Hartford Program Issues Geriatric Social Work Awards

The prestigious Hartford Scholars Program has granted eight geriatric social work researchers a two-year award that will provide career development, mentorship, and support for projects that will improve healthy outcomes for the country’s aging population.

The 2012 scholars are examining such topics as civic engagement, trauma among African American seniors, and the psychosocial impact of female sexual dysfunction. The cohort also includes one scholar supported by the Veterans Health Administration (VA) who will focus on the distress experienced by older cancer patients.

The Hartford Scholars Program provides individualized mentorship from top-tier national researchers who offer comprehensive feedback and guidance, and covers travel expenses and registration fees for several gerontology and social work conferences and professional development institutes.

The program is funded by the John A. Hartford Foundation and administered by The Gerontological Society of America as a component of the nationwide Geriatric Social Work Initiative, which seeks to expand the training of social workers in order to improve the health and well being of older people and their families.

National Program Director Barbara Berkman, DSW, PhD, works together with a national program advisory committee to select the recipients, which total 125 individuals to date. Listed below are the new scholars and their primary research topics:

Sharon Bowland  
University of Louisville  
Research Topic: Older African-American Trauma Survivors: Problems, Processes, and Attempted Resolutions

Christina Costa  
Boston College  
Research Topic: The Experience of Engagement in the Third Age: An Exploration of Productive Activities

Emily Greenfield  
Rutgers University  
Research Topic: Aging in Community, Aging with Community: Examining Older Adults’ Civic Engagement in NORC Programs

Anne Hughes  
Michigan State University  
Research Topic: Decreasing the Psychosocial Impact of Female Sexual Dysfunction through Self-Management

Dennis Kao  
University of Houston  
Research Topic: Using Geo-Ethnography to Explore the Spatial Accessibility of Health Services for Aging Minorities

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Terri Lewinson  
Georgia State University  
Research Topic: Mental and Physical Health Outcomes of Older Adults Residing in Extended Stay Hotels  

Frances Nedjat-Haiem (Hartford/VA Scholar)  
Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System  
Research Topic: Managing Distress in Elderly Cancer Patients Near the End of Life  

Avani Shah  
University of Alabama  
Research Topic: Motivational Interviewing and Self-Administered CBT to Address Depressive Symptoms and Medical Compliance in Older Cardiac Rehabilitation Patients  

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) is the nation's oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging. The principal mission of the Society — and its 5,400+ members — is to advance the study of aging and disseminate information among scientists, decision makers, and the general public. GSA’s structure also includes a policy institute, the National Academy on an Aging Society, and an educational branch, the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education.  

The John A. Hartford Foundation, founded in 1929, is a committed champion of training, research, and service system innovations that promote the health and independence of America's older adults. Through its grantmaking, the Foundation seeks to strengthen the nation's capacity to provide effective, affordable care to this rapidly increasing older population by educating health professionals and developing innovations that improve and better integrate health and supportive services.