



# **SIUE School of Nursing awarded \$1.5 million federal grant for East St. Louis Clinic**

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The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Nursing has been awarded a \$1.5 million, three-year grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). This interdisciplinary grant provides funding for the School of Nursing, along with the SIUE Schools of Pharmacy and Dental Medicine, and the SIUE Department of Social Work, to greatly expand the scope of services provided at the WeCare Clinic on the School's East St. Louis campus.



“The population we serve has a wide array of healthcare needs and often is unable to access assistance,” said Dr. Kim White, director of the WeCare Clinic and clinical assistant professor in the School of Nursing. “This grant is allowing us the perfect opportunity to meet those needs.”

The grant, entitled “Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention: Interprofessional Collaborative Practice,” expands services of the WeCare Clinic through the development of the nurse patient advocate (NPA) model. This innovative care approach ensures high quality, comprehensive and patient-centered care is provided under one roof. The WeCare Clinic is scheduled to begin offering expanded care to patients Sept. 1.

“By taking an interdisciplinary approach through the NPA model, patients will have access to primary and dental health care, pharmacy consultation and a medical social worker all in one visit,” White said.

Nurses will serve as care leaders to facilitate efficient and integrated services. With the four disciplines working side-by-side in a collaborative environment, communication among professionals and patients will be improved, ultimately leading to improved health outcomes and reduced costs. The practice also stands to enhance the education of SIUE students involved in care.

“Incorporating students in the care is an important aspect of this initiative,” said Dr. Lakesha Butler, assistant clinical professor in the School of Pharmacy. “Exposing students to an interprofessional environment where they can receive practice-based training among other healthcare disciplines is a unique opportunity for them.”

Though some hospitals utilize patient advocates to coordinate care, the NPA model for the clinic setting was developed by White, the principal investigator (PI), and an SIUE interdisciplinary team which includes: Dr. Linda Omondi (Nursing); Dr. Rhonda Comrie (Nursing); Dr. Cindy Schmidt (Nursing); Dr. Chris Durbin (Nursing); Dr. LaKesha Butler (Co-PI, School Pharmacy); Dr. Toni Rouka (Co-PI, School of Dental Medicine); Dr. Carol Wesley (Co-PI, School of Social Work); and Dr. T.R. Carr (evaluator; retired professor, Public Administration and Policy Analysis).

HRSA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary Federal agency for improving access to health care by strengthening the health care workforce, building healthy communities and achieving health equity. HRSA awards grants to organizations to improve and expand health care services for underserved people.