

### **Arkansas Aging Initiative: Providing Interdisciplinary Care to Older Adults, Statewide**

#### **The Challenge:**

**Bringing together community, academia, government and aging organizations to develop a state-wide infrastructure that will improve the quality of life of Arkansas' seniors.**

#### **The Goal:**

**Improve the quality of life for older adults and their families by developing an infrastructure that provides quality interdisciplinary clinical care and innovative education programs; and influencing health policy at the state and national levels, with emphasis on care of rural older adults.**

#### **An Innovative Solution:**

**Provide older Arkansans with evidence/consensus based health care and education through an interdisciplinary team of geriatric health care providers and educators.**

#### *Where To Learn More*

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#### **What It Is**

- A network of seven regional centers on aging located across the state, developed between 2001 and 2004. The program was a joint conceptualization by Drs. David Lipschitz, MD, PhD and Claudia Beverly, PhD, RN, FAAN.
- Interdisciplinary geriatric specialty care and education are two components that are critical to the success of the Arkansas Aging Initiative's (AAI) seven centers. Each center has an interdisciplinary ambulatory care clinic and has successfully recruited a board certified geriatrician, nurse practitioner and social worker. The education component provides educational offerings to health professionals, students of the health care and social service disciplines, older adults and their families and the community at large.
- One of seven programs funded annually by Arkansas' share of the Master Tobacco Settlement.

#### **What It Does**

- Provides older Arkansans with evidence/consensus based health care by an interdisciplinary team of geriatric health care providers – a nurse practitioner, (geriatric or family nurse practitioner or adult nurse practitioner with a post masters GNP) social worker and geriatrician.
- Serves as primary provider of quality geriatric education for the state of Arkansas.
- Employs marketing strategies to build program awareness.
- Helps drive formulation of public policies on aging issues at the local, state and national levels.
- Serves as a laboratory for developing nurse leaders to assume key organizational positions in nursing education and clinical geriatric nursing care.

## *Edge Runners*



### **How It Stands Out**

- Arkansas is the only state that has established this unique concept and thus has become a natural laboratory. Studying the impact this infrastructure has on health outcomes and quality of life for Arkansas' seniors is critical. Results would not only be utilized to improve the system, but can be used to inform local, state and national aging policy and can also be shared with other states in a replicable way.
- Through the program:
  - 90 percent of Arkansans age 65 and older are within 60 miles of interdisciplinary geriatric health care.
  - Since 2004 AAI partnered Senior Health Clinics have had over 101,000 interdisciplinary visits.
  - More than 200,000 education encounters have been provided since 2004.