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Announcing JCHP's Center for Applied Research on Aging and Health

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Announcing JCHP's Center for Applied Research on Aging and Health

In just 16 short years, one out of every six persons in the United States will be 65 years of age or older. The change in the age structure of our nation, due principally to the aging of the Baby Boom generation and the marvels of medical science, is unprecedented and promises to transform health care as we know it today.

We stand at the crossroads of dramatic trends including the reconstruction of adulthood and the meaning of growing old, as well as the need for sweeping changes in health care organization and payment mechanisms to address chronic disease, the primary issue confronting older people. Currently, health care provision to older adults with health problems falls far too short. A 2003 study estimates that one in three persons 65 years or older—representing more than 11 million people—are at risk of going untreated for diseases associated with aging including dementia, mobility disorders, and other conditions that place elders at increasing risk of losing their independence.¹ Thus, there is an imperative for fundamental change and new directions in service provision, the training of health professionals and research on health-related issues of growing old.

In response to this imperative, JCHP has recently instituted The Center for Applied Research on Aging and Health, which will be directed by Dr. Gitlin. The new Center builds on and significantly extends the present efforts of the Community and Homecare Research Division (CHORD) and reflects the recognition of the important role of health professionals in research on and service delivery to older adults and family caregivers.

The Center will have three integrated components that reflect its underlying mission to bridge research and practice. First, it will continue and extend the funded research program of CHORD dealing with clinically significant issues including end-of-life care, adaptation to chronic disease and intervention studies to test strategies to enhance daily functioning and support family caregivers. Second, there will be an education component, which will sponsor scientific and continuing education opportunities for health professionals on issues concerning dementia care and prevention and management of frailty. The third component will involve the development of innovative "living laboratories" based on clinical and community settings. These laboratories will be developed to implement proven interventions and train students in the health professions in new evidence-based practices to advance service, research and training.

The Center has already established meaningful collaborations with the Farber Institute on the Neurosciences and numerous community-based service programs in the aging network to advance its three-prong mission. It will continue to widen such collaborations, establish a scientific advisory board and fellowship structure as well as publish a periodic newsletter to inform the Jefferson community of aging-related activities and accomplishments. The Center ultimately seeks to advance scientific knowledge, health professional training and service delivery to older people and family caregivers.

To learn about aging-related activities at Jefferson as well as nationally, join our Jefferson Aging Network (JAN) list serve, a monthly email service provided to close

to 200 members concerning important funding opportunities, conferences and research activities of potential interest. Please send an email message to Nancy Chernett, MPH, project manager (nancy.chernett@jefferson.edu), and indicate the email address to which you want JAN messages to be sent. To learn more about the Center, receive its forthcoming newsletters and/or inquire about becoming a fellow, contact Ms. Chernett at (215) 503-2790 or Dr. Gitlin at laura.gitlin@jefferson.edu.

References

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About the Authors

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