

Center on Aging

Summer 2021 | musc.edu/aging



03 There are many questions about the COVID-19 vaccine. Inside you will find answers about the distribution plan for seniors in South Carolina, where to get up to date information, and why everyone should get vaccinated.

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From the Director

Hello everyone,

As we enter the summer months, we hope your lives have had some return to normalcy, such as spending time with friends and loved ones and enjoying activities that bring you happiness.

We are excited to share with you the news that plans are in the works for the next MUSC Center on Aging Senior Expo - to be held next spring 2022. The College of Medicine Senior Mentor Program is ready to welcome new mentors for the incoming class of 2025! For more information, see page 3.

We hope you will also take a moment to learn about the newly named, SC Safe Seniors program (formerly the Elder Abuse Identification and Treatment Program) here at MUSC, as well as the exciting research in the area of Alzheimer's and related dementias being done by Dr. Onder Albayram.

Lastly, we are happy to share activities that the Center on Aging is participating in to help support seniors in our community. We hope that this newsletter finds you well and that you enjoy the rest of the summer!

Heather Boger, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Interim Director
Center on Aging



Senior Mentor Program

Have you heard of the MUSC Senior Mentor Program?

The Senior Mentor Program connects medical students from the Medical University of South Carolina with people, aged 65 years and older, living in the Charleston, SC area.

The goals of the program are:

- To provide a learning experience for MUSC medical students.
- To help reduce stereotypes about aging.
- To improve the way future doctors care for older patients.

Why is there a need for Geriatric Education?

With America entering into the “baby boomer” generation, 10,000 individuals will turn 65 every day for the next 20 years, resulting in 78 million more elderly individuals in the United States alone.

Providing contact with seniors early in medical training improves, not only knowledge of aging, but has a positive effect on students’ attitudes toward caring for older adults.

What do the students do in the program?

Students are paired with seniors in the community for all 4 years of medical school to complete assignments 1-2 times per year, based on information that they have learned in the classroom. Students meet with the senior mentors in their homes to learn in a non-clinical setting.

Students evaluate the health of their senior mentors by performing tasks, such as a nutrition analysis, fall risk assessment, and advanced care planning.

Interested in learning more or volunteering to become a Senior mentor?

Email seniormentor@musc.edu for an application.



Rescheduled for Spring 2022

MUSC Center on Aging Senior Expo

We are excited to announce that we are working on scheduling this community event for Spring 2022.

- All seniors, caregivers and senior service providers welcome!
- Free health screenings, exhibitors, and raffle prizes

musc.edu/aging | email: dillonk@musc.edu



Changing What's Possible

Senior Mentor Program + Upcoming Events



Now seeking Senior Mentor Volunteers

The Senior Mentor Program connects medical students from the Medical University of South Carolina with people, aged 65 years and older, living in the Charleston, SC area.

We are currently enrolling volunteers for the incoming College of Medicine Class of 2025.

Volunteers must be willing to meet with the students twice a year to complete assignments where they will perform tasks, such as nutrition analysis, fall risk assessment, and advanced care planning.

For more information email:
seniormentor@musc.edu



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

DATE	EVENT	FOR MORE INFO
August 28 7:45 am	22nd Annual McElveen Race For The ARK <i>Summerville, SC</i>	www.thearkofsc.org/race-for-the-ark-2/ 843-471-1360
October 16 9 am	Walk to End Alzheimer's <i>Riverfront Park, North Charleston</i>	www.alz.org 843-614-6608
November 19 6 pm - 10 pm	LSN Holiday Harvest Gala to benefit Charleston Meals on Wheels <i>Cooper River Room, Mount Pleasant, SC</i>	843-792-0712 dillonk@musc.edu

SC Safe Seniors Honors World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

This past June 15th, we participated in the global observance of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). Despite looking a little different this year than it has for the past 5 years of honoring WEAAD as a program, we had one of the most successful awareness campaigns yet. We announced our new name, SC Safe Seniors, and are harnessing the momentum built from the community's support of our behavioral health services, identification and referral trainings, and community outreach efforts as we move forward with this rebrand.

This month was one of incredible progress for South Carolina through several local and statewide events. On June 10th, SC Safe Seniors hosted its first ever Virtual Resource Fair, where we heard from 15 different organizations that support older adults aging gracefully, peacefully, and respectfully in our community. If you didn't have the chance to tune in live, here is the link to the recorded version <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=486130616009362>. Organizations like Trident Area Agency on Aging (TAAA), SC Vulnerable Adult Guardian Ad Litem Program (VAGAL), MUSC Advocacy Program (MAP), Palmetto Project, SC Assistive Technology Program, Tricounty SPEAKS, Charleston County Sheriff's Office, Charleston County Probate Court, My Sister's House and many more gave us overviews of their resources.

SC Safe Seniors is directed by Dr. Tatiana Davidson, who set the tone for the resource fair with the following remarks: "We are gathering today to learn from each other, learn what services and programs are available and who the key players are, so that in each of our individual practices and agencies we can begin to connect victims to the resources they need. A wrap around care approach is truly necessary if we are going to effectively address their unique needs."

Another highly attended event we had the honor of taking part in was hosted by the SC Department on Aging and SC Victim Assistance Network entitled "A Virtual Multi-Disciplinary Response to Elder Abuse". Our Mental Health Services Program Manager, Theresa Skojec, LPC reflected on the event: "We have had so many exciting opportunities this year, including taking part in the first annual multidisciplinary statewide event to honor World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. This event included Kelly Cordell, Director of Adults Advocacy for DSS, Dale Watson, State Long Term Care Ombudsman, and Tricia Phaup, Program Director of Training & Prevention, SCCADVASA, as well as the nation's only Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Forensic Nurse Examiner, Julie Watson, RN, from right here at MUSC. I am extremely proud to have joined these passionate women to discuss the importance of utilizing trauma informed care with our elder victims and patients."

For more information about this panel and the speakers, visit: <http://www.scvan.org/weaad>.

We are encouraged to continue to make progress in training professionals on how to identify and refer elder mistreatment, directly assist older adults in need of behavioral health support through in-person and telehealth visits, and look forward to working together with each of you to build a strong support system for our elders across SC and beyond!

If you are interested in hearing more about our program or would like to connect, please email us at ElderAbuseHelp@musc.edu.



**WORLD ELDER ABUSE
AWARENESS DAY**
Building Strong Support for Elders

Research: Linking Vascular Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Dr. Onder Albayram is a tenure-track faculty in the Division of Cardiology at MUSC. He has had numerous meaningful contributions to the field of brain aging and age-dependent neurodegenerative disorders reflected in number of excellent publications including Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A, Nature, Nature Medicine, Nature Communications, Scientific Reports and Science Translational Medicine.

Ever since he was an undergraduate student in Turkey and the U.K., he was at the forefront of new discoveries as a protagonist. His neuropharmacology studies at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles drew the attention of researchers at the University of Bonn in Germany, who enrolled him in the PhD program focusing on brain aging. Dr. Albayram completed his faculty training in Translational Neuroscience perspective with Alzheimer's Association Fellowship Award at Harvard Medical School before joining the MUSC family.



Dr. Onder Albayram, PhD,
Assistant Professor, Division of Cardiology

Dr. Albayram recently uncovered the previously unrecognized major early driver protein which linking vascular insults to Vascular Dementia (VaD) and Alzheimer's disease (AD), as reported in the Science Translational Medicine.

Alzheimer's and related dementias represent growing social, healthcare and economic problems and their prevalence is rapidly increasing with the age. There are no effective treatments for AD and VaD as neurodegenerative diseases with distinct pathology (deposition of the misfolded proteins, including Amyloid beta-Abeta and microtubule associated protein-tau) OR vascular origin, respectively. The fact that ~60% of human dementia patients have mixed vascular and AD pathologies necessitates a reassessment of the complex

relationship between the VaD and AD in clinically relevant experimental models to advance the field.

Here in this report, the investigators discovered that overlap between AD and VaD, and raises the possibility that this newly discovered protein modification could be an upstream early pathogenic factor common to both diseases.

“The cellular process underlying aging has remained one of the last frontiers in biology. The question of why aging occurs and what determines the speed of aging

has amazed mankind since ancient times. Aging of the brain is associated with an increased risk of neurodegenerative diseases as well as with a cognitive decline, even in healthy individuals. Although the onset and progression of learning and memory deficits vary strongly among individuals, age-related deficits in learning are generally observed phenomena in many species, from mice to humans. Which factors influence the onset and

progression of the learning and memory deficits has not been understood yet, but it is hypothesized that the balance between physical, chemical, and biological stressors and antistress responses play a crucial role.

Currently, my research goal is to integrate his background and research interests in brain aging and age-dependent neurodegenerative disorders to study the different involvement of cellular stress response in young and aged brains' physiology and in pathological conditions.”

Service: Homeless Senior Supply Drive

The Lowcountry Senior Network (LSN) is continuing to support seniors in the community.

With a rise in the number of homeless seniors requesting assistance at local senior centers, LSN decided to solicit help from its membership. Throughout the spring, members collected and donated canned foods, snacks, personal hygiene products, utensils/can openers, dental health items, socks, hats, and even hand-crank radios that include phone chargers. These items are most sought after by seniors who visit these centers seeking assistance.

With the help of sponsors (MUSC Center on Aging, All About Seniors, Trident Area Agency on Aging, and Senior Care Insurance Services) sling back packs with reflective safety strips were purchased for easy distribution and portability of these supply kits.

Fifty bags will be ready to go the beginning of July and will be available at Charleston Area Senior Citizens,

Berkeley Seniors, and Dorchester Seniors, with the goal to have another 50 by the end of the summer.

If you would like more information about this project or would like to contribute donations, contact: dillonk@musc.edu or deliver items to:
Trident Area Agency on Aging
5895 Core Rd, Ste. 419
North Charleston



FIFTH ANNUAL
Holiday Harvest Gala
 Lowcountry Senior Network

SAVE
 the
 DATE

Friday 11/19/21
 COOPER RIVER ROOM
 MT. PLEASANT

A fundraising event to benefit Charleston Area Meals on Wheels





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MUSC Center on Aging
musc.edu/aging

THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Founded in 1824 in Charleston, The Medical University of South Carolina is the oldest medical school in the South. Today, MUSC continues the tradition of excellence in education, research, and patient care. MUSC educates and trains more than 3,000 students and residents, and has nearly 13,000 employees, including approximately 1,500 faculty members.

The Center on Aging is a research, service, and education center at the Medical University of South Carolina. The center was approved by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education December 3, 1987, giving it the status of the oldest research center at the University.

Under the leadership of Interim Director, Dr. Heather Boger, the Center on Aging is committed to promoting health, longevity and improving the quality of life for South Carolina's seniors.