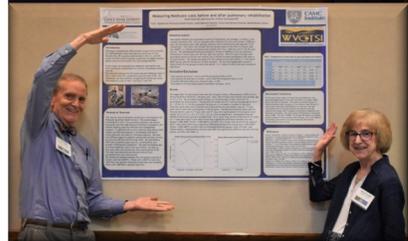


As the retreat moved into its annual poster session, attendees were treated to 13 posters from eight different sites. Topics ranged from MAT expansion, to suicide screening tools, to Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS).

Following the poster session, the group reconvened for the panel discussion

centered on the ongoing opioid epidemic in West Virginia. This year’s panelists were Lois Vance of Cabin Creek Health Systems, Sherri Ferrell, MBA, of the WVPCHA, Rachel Merino, MS, of Valley Health Systems, and Judith Feinberg, MD, of WVU, with David Baltierra, MD, of the WVU School of Medicine facilitating the discussion. The panelists spent time focusing on West Virginia’s hard-hit residents amid the opioid

epidemic. Panelists discussed currently-existing MAT programs and their successes and challenges, expanding MAT to more clinics and organizations,



## 6th Annual WVPBRN Retreat: Recap

stigma related to treatment of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), opportunities for research related to OUD, and mused over how employers handle the hiring or not hiring of individuals who have been through or are currently going through an MAT program.

This year featured a working lunch, the WVPBRN Lunch Combo: Dine, Discuss, Deliver. The goal of the WVPBRN Lunch Combo was to provide a networking opportunity for members to discuss the top health concerns in the state. When registering, Network members were asked to list their top three health concerns; those concerns were used to come up with ten table topics for lunch.

Community Impact of Addiction and Reducing Stigma, Reducing and Preventing Obesity, and Mental and Behavioral Health Services were among this year's table topics.

Attendees selected whichever topic interested them the most, and discussion centered around major concerns in primary care in relation to that topic area, barriers that prevent providers from being able to address those issue areas, ideas of how to better address them, who else needs to be involved in the discussion, and the biggest takeaways from the discussion. Following lunch, attendees regrouped in the conference hall to share what their tables had come up with in terms of potential projects and collaborations. One key discussion involved engaging other sectors such as policy makers and local health organizations at next year's WVPBRN retreat.

The retreat concluded with the in-person Design Studio session, formerly known as the Design Hub. The Design Studio is a WVPBRN initiative that began in November 2018. This quarterly meeting allows clinician researchers an opportunity to meet with the WVCTSI's expert design core to discuss potential project ideas and learn how to turn those ideas into actionable projects, while Network members have the option to tune in to the videoconference call to observe the process.

The in-person Design Studio session at this year's retreat featured Jill Cochran, PhD, of Robert C. Byrd, presenting her idea to Tom Hulseley, ScD, of the WVCTSI Clinical Research Design, Epidemiology, and Biostatistics core, and Trea Haggerty, MD, of WVU Medicine, while retreat attendees were able to observe the process and learn from it.

Following the live Design Studio session was the reflection and wrap-up before attendees parted ways. Based on feedback from the WVPBRN Retreat Evaluation Survey sent out following the conclusion of the retreat, the 7th Annual WVPBRN Retreat will be held at Stonewall Resort in May 2020.

*To see all photos from the retreat, please check out our Facebook page!*



## WVPBRN Spotlight: Treah Haggerty, MD

Treah Haggerty, MD, MS, is a clinical researcher and physician at West Virginia University's (WVU) Department of Family Medicine. Now very successful in her research and practice, Haggerty's dreams of becoming a physician began when she was just a child. Growing up in the coal country of southern West Virginia, Haggerty saw how the physicians helped her rural community and knew she wanted to do the same thing. She sought training at WVU School of Medicine because the school's medical curriculum takes into account healthcare in a rural environment with significant health disparities. During medical school, Haggerty was accepted into the WVU Department of Family Medicine Rural Scholars Program which allowed her to learn best practices for treating rural and underserved patients. From there, she became the Director of the WVU Rural Scholars Program.

Haggerty has been involved with the WVPBRN since its inception in 2013. She became active in the West Virginia Clinical and Translational Science Institute's (WVCTSI) Community Engagement and Outreach (CEO) core. One of the CEO core's first initiatives was the development of a practice-based research network. Haggerty became an active member of the WVPBRN Steering Committee and the effort to develop the Network. She completed her Master of Science degree in Clinical and Translational Science (MCTS) with courses in research translation for health, research ethics, scientific writing and grantsmanship, and scientific integrity to name a few. These courses enhanced Haggerty's understanding of how research could truly benefit Appalachian patients.

In 2016, Haggerty became a WVCTSI Research Scholar. Her proposal, *Facilitating Patient Engagement in Weight Management Through mHealth Technology Use in Patients' Visit Waiting Time*, led to the development of an application based on American Heart Association Weight Management guidelines.

Serving as the clinical site lead for the WVU Department of Family Medicine, Haggerty remains heavily involved in the WVPBRN and the Network's associated initiatives and activities. She was instrumental in the development of the WVPBRN CORE Survey that first launched in November 2017. Additionally, she is a part of the WVPBRN Design Studio panel of design and research expertise. Haggerty also helped to develop a learning collaborative for members of the WVPBRN who are involved in resident education. This group has looked

into resident views on research and quality improvement.

Haggerty has collaborated with WVU Neurosurgery conducting research studies related to obesity and how it affects patients' internal settings. Being one of the first and more frequent investigators to utilize the WVPBRN, Haggerty has conducted several studies relating back to obesity, which was identified at this year's Annual WVPBRN Retreat as one of the top priority areas by the membership of the WVPBRN.



"Treah works with multiple departments at WVU's Morgantown campus including both Family Medicine and Neurosurgery. She is always open to help with recommendations and sharing of her past experiences. I thought her talents really shined brightly at the Design Studio presentation at the retreat, and I hope that more people recognize the valuable resources that I have already found in her," said friend and colleague Amy Moyers, MD, WVU Medicine.

Project Better Health was one of the earlier and largest projects that Haggerty participated in. Project Better Health was a WVCTSI demonstration project that was completed in seven primary care clinics throughout West Virginia; it aimed to improve eating habits among patients with obesity and assessed the feasibility of an electronic health application that allowed options based on each day's prior meals. Haggerty has also presented the results from Project Better Health in a poster, *Impact from a Personalized Nutrition Application in WV*, at the West Virginia Rural Health Conference.

Haggerty's current research explores the use of technology to improve patient engagement in the primary care setting. She is currently collaborating with the Lehigh Valley Practice and Community-Based Research Network (LV-PCBRN) to collect preliminary data on how the electronic medical record can be better used to conduct research through patient portals. This study was presented by LV-PCBRN's Beth Careyva, MD, at the North American Primary Care Research Group's 2019 Practice-Based Research Network Conference in Bethesda, MD.

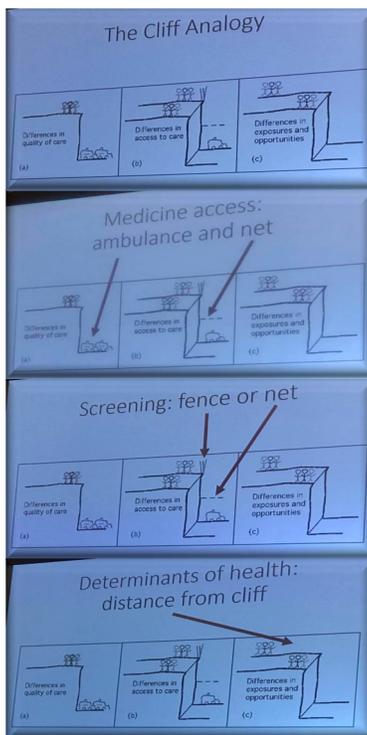
**WVPBRN**  
**Spotlight**

If there is a health system, site, specific person, or a team that you feel deserves to be recognized, please submit nominations to the WVPBRN Water Cooler's WVPBRN Spotlight tab or e-mail your nomination to Angie DeWitt at [amdewitt@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:amdewitt@hsc.wvu.edu).

## WVPBRN Presented at National PBRN Conference

Bill Lewis, WVPBRN Co-Director, Stacey Whanger, WVPBRN Manager, and Angie DeWitt, WVPBRN Coordinator, traveled to Bethesda, MD this week to attend the North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) 2019 Practice-Based Research Network (PBRN) Conference.

The theme of this year's conference was "How do we keep prevention on the table in face of disease management incentives?"



The conference kicked off with Nav Persaud, MD, of St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, Canada, presenting *Preventing the Harms of Inequities in Primary Care*. Persaud's discussion utilized the cliff analogy first coined by Camara Phyllis Jones, MD, of the Satcher Health Leadership Institute. Jones' cliff analogy illustrates addressing an issue before the need to treat it, such as putting a fence along the cliff's edge (i.e. prevention) versus increasing the number of ambulances at the bottom (i.e. medication / treatment).

The NAPCRG PBRN Conference has become a staple for the WVPBRN to travel to each year as new connections are fostered and ideas are shared. The opportunity to connect to PBRNs from all over the country often leads to future collaborations and opens the pathway to hear how other networks are dealing with similar issues that the WVPBRN faces.

This year we had the opportunity to meet with two PBRNs we have collaborated with, the Lehigh Valley Practice and Community-Based Research Network (LV-PCBRN) in Pennsylvania and Laval University's Frontline Practice-Based Research Network (RRAPPL-UJL) in Quebec, Canada.

We also formed new relationships with the Atrium Health Center for Primary Care Research in Charlotte, NC; Hospital

University of Mirebalais in Mirebalais Haiti – a member of the Partners In Health organization; and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

The NAPCRG PBRN Conference also gave the WVPBRN an opportunity to connect with other networks through social media to effortlessly stay in contact and share our work.

The WVPBRN has presented four oral presentations and three poster presentations at the NAPCRG PBRN Conference since 2016.

This year's oral presentations were on new WVPBRN initiatives. Bill Lewis, MD, presented on the WVPBRN CORE Survey, and Stacey Whanger, MPH, presented on the WVPBRN Design Studio. Both presentations centered on the creation, structure, and implementation of each initiative. Lewis' poster presentation shared his project data results from the 2018 WVPBRN CORE Survey. Additionally, LV-PCBRN's Beth Careyya, MD, presented *How are Patients Using the Portal? Portal Use Patterns Within Two PBRNs* – a collaboration with the WVPBRN through Network-member Treah Haggerty, MD, MS.

The topics of this year's oral and poster presentations exhibited a variety of unique perspectives, such as prevalence of depression among diabetics, the use of photovoice to understand community health priorities, workshop-learning for motivational interviewing skills in the primary care practice setting, and addressing the root causes of asthma disparities.

We look forward to collaborating with and learning from our new connections, and we can't wait to see what's in store for next year!



## Member Spotlight: Jill Cochran, PhD, APRN, C-FNP

When Jill Cochran was young, she spent a lot of time in hospitals. The impact the hospital nurse had on her was life-changing. That relationship led Cochran, PhD, APRN, C-FNP, to a career in health care. She works as a nurse practitioner at the Robert C. Byrd Clinic in Lewisburg, WV; she is also a clinical researcher, doctorate, and associate professor of clinical science at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine.

Beginning her education at Roanoke Memorial Hospital in a hospital-based program for Registered Nurses, Cochran then spent the next 15 years taking satellite courses to earn her Bachelor and Master of Science in Nursing degrees. In 2000, she began her PhD program, graduating with a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing.

Cochran was born in Quinwood, WV. Her husband's job had the two relocating often before settling back down in her Greenbrier County home. For ten years, Cochran would make the 60-mile drive between Quinwood and Lewisburg daily. Eventually, however, the opioid epidemic that washed over West Virginia hit her hometown, too. Her home was robbed, and with her husband working out of town, safety became an issue. The two packed up and moved to Lewisburg shortly thereafter.

"I love working in rural West Virginia and being close to family," Cochran said. She has three grandsons: Levi, Brady, and Griffin; her favorite thing to do outside of work is to play with them and see her family.

Cochran's research focuses primarily around children. She is currently working on a tool to measure contentment in infants, and she is starting an infant soothing project in the Robert C. Byrd pediatric clinic.



She has developed the "Baby Bliss" application to evaluate the effectiveness of soothing techniques on infants that are diagnosed with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) after their discharge from the hospital nursery.

Cochran is very engaged in the WVPBRN. She is a longstanding member of the Protocol Review Committee and presented at the Design Studio Live session during the 6th Annual WVPBRN Retreat this past May. She has also led projects in childhood obesity, improved nutrition interventions, and suicide screening techniques to name a few.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to work with children and to work with a team to improve outcomes in my local area," Cochran expressed.

Because of a chance encounter with a nurse in her own childhood, Cochran has paved the way for research at the Robert C. Byrd Clinic and is making a difference in countless other children's lives.

To learn more, please visit Cochran's webpage at <https://www.wvsom.edu/Research/Faculty/Jill-Cochran>

*"I'm grateful for the opportunity to work with children and to work with a team to improve outcomes in my local area,"*  
- Jill Cochran,  
PhD, APRN,  
C-FNP

## NIDA CTN Appalachian Node: Future Project Opportunities

In collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh Medicine and Penn State University, Judith Feinberg, MD, of West Virginia University, is working to establish the Appalachian Node of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Clinical Trials Network (CTN). The role of the Appalachian Node will be to conduct substance use-related research in the region over the next five years. An emphasis will be placed on reaching rural and other underserved populations.

“Through this grant West Virginia will provide host sites to study treatment for opioid use disorder in front-line settings such as emergency departments and primary care settings to study collaborative models and interventions to better treat, and hopefully even prevent, opioid addiction,” said Dr. Feinberg. “Our researchers will also propose new studies for implementation in this national Clinical Trials Network.”

The Appalachian Node has passed the WVPBRN Protocol Review Committee to serve as a WVPBRN project, so project opportunities through the Appalachian Node will come up often. Recruitment will take place through phone and e-mail as usual, however a tab on the WVPBRN Water Cooler has been dedicated to the Appalachian Node as well. Here you can find

more information as well as see details on each currently-available project through the Appalachian Node.

The Appalachian Node team plans to propose and facilitate studies that will use existing resources in new ways, including local pharmacists, peer recovery coaches, and digital technology, with the goal of extending more advanced care into areas with limited resources. They ultimately hope to use their findings to inform state policymakers, local practitioners, and community members about evidence-based improvements in care for opioid use disorder.

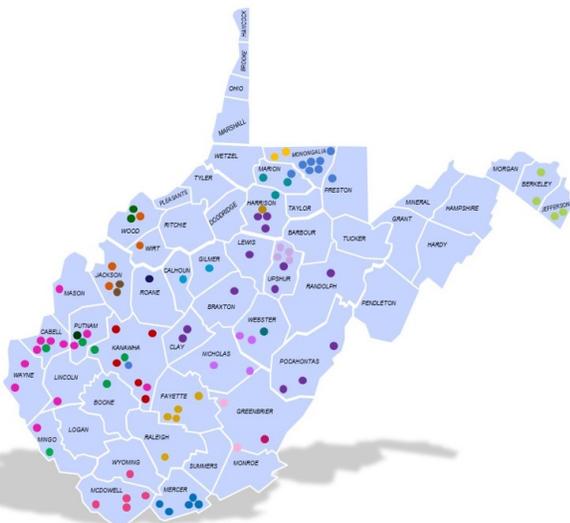
“Historical and cultural factors have caused Appalachia to experience the negative consequences of the opioid epidemic at a disproportionately high rate, including overdoses, neonatal abstinence syndrome, and death,” said Jane Liebschutz, M.D., of UPMC. “Often times research does not include data from rural populations, meaning that the findings don’t always apply in the same way they would to an urban population. This grant will help to ensure that we are addressing the opioid epidemic in a way that truly helps those who are most impacted.”

Learn more by visiting the WVPBRN Water Cooler tab here: <https://wvpbrn.wordpress.com/nida-appalachian-node/>

## Announcements

The 9th Annual Appalachian Translational Research Network (ATRN) Health Summit will be held October 14-15 at The Ohio State University in Columbus, OH. Abstract submissions for oral and poster presentations are open until July 15!

## Where Are We?



West Virginia  
Practice-Based  
Research Network

West Virginia  
Clinical & Translational  
Science Institute

Community Engagement  
and Outreach Core

West Virginia University  
Health Sciences Center  
PO Box 9102

## CONTACT

Stacey Whanger, MPH  
Network Manager  
[swhanger@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:swhanger@hsc.wvu.edu)

Angie DeWitt  
Network Coordinator  
[amdewitt@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:amdewitt@hsc.wvu.edu)

Find Us Online!

[www.wvctsi.org](http://www.wvctsi.org)

