

# Center on Aging

Winter 2022 | [musc.edu/aging](https://musc.edu/aging)



**05** Are you an older adult driver that has fallen in the past year? Be sure to read about studies that have shown a correlation between falls and older driver crash involvement.

Winter | 2022



## INSIDE:

- 03 MUSC Volunteer Clinics
- 04 SMP + Events
- 05 Falls + Driving Safety
- 06 Research Day
- 07 AARP Research Study

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# MUSC Volunteers Making a Difference: CARES

CARES is a nonprofit organization providing free medical care to uninsured patients aged 18 and older in the local Charleston area since 2005. It is operated and managed by professional students of MUSC for the opportunity to learn about medicine and the inter-workings of a free clinic. At CARES, medical, pharmacy, and PA students follow licensed physicians who are volunteering their time to care for patients.

Preceptors are from MUSC (attending and resident physicians) as well as community-based, such as fully licensed retired providers who relocate to the area. The majority of students are from MUSC College of Medicine, but there are a large number from the Colleges of Pharmacy and Graduate Studies, as well as some MPH and MHA student volunteers on the CARES board.

Under the Directorship of Dr. Anita Ramsetty, CARES main site addresses primary care/preventive care (pap smears, hepatitis screenings, etc), ongoing chronic conditions (diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, arthritis), and acute care (things like acute infections), mental health concerns (depression, anxiety, stable bipolar disorder, etc). For kids, they provide mainly preventive care visits, vaccines, and address chronic medical conditions, like asthma.

CARES also has specialty nights, including cardiology, orthopedics, dermatology, gynecology, and mental health/integrative care. These events allow them to perform more specialized care, such as biopsies for dermatology night, management of certain joint conditions and cardiac conditions, etc.

If CARES can't handle a condition through these specialty nights, they will refer out through Access Health, where patients can enroll for discounted or free specialty care. The most common referrals are for studies that require echocardiograms or colonoscopies, or other specialties that are not in-house, such as gastroenterology and neurology.

The CARES Clinic was awarded the 2015-2016 "MUSC Gives Back - University Wide Organization Community Volunteer Award for Student Organizations." In addition, the CARES Clinic Spanish Night was awarded the 2015-2016 "MUSC Gives Back - College of Medicine Community Volunteer Award for Student Organizations."

Recently, CARES was awarded the inaugural Association for Prevention, Teaching and Research (APTR) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award for its efforts to systematically address a public health need among vulnerable populations. <https://www.aptrweb.org/page/Diversity-Equity>

Learn more at: <https://muschealth.org/medical-services/cares>

## Dream Center Neurology Clinic

**In addition to CARES, MUSC student and faculty volunteers are also providing outstanding care to patients in need of neurology expertise through the Neurology Specialty Clinic at the Dream Center Clinic.**

The Dream Center Clinic (DCC) is a faith-based free medical clinic. Their purpose is to provide routine, outpatient health and wellness services to the medically underserved residents of North Charleston, Hanahan, and West Ashley in South Carolina. The primary focus is on uninsured families, whose income is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and aged 18-65. The DCC relies on medical and non-medical volunteers to provide services at the clinic during hours that are convenient to their patients. Volunteers include MUSC neurologists (both attending and resident physicians), MUSC clinical and preclinical medical students, EEG technicians, and other members of the medical community such as scheduling coordinators.



The Neurology Clinic at the Dream Center provides consultation and follow-up for the full spectrum of neurological illnesses. In addition, they provide subspecialty care in Movement Disorders, Epilepsy and Headache, including EEGs and botulinum toxin injections.

If a patient is diagnosed with a neurological condition at the clinic or was referred to the clinic for a previously diagnosed neurological disorder, their neurologists are ready and able to manage the patient's condition at the clinic. They currently supplement the management of their patients by scheduling them for lab work, MRI scans, CT scans, and EEG monitoring at various locations in the community. The Neurology Clinic at the Dream Center provides follow-up for their neurological patients and routinely refer to the CARES clinic for physical therapy, and to other specialty clinics at the Dream Center to provide comprehensive care. If patients require advanced

subspecialty care not available at the Dream Center location, they can be referred directly to MUSC.

“In 2013, a group of faculty, staff, and students from the Department of Neurology at MUSC was inspired to expand the services offered by the Dream Center, a free clinic established in 2009 to provide outpatient ophthalmologic, dental, and primary care to local underserved patient populations. [Their] goal was to create a free clinic dedicated to addressing neurologic conditions in uninsured patients” (Taylor et. al., 2015). Over time, the MUSC College of Medicine (COM) became more involved when former students Katherine Teague and Kyle Kulbarsh, under the guidance of Dr. Gonzalo Revuelta, added a teaching component to the clinic to give COM students more hands-on exposure to neurology while also having the opportunity to serve the under-insured and uninsured population in Charleston. Currently, under the leadership of COM students Brielle Smith and Laura Campbell,

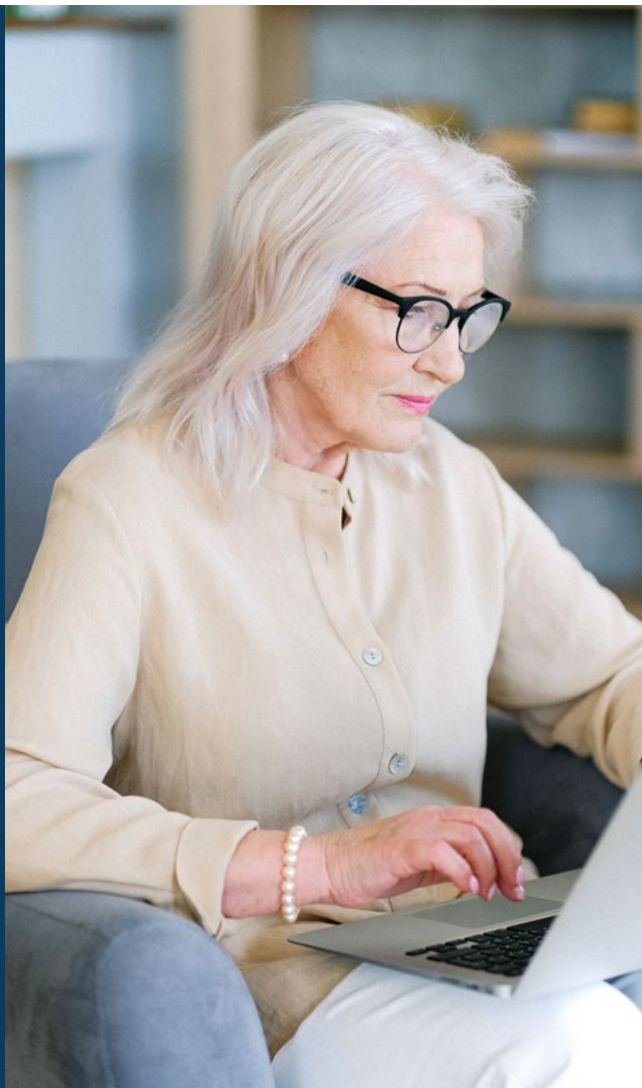
CARES provided free health screenings at the 2019 Senior Expo

the Dream Center Neurology Clinic hopes to streamline the process of acquiring brain imaging and lab work for its patients as well as prepare the clinic for a transition to an electronic medical record in the future. To learn more about how the Dream Center Neurology Clinic was founded, read “The Feasibility of Establishing a Free Clinic for Uninsured Patients with Neurologic Disorders” by Taylor et al (see citation below).

Citation: Taylor JJ, Larrew T, Omole A, Roberts M, Kornegay A, Kornegay K, Yamada L, Revuelta GJ, Sohn M, Hughes T, Edwards JC. The feasibility of establishing a free clinic for uninsured patients with neurologic disorders. *Neurol Clin Pract*. 2015 Aug;5(4):302-308. doi: 10.1212/CPJ.000000000000154. PMID: 26336631; PMCID: PMC4549716.

For more information: <https://www.dreamcenterclinic.org/>

## Senior Mentor Program + Upcoming Events



### Upcoming assignments for Senior Mentor Program

- Year 1 Students:** Relationship/Intimacy Review with Medical History (due Spring 2022)
- Year 2 Students:** No spring assignment due
- Year 3 Students:** Fall Risk (due at end of Neurology Clerkship rotation)  
Life Review (due at end of Psychiatry Clerkship rotation)
- Year 4 Students:** Advanced Directives (due March 4, 2022)

The Senior Mentor Program connects College of Medicine Students with adults, 65 years and older, living in the Charleston area.

Students conduct assignments with their mentors throughout all four years of their medical training to improve their understanding of how to treat and care for older patients.

For more information or to learn how to become a Senior Mentor: [seniormentor@musc.edu](mailto:seniormentor@musc.edu)

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

DATE	EVENT	FOR MORE INFO
January 26 9 am - 5 pm	Health Fair and Blood Drive for Tri-County Omar Shrine Temple, Mt. Pleasant	<a href="mailto:tbowland@transitionshc.com">tbowland@transitionshc.com</a> 843-475-7902
March 20 2 pm - 5 pm	Lowcountry Senior Center Oyster Roast <i>Bowen's Island Restaurant</i>	<a href="http://lowcountryseniorcenter.com">lowcountryseniorcenter.com</a> 843-990-5555
March 26-27	Parkinson's Pickleball Tournament <i>Myrtle Beach</i>	<a href="mailto:cool@musc.edu">cool@musc.edu</a> 843-792-7859
April 9	Parkinson's Moving Day	<a href="mailto:kterry@parkinson.org">kterry@parkinson.org</a> 864-323-7411

## Falls and Older Driver Safety

**Are you an older driver who has fallen in the past year or so? Do you find yourself losing your balance more than you have in the past? For adult children, have you noticed more trips or falls in your aging parent? Has your loved one recently stumbled or tripped in their home? Are they still driving?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reports that one out of three older adults (those aged 65 or older) fall each year. Importantly, the Journal of Gerontology (Sept. 2017) further reports that half of those persons actually have multiple falls.

Recent research has established a correlation between falls and older driver crash involvement. According to an article published in Jan. 2014 by the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society and conducted by the Department of Ophthalmology, School of Medicine, and the School of Public Health at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, older drivers who fell two or more times in the prior year were 1.5 times as likely to be involved in an accident and two times as likely to be involved in an at-fault accident.



The study's bottom line; a history of frequent falling can serve as a valid indicator in identifying older drivers that are at a higher risk for future traffic accidents.

According to MUSC Associate Professor, Chris Gregory PhD, PT, of the Department of Health Sciences and Research, "Impairments that contribute to reduced independence in older adults can manifest in a variety of activities. Driving and falls risk may be commonly impacted by changes that occur with aging. Examples of impairments that could impact both driving and falls include visual deficits, cognitive impairments as well as a general lack of strength and coordination. The good news is that these impairments can be addressed and the risk of falls and driving accidents/injuries potentially reduced."

As Dr. Gregory states, falling is not an inevitable part of the aging process as falls can be prevented. In loose translation, preventing falls by addressing some of the common underlying impairments means we could possibly prevent automobile accidents involving older drivers.

The CDC has developed the following tips to help older adults reduce their chances of falling that may also impact driving abilities: (<https://www.cdc.gov/injury/features/older-driver-safety/index.html>)

- Exercise regularly. It is important that the exercises focus on increasing leg strength and improving balance and that they get more challenging over time. Tai Chi programs are especially good.
- Ask a doctor or pharmacist to review current medications (both prescription and over the counter) to identify medicines that may cause side effects or interactions such as dizziness or drowsiness.
- Have your loved-one's eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year and update their eyeglasses to maximize their vision.

Visit the "Beyond Driving with Dignity" website at [www.beyonddrivingwithdignity.com](http://www.beyonddrivingwithdignity.com) to learn more about the Enhanced Self-Assessment Program, designed specifically for senior drivers, or to schedule a presentation for your group, business, or organization. Or call Ray Manniello at (843)233-9251.

## Research: MUSC Research Day 2021

### 2021 Research Day Center on Aging Award for Excellence in Aging Research

The 2021 Perry V. Halushka Research Day (RD) was held virtually on Friday, November 5th.

MUSC RD is open to all undergraduates (high school, college), students in all six colleges, postdoctoral fellows, clinical fellows and residents, as well as staff scientists and research specialists who performed research in the year leading up to RD.

RD is a great opportunity to practice presentation skills and receive constructive criticism. Awards are also given in special categories including the Center on Aging's award for aging-related research.

### Congratulations to this year's Center on Aging Award winners:

#### 1st Prize Poster Presentation: Mia Edgerton

Inhibition of ferroptosis using UAMC-3203 in the post stroke period does not impact cognitive outcomes in diabetic rats

#### 2nd Prize Poster Presentation: Rachel Eisenhart

Novel Gal-3 Macrophage Interactions in a Murine Presbycusis Model

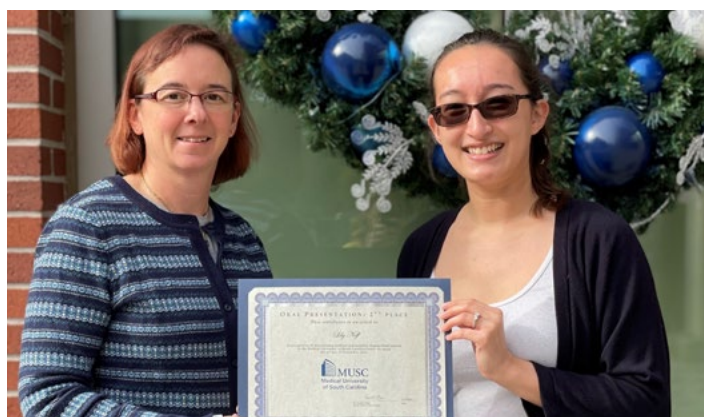
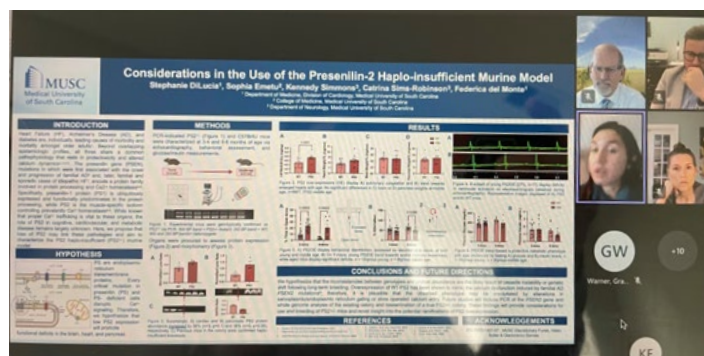
#### 1st Prize Oral Presentation: Emerson Hart

Priming Upper Extremity Motor Practice with Aerobic Exercise (PUMP-Ex) - A Preliminary Report on Feasibility and Efficacy

#### 2nd Prize Oral Presentation: Lily Neff

Mechanisms Controlling Regression of Cardiac Fibrosis by Removal of Pressure Overload

**Photos: Dr. Heather Boger presented certificates and prizes to Emerson Hart, Mia Edgerton, and Lily Neff (top to bottom). Unfortunately, Rachel Eisenhart was not available for the presentation.**



# AARP Disrupt Health Disparities Research Project

AARP South Carolina released the full **Health Disparities: South Carolina Non-Hispanic Black People Aged 50+**. Nowhere are these disparities clearer than the COVID-19 pandemic where Black people have suffered much higher case rates and nearly two and half times the mortality rate compared to White people.

AARP SC commissioned the report in collaboration with the South Carolina Aging Research Network, Clemson University Institute for Engaged Aging (Cheryl Dye, PhD), University of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health (Lucy Ingram, PhD), and the Medical University of South Carolina Center on Aging (Heather Boger, PhD).

“We wanted to better understand the impact of health disparities on SC’s 50+ African American population and the high number of African Americans contracting and dying from COVID-19,” stated Jo Pauling-Jones, AARP SC associate state director for advocacy and outreach.



## Findings include:

- South Carolina ranks in the top 10 of states of those ages 50 to 60 at risk for hunger, third in the nation for food insecurity for seniors age 60 and older, and second for the number of people 50-59 with hunger.
- The risk for hunger for African Americans and Hispanics is twice that of White people.
- Heart disease death rate for Black people was 27% higher than for non-Hispanic White people.
- African Americans have higher rates of hypertension (70.7% vs 54.6%) compared to White people.
- Black people also have higher rates of diabetes (29.2% vs 20.1%) and are twice as likely to die from diabetes compared to White people.
- Black people are also 61% more likely to die from stroke than White people.
- Black people have a 21% higher chance of getting colorectal cancer and a 50% higher chance of dying from it compared to non-Hispanic White people.
- Black men are 1.9 times more likely to get prostate cancer and 2.7 times more likely to die from it compared to non-Hispanic White men.
- Black people are 64% more likely to have Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD) compared to White people.
- 8.8% of White people and 14% of Black people responded there was a time in the past 12 months they needed to see a doctor but could not because of cost.
- More than 17% fewer Black people reported visiting a dentist in the past 12 months compared to White people and 5% more African Americans report have lost all of their teeth.

## Other major recommendations included:

- Greater public health efforts are needed to reduce the high rates of hypertension among African Americans.
- Hypertension plays a large role in heart disease and stroke as well as ADRD.
- Black people suffering from a combination of diabetes, obesity and hypertension

should be prioritized to receive targeted, coordinated and culturally appropriate healthcare and education.

- There is a need for efforts to expand dental care to Black people, as tooth decay and loss are risk factors for various chronic diseases such as heart disease and ADRD.
- Provide concentrated outreach and education to Black communities and increase colorectal screenings and prostate specific antigen or PSAs.
- Social determinants of health such as poor housing, homelessness, unsafe neighborhoods and lack of transportation significantly contribute to health disparities in older African Americans and require creative coordinated solutions through multi-agency collaboration.

The project continued with Phase Two: Qualitative Assessment of Health of Older African Americans in South Carolina: Understanding Disparities in the Context of COVID. To read the full reports, visit: <https://states.aarp.org/south-carolina/disrupthealthdisparities>



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## 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.