

THE ARIZONA GWEP MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2024



ABOUT

The mission of the Arizona Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (AZ-GWEP) is to provide the best possible care through an interprofessional approach to individual, system, community and population level education, training and models of care innovations.

The AZ-GWEP Newsletter is an important forum to share AZ-GWEP activities and highlight your valuable work. Please use this form by the 10th of each month to be featured in the next issue:

[SUBMIT INFO FOR
OUR NEXT ISSUE](#)

OLDER DRIVER SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK



DECEMBER 2-6, 2024

UNDERSTAND, BE PROACTIVE, PLAN

Aging affects everyone differently. When it comes to driving, it is important to understand the impact age-related changes may have on one's safe driving ability. During the month of December, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the American Occupational Therapy Association promote **Older Driver Safety Awareness Week**. The week aims to:

- Remind drivers that age doesn't necessarily mean it's time to stop driving
- Educate the public about age-related changes that can affect driving skills
- Encourage conversations about driving safety and mobility independence
- Promote regular health checks and self-assessment

The National Institute on Aging has additional tips and resources about [Safe Driving for Older Adults](#).

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PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

MEET DANIEL, OUR PARTNER FROM ARIZONA CENTER FOR RURAL HEALTH

[DANIEL DERKSEN, MD, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR HEALTH EQUITY, OUTREACH & INTERPROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA HEALTH SCIENCES](#)

Dr. Derksen directs the [Arizona Center for Rural Health](#) and is principal investigator of grants including Arizona's State Office of Rural Health and Rural Hospital Flexibility Program. He collaborates with Dr. Mindy Fain on her HRSA Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program and with Dr. Sally Radovick on the Clinical & Translational Science Award (CTSA) NIH proposal. He serves as Senior Advisor for the [Arizona Area Health Education Center](#) (AzaHEC) Program.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS



ADVANCES IN AGING LECTURE SERIES

JANUARY 13th
12 - 1 pm (MST)

We are taking the month of December off for the holidays, but will return in the new year.

View archived presentations [here](#)

In his 38-year academic career he has been principal investigator for federal and state grant awards totaling \$48 million in his 25 years at UNM, and \$54 million in 13 years at University of Arizona.

Dr. Derksen's current work informs legislative, regulatory and program policy to improve health equity, increase health insurance coverage, reduce the uninsured, narrow health disparities and assure a well-trained and distributed health workforce to meet the health needs of all Arizonans.

Dr. Derksen and his wife, Dr. Krista Wills, graduated from the University of Arizona College of Medicine in 1984. They have two children and three grandsons. Their favorite activities include enjoying Arizona's great outdoors and spending time at their cabin in Greer, Arizona.

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PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COLLEGE OF NURSING

WWW.NURSING.ARIZONA.EDU



The University of Arizona College of Nursing (CON) was developed in 1957 and is one of several colleges within the University of Arizona Health Science campus. The College has several nursing education programs including the Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing (BSN), BSN with an emphasis on integrative health, Masters Entry Program in Nursing. In addition, the Doctor of Nursing Practice educates licensed nurses in a wide variety of specialties such as Adult-Geriatric Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, Executive Health Care Systems Leadership, Family Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Anesthesiology, Nurse Midwifery, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. The Doctor of Philosophy program educates nurse scientists who research various aspects of the nursing profession. The College of Nursing is nationally accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education and is ranked among the top nursing colleges in the United States. The College of Nursing also collaborates with Colleges of

Medicine, Pharmacy, Public Health, and others to provide a wide range of interprofessional education opportunities.

The College prepares nurse clinicians at the entry and advanced practice levels and nurse scientists who study a wide variety of topics focused on preventing the development of chronic conditions and supporting those with chronic conditions, especially, older adults. The CON mission is to “innovate nursing and interdisciplinary education, practice, research, and service to develop leaders, address healthcare challenges, and promotes health, equity, and inclusiveness.” The College has a rich history of nursing education focused on older adult care and research focused on enhancing quality of life in aging populations. The CON graduates students from the Tucson and Gilbert campuses who enter the health care field to provide care for populations across the lifespan including hospital and community-based care of aging populations. This includes both nurses entering the profession and those advancing in the profession as nurse practitioners or nurse researchers. All nursing graduates from the programs focused on clinical care receive education and experiences in providing support to older adults by and promoting healthy aging.

Between September 2021 and August 2023, the CON received a \$416,863 grant from the Health Resources and Service Administration to support entry level nursing students from rural and underserved areas to receive additional education in supporting healthy aging to enhance the nursing workforce caring for older adults across the care continuum. The grant team developed a comprehensive curriculum based on the 4Ms of Age-Friendly Health Systems (What matters most, Mobility, Medications, and Mentation) framework. The curriculum included critical topics in healthy aging such as ageism, advanced care planning, caregiving, frailty, multi-morbidities, and advocacy) and the lived experience of diverse OAs. Clinical practice experiences included simulation-based learning activities and working with older adults in diverse care settings. In addition, students learned advanced care concepts for supporting healthy aging (health restoration and rehabilitation), aging in underserved communities, clinical leadership skills, and clinical experiences focused on supporting community-dwelling older adults in rural and underserved settings. Students who engaged in this specialty education program demonstrated key competencies in older adult care. Important elements of this curriculum were embedded throughout the BS in Nursing curriculum leading to the educational enhancement of the healthy aging and supportive care of older adults curriculum for all BSN students. The impact of this curricular enhancement is that 100 to 120 new nurses a year are educated in the principles of age friendly care.

Currently, the foundations in nursing course in the baccalaureate program covers comprehensive content and skills focused on older adult care. This includes classroom content on physical and psychological changes that occurs as one ages, therapeutic communication, sensory and mobility changes, nutrition and topics that Healthy People 2030 address. Skills development and simulations are focused on the development of frailty occurring from changes in health of an older adult and how chronic conditions can impact discharge planning. Clinical experiences in older adult care include learning the day-to-day essentials that residents in the long term care settings need and how to offer this care in a meaningful manner.

In addition, the 4Ms framework is embedded in subsequent semesters as students learn about caring for older adults in the hospital setting (both general and intensive care) and the community. Students learn about the medication safety specific to older adults including medication sensitivities and reactions between multiple medications used for treating multiple chronic conditions. They continue with learning about the chronicity and complexity of co-morbidities that older adults face. Students deepen their learning about older adults’ transitions across the care continuum and age in plan in the community.