

HRE's Program Evaluation and Research Center helps obtain \$53 million for West Virginia Clinical and Translation Science Institute

The Program Evaluation and Research Center in the West Virginia University College of Human Resources and Education was instrumental in obtaining a \$19.6 million Clinical Translational Research Award for the West Virginia Clinical and Translation Science Institute August 15.

Awarded by the National Institutes of Health over the next five years, the grant allows WVCTSI to increase efforts in addressing the healthcare needs of West Virginia and central Appalachia residents.

In addition to the NIH grant, other leading educational, health sciences and healthcare entities from across the state have committed to providing another \$33.5 million to the WVCTSI, to make the total initiative worth an unprecedented \$53.1 million over the next five years.

As the assistant director of the institute's Tracking, Evaluation and Quality Improvement Program Core, Dr. Reagan Curtis and the Program Evaluation and Research Center will lead all evaluation efforts, including data collection, analysis and assessment.

"Through PERC, the Tracking, Evaluation and Quality Improvement Program Core will receive increased autonomy and external perspective from which to develop and recommend changes when necessary, making it mission driven, results-oriented, and transparent in its efforts," said Curtis, associate professor of educational psychology, program evaluation and research methods.

WVCTSI seeks to develop its infrastructure to become an academic home for research that targets cancer, cardiovascular-stroke, and obesity-related diseases.

The institute also plans to expand research functions through collaboration and creating innovative recruitment, mentoring and training strategies to increase scientists' participation.

"We are completely committed to the concept that we cannot effectively address health disparities in the state without also transforming our approach to clinical and translational research in the state," said Dr. Christopher Colenda, Chancellor for Health Sciences. "While WVU and the WVU Health Sciences Center have enjoyed an excellent reputation for our educational programs, the WVU healthcare enterprise, and research programs in the biomedical sciences over the years, we recognized that to further our land-grant mission we need to systematically invest and build our research infrastructure and capacity."

WVCTSI, which encompasses WVU, Charleston Area Medical Center, West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine and West Virginia United Health Systems, is partnering with the University of Kentucky, Ohio State University and Indiana University to achieve these goals.

“As a land-grant institution, WVU was founded with a mission to serve the people of our state,” said WVU President Dr. James Clements in his letter of support for the project. “In a state with systemic health disparities, it is the obligation of the land-grant, flagship, research university to lead a statewide effort to transform the health of West Virginia.”

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