

# COMMUNITY NEWS

WEST VIRGINIA PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH NETWORK

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

## *MOUNTAINEER HEALTH INITIATIVE PARTNERS WITH DESIGN STUDIO*

The WVPBRN and Mountaineer Health Initiative are partnering together to foster multidisciplinary collaboration among researchers and clinicians across West Virginia through the Design Studio. Both groups complement and supplement each other's knowledge of community-based participatory research and clinical and translational perspectives.

Design Studio has grown in the last year to include a tutorial portion for investigators needing a reminder of best practices associated with the research process. Past presentations have included IRB guidelines, literature search tips, how to formulate a research question, and how to write a solid methods section. Additionally, because of the quarterly meeting, organizations and groups have collaborated on various projects including a review of critical access hospitals in WV, the adaptation of Maryland's "Regrounding Our Response" curriculum, and an evaluation of the use of fentanyl test strips as a harm reduction strategy.

With the recent passing of Tom Hulsey, ScD, resident



advisor to the those needing project feedback, Design Studio has taken a more team-based approach moving forward. An emphasis on the inclusion of all participating institutions of the WVPBRN is also occurring with the additions of Mary Emmett, PhD (CAMC), Courtney Hereford, MPH, MSW, (WVSOM), and Rajan Lamichhane, PhD (Marshall) to offer their expertise. Treah Haggerty, MD provides a clinician point of view, Sijin Wen, PhD (WVU) offers biostatistical support, and Bri Sheppard, Ph.D. (WVU) rounds off the panel with her extensive knowledge and work with rural health issues.

The next Design Studio will be held in June. Project submissions are now being accepted. Please visit <https://is.gd/wvpbrnDesignHub> to submit your idea.

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**“Health in West Virginia is multidimensional and ever-evolving and requires us all on board and engaged together to share the passion, energy and expertise necessary to meet that complexity.”**

**Courtney Hereford,  
MPH, MSW**

## ***HEREFORD NAMED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WVSOM CRCH***



The WVPBRN would like to congratulate our Courtney Hereford, MPH, MSW, on her recent appointment as the executive director of the Center for Rural and Community Health (CRCH) at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM).

In her new role, Hereford hopes her passion for public health and partnership will address prevention, equity, diversity and justice across the continuum of care and community in efforts to improve holistic health and well-being across the state.

“As a native West Virginian, leaving the state as a young adult brought out this passion in me,” Hereford said. “My exposure to rural communities in other states and countries helped me see the disparity, complexity, strength and resiliency of West Virginia more clearly.”

Hereford began her work at CRCH in 2017 as a research coordinator. She credits her predecessor, Drema Mace,

PhD, with the center’s swift growth. Since 2016, CRCH has expanded from a staff of five with an annual budget of about \$350,000 to its current staff of more than 10 WVSOM employees, three AmeriCorps service workers and key faculty advisors bringing in more than \$7 million in grants, contracts and purchasing agreements in that time.

During this time, the team at CRCH has created a long list of accomplishments including: statewide health literacy programs, professional development and pipeline programming, the Community Health Education Resource Person (CHERP) program, opioid and substance use toolkits and workshops, clinical and translational science projects, COVID-19 response initiatives, and creation of the Greenbrier County Health Alliance.

Hereford said she understands that health issues in West Virginia are complex, and it is her goal as the center’s executive director to forge engagement among those dynamic partnerships.

“Health in West Virginia is multidimensional and ever-evolving and requires us all on board and engaged together to share the passion, energy and expertise necessary to meet that complexity. We are only as strong and impacting as our partnerships, and the CRCH is privileged to partner across so many fronts,” she said.

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Even with the center's expansion, Hereford still sees opportunity for growth and increased impact on the surrounding communities.

She also hopes the center can become a resource hub recognized across the region, in which stakeholders across Appalachia and the rural U.S. can utilize the center's expertise and model to advance their own health programming and priorities.

"I see us continuing to grow in presence and programming as the Center for Rural and Com-

munity Health here at WVSOM, where students, faculty, staff, partners and stakeholders understand that they are our most valued communities, and whatever their passion and priority, we will be of service," she said. "We will continue to grow opportunities for WVSOM students and stakeholders to engage with our rural communities in meaningful ways that positively impact their training, orientation and future practice."

*Special thanks and credit to WVSOM communications team for the majority of the story.*

## **WVPBRN RETREAT SCHEDULED FOR THIS FALL**

Save the date! The WVPBRN Retreat will return this fall, on August 5 and 6. Please let us know if you would like to be a part of the planning committee or have any ideas for the agenda. Contact Jen Lukas at [jg0138@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:jg0138@hsc.wvu.edu) if you have any questions or want to help with planning.

The retreat will take place at

August 5-6, 2021  
WV

**Stonewall Resort, Roanoke,**

**8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL**

**WVPBRN RETREAT**

Mark your calendars! The WVPBRN Retreat will be back this fall on August 5 and 6!

West Virginia Practice-Based Research Network

**The mission of the WVPBRN is to improve the health of West Virginians by collaborating with primary care practices to conduct translational practice-based research.**



## **PROJECTS CURRENTLY RECRUITING**

### **Families Strong**

Mosaic Group, a national healthcare consulting firm, is bringing Families Strong to West Virginia residents that have been impacted by their loved one's substance use.

Families Strong offers judgment-free support groups for families and friends of loved ones who are struggling with a substance use disorder in West Virginia. This free support group is being offered online and over the course of 9-weeks and the goals are to:

- Provide support for family members and friends of individuals with Substance Use Disorder
- Minimize the effects of an individual's substance use on family members or loved ones
- Promote the use of communication skills to alter the relationship between the substance user and family member/loved one
- Attempt to get the substance user into treatment

Family members can register themselves using the following link: [bit.ly/  
FamiliesStrongWestVirginia](https://bit.ly/FamiliesStrongWestVirginia)

As a bonus, individuals who complete Families Strong, will be provided with \$50.00 as an incentive for their time and participation. Questions can be directed to Dawn Brown,

## **Addiction impacts West Virginia families**



**Care is here** for loved ones of substance users

**Online support groups are now forming.**

Families Strong Coordinator, by calling and/or texting 443-525-1976 or email at [dawn.brown@groupmosaic.com](mailto:dawn.brown@groupmosaic.com).

### **International Medical Graduates Study**

Researchers from Davidson College and the University of Chicago are interested in learning from international medical graduates (IMGs), health system administrators, and community leaders to participate in interviews on the experiences of IMGs and the ways that health and immigration policies affect their ability to work in underserved areas, particularly in WV. Please contact Kata Chillag at [kachillag@davidson.edu](mailto:kachillag@davidson.edu) or visit [imgstudy.org](http://imgstudy.org) for more info.

### **Appalachian Mind Health Initiative (AMHI)**

Funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), AMHI is a pragmatic clinical trial of internet-based psychotherapy (eCBT) for patients being treated for Major Depressive Disorder. Participants will receive additional support and resources to supplement their provider's treatment plan. This is very important and impactful work benefiting West Virginia patients, particularly given the mental health challenges this pandemic has created. The project team has also begun a series of talks focused on mental health. For more information, visit: <https://amhi-home.org/>.



## *Projects Recruiting (cont.)*

### Infant Mortality Project

Lauri Andress, Ph.D., is currently recruiting female adults between the ages of 18 & 45 years old who are physically able to bear a child OR have lost a child less than 12 months of age in hopes of better understanding factors influencing infant mortality. Interviews will take approximately 60-90 minutes and participants will receive a \$40 gift card. If you know anyone interested, please email:

[laandress@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:laandress@hsc.wvu.edu)

## **RADx-UP TESTING PROJECT EXPANDS**

The NIH-funded Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics for Under-served Populations (RADx-UP) COVID-19 testing project launched earlier this year and has increased testing capacity throughout the state by providing various enhancements for primary care sites and adding two mobile units to the WV National Guard.

Now, the project is concentrating efforts on expanding testing for minority populations through their Communities of Color initiative.

Throughout the pandemic, disparities for Hispanic and African American populations have been a large concern. To

### Meet Emily Kemper WVPBRN Testing & Project Coordinator



I am excited to have the opportunity to work more closely with the WVPBRN. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Behavioral Science from Glenville State College. I am also in graduate school at West Virginia University's Clinical and Translational Science program. I have been serving as a research assistant in the RADx-UP COVID-19 testing project awarded to WVCTSI since December. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, and also utilizing my time outdoors.

### Meet Elisabeth Minnick WVCTSI Project ECHO Coordinator

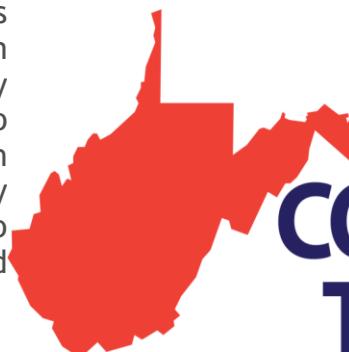


I am so grateful and excited to be joining such a wonderful team and being part of something that helps so many individuals. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Fish and Wildlife Sciences from Oregon State University, and I'm currently in graduate school at the University of Denver for Environmental Policy. I have experience in management, planning, research, and guest relations. I love science, history, fishing, skincare, museums, traveling, and video games.

combat this inequity, the team is actively traveling to communities with large minority populations to offer free and convenient testing.

Home testing will also be an option extended to minority participants if they are interested. The project expects to launch this component of the study in the next couple of weeks. Furthermore, participants will have an opportunity to share their thoughts about home testing and their health behaviors through an interview with researchers.

In addition, multiple variants



## **FREE COVID-19 TESTING**

**RAPID ACCELERATION OF COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS**

have already been reported in West Virginia over the last month. The project hopes to provide extra resources in order to increase testing in areas with variant concerns. The project team stresses the importance of continual testing despite lower prevalence of cases in some areas. Please see the attached flyer for reasons testing is still a priority. Contact Stacey Whanger at [swhanger@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:swhanger@hsc.wvu.edu) with any questions.

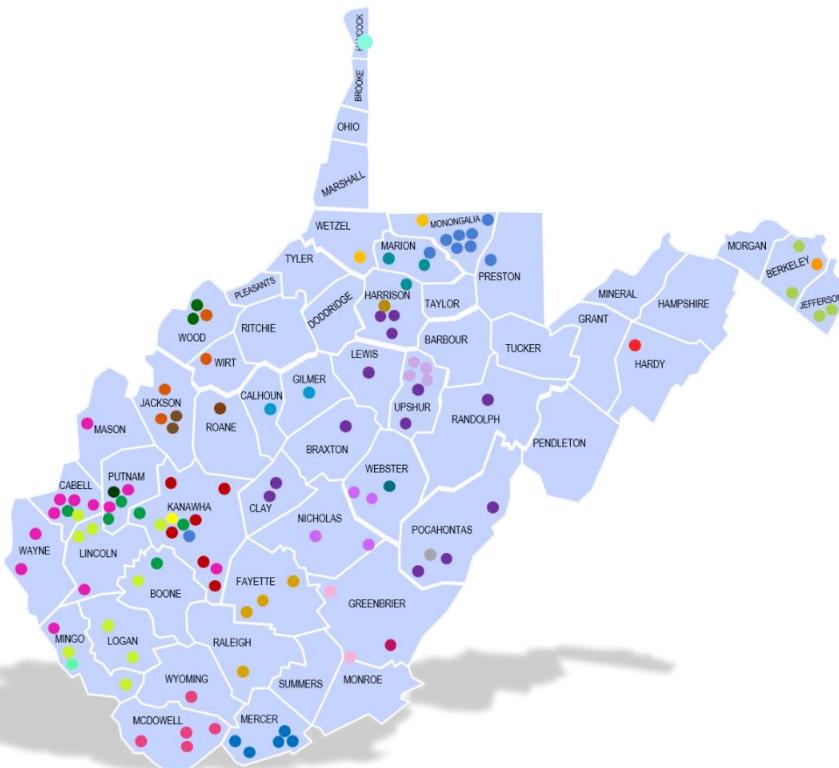
## ***IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS***

- Project submissions for the next Design Studio are now being accepted. Please visit <https://is.gd/wvpbrnDesignHub> to submit your idea.
  - The 2021 North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) Conference will be a virtual event this year from June 24-25.
  - The CORE Survey selection committee has been chosen and members are deliberating on this year's 7 total submissions. The WVPBRN will announce the recipients and release the survey later this month.

## Staffing Update

Tracy Sun, Testing and Implementation Research Manager, will be resigning her position, effective March 16. She will be joining the Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum as their community engagement manager. Emily Kemper ([ekak00009@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:ekak00009@hsc.wvu.edu)) will be taking over some of her responsibilities for the RADx-UP testing grant. For any assistance related to the WVPBRN, please contact Jen Lukas at [jg0138@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:jg0138@hsc.wvu.edu).

## *OUR NETWORK*



## *CONTACTS*

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Find us online at  
[www.wvctsi.org](http://www.wvctsi.org)



# West Virginia Practice-Based Research Network

West Virginia Clinical and  
Translational Science Institute

## Community Engagement and Outreach Core

