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AMERICAN FEDERATION FOR AGING RESEARCH ANNOUNCES
THE 2012 HARTFORD CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE IN GERIATRIC MEDICINE AWARDS

Awards address critical need for geriatricians

New York, NY (March 23, 2012)—The American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) announced today it will distribute nearly $2.5 million in career development awards to 83 advanced fellows and junior faculty members at 28 Hartford Centers of Excellence in Geriatric Medicine and Training. The Centers of Excellence program is funded by The John A. Hartford Foundation, a committed champion of improving health care for older adults, and administered by AFAR, and since 2010 has granted more than $7.5 million, with the goal of increasing the number of academic leaders in geriatric medicine.

“As America ages, the Hartford Foundation’s support of the next generation of geriatricians is more important than ever,” said Richard Besdine, MD, Chief Medical Officer for AFAR and vice chair of AFAR’s National Program Office Advisory Committee, which administers the program. “These scholars are extremely impressive, both in their accomplishments and in their dedication to the important cause of promoting excellent medical care for older adults through their research, teaching, and leadership. Without this support, progress to better care for elders would be seriously impeded, and we are all grateful.”

The rapid aging of the American population and the drastic shortfall in the number of geriatricians create an urgent need for more medical faculty who can impart geriatrics to all medical students, and for researchers who can develop innovative ways to improve the care of older adults.

For a complete list of this year’s Hartford scholars, please visit www.afar.org/grantees.

The critical need for geriatricians

The nation's acute shortage of geriatricians is compounded by a lack of faculty members specializing in geriatrics who can train the next generation of doctors. Currently there are fewer than 900 full-time academic geriatricians in the U.S., while some experts project that 2,400 are required to meet the growing demand.

“The Hartford Foundation believes that all physicians need to be prepared to meet the specialized needs of older patients, who are the heaviest users of our health care system,” said Nora O'Brien-Suric, senior program officer at The John A. Hartford Foundation. “The Hartford Centers of Excellence award is the only one of its kind supporting young academic geriatricians at this critical time in their careers, and is designed to maximize its impact by
giving the leaders of geriatrics training programs a high degree of flexibility in how they use the award.”

Many of the recipients of the Hartford awards would not have been able to pursue an academic career without this support for their ongoing training in geriatrics. The awards aim to open doors to subsequent career development awards, help recipients build a network of professional colleagues and mentors in the field of geriatrics, and provide recipients the freedom to be innovative in their research.

**Building Centers for Excellence**

The Hartford awards are part of the Hartford Foundation’s Centers of Excellence in Geriatric Medicine and Training (CoE) initiative, which supports medical schools with the necessary components for training academic geriatricians. These include infrastructure for research and medical education, advanced training opportunities, academic mentoring, and enlightened institutional support. Twenty-six Centers focus on geriatric medicine and two are dedicated to geriatric psychiatry.

For more information on the CoE program, please visit [www.geriatricsrecruitment.org](http://www.geriatricsrecruitment.org).

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**About AFAR**

Founded in 1981, AFAR has championed the cause and supported the funding of science in healthier aging. Due to the shortage of physicians and researchers dedicated to the bioscience of aging, AFAR partners with foundations, corporations and individuals to fund important research into the fundamental mechanism of aging, age-related health, and diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease, cancer, heart disease, and other illnesses. For more Information, please visit AFAR’s website at [www.afar.org](http://www.afar.org).

**About the John A. Hartford Foundation**

Founded in 1929, The John A. Hartford Foundation is a committed champion of health care training, research, and service system innovations that will ensure the well-being and vitality of older adults. Its overall goal is to improve the health of older Americans. Today, the Foundation is America’s leading philanthropy with a sustained interest in aging and health. For more information about The John A. Hartford Foundation, please visit [www.jhartfound.org](http://www.jhartfound.org).

Recipients of the John A. Hartford Foundation 2012 Award from the Emory University School of Medicine include Drs. Manuel Eskildsen, Ugochi Ohuabunwa, Rina Eisenstein and Nadine Dubowitz. Below is information about their projects/experiences as a CoE scholar:

**Manuel A. Eskildsen, MD, MPH, CMD**

*Emory University School of Medicine*

With the support of the Hartford Foundation’s Centers of Excellence program, Dr. Manuel Eskildsen has been able to develop curricula for learners to perform more effective transitions of complex patients through the healthcare system. Hartford funding supported Dr. Eskildsen’s time to serve as the chair of a Care Transitions Task Force chartered by Emory’s Department of Medicine, which had the goal of developing care transitions curricula for internal medicine residents. Dr. Eskildsen’s team has been able to disseminate this curriculum through presentations at national conferences and through the AAMC’s peer-reviewed MedEdPortal online resource.
During the 2011-2012 funding period, Dr. Eskildsen has implemented a pilot program for first-year internal medicine residents during their ambulatory care rotations in which they are paired with home health nurses on patient visits, and participate in post-acute care at a skilled nursing facility.

**Ugochi Ohuabunwa, MD**  
**Emory University School of Medicine**

Dr. Ugochi Ohuabunwa, with the support of the Hartford Foundation’s Centers of Excellence program has been able to develop curricula for medical students and internal medicine residents on Hazards of Hospitalization of the Elderly, Best Practices Management of the Hospitalized Older Adult and Care Transitions to other care settings. Dr Ohuabunwa is also in the process of starting Interdisciplinary Care Transitions education for hospital staff, including nurses, social workers, case managers and pharmacists, scheduled to begin on April 23, 2012. In addition, Dr. Ohuabunwa has conducted a Care Transitions Needs Assessment among providers serving low-income seniors and among patients within Grady Health System, a safety net hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. The information obtained from this Needs Assessment will be used to improve the discharge processes at Grady Hospital. Information obtained from the Needs Assessment and the curricula developed have been disseminated at national conferences.

In the upcoming year, Dr Ohuabunwa will focus on implementing hospital and community based measures to improve care transitions among minority seniors. At a hospital level, she will focus on implementing best practices in the care transitions processes at Grady Hospital by involving stakeholders, educating multidisciplinary healthcare personnel, leading a Transitions of Care Committee that will implement change to the current discharge processes of care, while monitoring and evaluating these changes. At a community level, an educational needs assessment regarding care transitions will be conducted among community-dwelling minority seniors and targeted educational interventions will be implemented to equip these seniors with skills and improve their capacity to transit safely to the next care setting post discharge.

**Rina Eisenstein, MD**  
**Emory University School of Medicine**

With the support from Hartford Foundation’s Center of Excellence, Dr. Rina Eisenstein will develop and provide a structured course curriculum regarding geriatric medicine and sleep medicine to the geriatric and sleep fellows during training. This curriculum will enhance the quality of geriatric-related education for both specialty fellows and ultimately improve diagnosis, treatment, and long-term management of older adults with sleep disorders.

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