

HSC E-NEWS

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Geriatrics has blossomed into a critically important specialty in medicine as patients are living longer. In July 2001, our Health Sciences Center (HOC) was granted 5-year funding from the Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Health Professionals, Health Resources and Services Administration to establish its Long Island Geriatric Education Center (LIGEC) to improve the quality of care provided to geriatric patients. The interdisciplinary LIGEC programs provide education for health professionals, students, faculty, and community practitioners.

To date, a total of 72 professionals have enrolled in the LIGEC Associates Program and recruitment for fall 2004 is underway. Using a train-the-trainer model, the LIGEC has developed a curriculum that incorporates 40 hours of training in three major topic areas: innovative educational techniques (6 hours), an interdisciplinary geriatric core (16 hours), and a discipline-specific core (18 hours). Special half-day and full-day symposiums, workshops, and "faculty Retreats" are also planned, as are creative, "cutting edge" programs to heighten interests in geriatrics and gerontology. Enrollment is limited to dentists, nurses, nurse practitioners, occupational therapists, physicians, physician assistants, physical therapists and social workers. Associates receive a certificate of completion at the end of the 40-hour program and continuing medical/professional education credit is available for many courses.

Since January 2002, the Center has offered over 110 courses/conferences on topics such as Falls Prevention, Cultural Competence in End of Life Care, Understanding Entitlements and Insurance Issues, Geriatric Rehabilitation & Services for Elders with Special Needs, Osteoporosis, Bioterrorism and Disaster Preparedness, Palliative Care, Obesity as a Cause for Functional Decline in Seniors, The Older Driver, Health Promotion/Disease Prevention, Oral Physiologic Changes of Aging, Dementia Updates, Best Practice in the Nursing Home, and Exercise in the Elderly. The LIGEC has sponsored faculty development workshops in conjunction with the HOC Medical Librarians and professionals from the Center for Excellence in Teaching (CELT).

LIGEC has collaborated with a variety of organizations on Long Island, co-sponsoring conferences and holding them at sites other than SUNY Stony Brook, including the Long Island Occupational and Environmental Center, Good Samaritan Hospital, the



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Northport VA Medical Center, Winthrop University Hospital, the LI State Veterans Home and Gurwin Jewish Geriatric Center. Guest speakers have included: Marcelle Morrison-Bogorad, Associate Director Neuroscience and Neuropsychology, National Institute on Aging (NIA), Dr. Steven Ferris, Executive Director, Aging and Dementia Research Center, NYU and Dr. John Morley, Professor of Gerontology at St. Louis University.

The LIGEC also focuses on HOC students. A geriatric selective within the course "Medicine in Contemporary Society" was developed for medical students in the spring of 2003. The 15-hour interdisciplinary geriatric/gerontologic "selective" was also offered to dental, PA, NP, OT, PT and Social Welfare students. Thus far, over 150 students have completed this selective. Topics covered include: Aging Concepts, Drug Prescribing in the Elderly, Sensory Loss and Communication, Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment, Cultural Aspects of Aging, Elder Abuse, Community Resources for the Elderly and Geriatric Interdisciplinary Team Training (GITT).

Visiting professors have met with students from all of the HOC Schools at C-3 luncheons. A student chapter of the American Geriatrics Society has been formed for interested medical students. Five students from our geriatric interest group have been awarded AFAR summer scholarships and most have presented their research at national AGS annual meetings. The first scholarship winner, Dr. Diane Lewis, who had performed geriatric research as part of the MD with Distinction in Geriatrics Program, won first prize in a local student research contest at Stony Brook. Now in her Internal Medicine residency, Dr. Lewis is planning to specialize in Geriatric Medicine for an academic career. Dr. Lisa Strano Paul, core faculty member for Medicine, has developed for first year medical students an innovative geriatric clinical experience, which entails an introduction to the practice of Geriatrics and ongoing contact with nursing home residents at the LISVH. Dr. Paul recently submitted a successful application for a Medical School Advanced Clinical Transactions grant to incorporate geriatrics into the third-year Internal Medicine clerkship. Dr. Kathleen Shurpin, core faculty for Nursing, has received additional funding from NY State DOH and the Hartford Foundation, to expand the School's Distance Learning program to include significant geriatric content.

The LIGEC houses a Resource Center with geriatric/gerontologic curricular materials from other GEC's, textbooks, journals, videos, CDs, newsletters, and pamphlets. Many of the LIGEC conferences are videotaped. These videotapes are made available to both associates and interested faculty, staff, students and healthcare providers. For additional information or to apply to the LIGEC Associate Program, please visit the LIGEC website: www.HOC.stonybrook.edu/ligec or call the LIGEC office at (631) 444-8279. As the number of people living to advanced age continues to rise, I hope you would take advantage of the resources here at Stony Brook so that you are better prepared to serve their needs.