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Promoting Heart Health in Rural Women Through Tailored Nurse-led Education and Community Intervention Care

An innovative nursing program was recently developed to promote heart health in rural women. Rural females aged 35-65 in areas of New York and Virginia participated in a community meeting in which (1) ways to increase awareness of female heart disease and (2) local community resources available to women to improve their heart health were discussed. In addition, participants received tailored nurse-led education and counseling, consisting of up to 4 visits by a registered nurse who delivered assistance in changing diet, exercise activities, and/or smoking, depending on the needs of each participant. The intervention also addressed limitations specific to rural areas, such as lack of sidewalks or other safe places to exercise. Compared to a group of participants who only participated in community meetings, those also receiving tailored nurse-led education and counseling had positive changes in diet and reduced blood pressure, both of which impact heart health. Citation: Fahs, P. S., Pribulick, M., Williams, I. C., James, G. D., Rovynak, V., & Seibold-Simpson, S. M. (2013) *Journal of Rural Health* 29(3): 248-257. ♦

Did You Know?

- Nearly 1 in 5 uninsured Americans currently live in a rural area. Rural residents are more likely to lack health insurance coverage than their urban counterparts.
- Under the Affordable Care Act, it is estimated that beginning in 2014, nearly 8 million uninsured rural Americans will have the ability to obtain affordable health care.
- Prior to the introduction of federal and state Health Insurance Marketplaces, a single insurer has dominated the health insurance market in 29 mostly rural states. The Health Insurance Marketplaces are expected to increase competition and lower insurance costs for rural residents.
- 30 million rural Americans with private insurance, and over 11 million with Medicare coverage, will now have access to expanded preventive services at no extra cost.
- Beginning in 2014, adults can no longer be denied health insurance coverage because of a pre-existing condition, which can include circumstances as varied as cancer or pregnancy.
- Young adults can now continue to stay on their parents' employer-sponsored or individually purchased health insurance plan until age 26. It is estimated that nearly 600,000 young rural Americans will now have coverage under their parents' plan. ♦



Expansion of VetSuccess on Campus Program to over 60 Additional Campuses

VA's VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) program will be expanding in the fall of 2013 to 62 new locations across the country, in both rural and urban areas. The VetSuccess program began in 2009 with just one pilot center, expanding to two more locations within six months. Five locations were added in 2011, 24 locations in 2012, and by 2014, the total number of VSOC schools will rise to 94. This expansion will help accommodate large numbers of Veterans returning to higher education through the VA's Post-9/11 GI Bill. The VSOC program primarily serves Veterans by placing experienced VA counselors on college campuses to promote a healthy and successful transition from military service to academic life. VSOC partner schools are chosen for a variety of factors, typically the size of their student Veteran population and proximity to a VA Medical Center or Vet Center. The proximity of these campuses to VA facilities allows for a close partnership between schools and the VA to best serve their student Veteran populations, whether through benefits assistance, medical care, vocational rehabilitation counseling, or behavioral healthcare. Since 2009, VA has issued over \$30 billion to nearly 1 million Veterans, service members, and their families to pursue higher education. ♦

