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MUSC, Clemson, SCRA receive grant for nutritional education pilot program study



Staff Report

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The [Medical University of South Carolina](#), [Clemson University](#) and the [S.C. Research Authority](#) have been awarded a \$300,000 grant from the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) for a nutrition and food safety education pilot program study.

Initiated through the [Nutrition Research Consortium](#), the study specifically targets older South Carolinians for participation in nutrition and food safety programs taught at meal sites around the state. A large number of older South Carolinians are classified as malnourished because of factors such as chronic disease, low income or lack of nutrition education.

This program is intended to teach skills to improve participants' health and support longer and more independent living.

"When we think of older people in the Southern states, well-to-do retirees who have moved from other parts of the country may come to mind. But our native elders, particularly in rural areas and of minority populations, don't always have the resources to access services they may need to ensure optimum health," said Angela Fraser, associate professor of food safety at Clemson.

Fraser said Clemson and MUSC investigators will be outstanding stewards and will make the best possible use of the funds.

"We'll rigorously evaluate this nutrition program so we can change what doesn't work and enhance what does, to find the best way to effect a tangible, positive change for these citizens," she said.

The study will examine the effectiveness of a series of one-hour nutrition and food safety education sessions at meal sites — senior centers, for instance — throughout the state. The sessions will focus on healthy food choices, simple and healthy food preparation practices and safe handling of food. The positive impact of the sessions will be determined by the measuring of participants' weight, blood pressure and knowledge of nutrition and food safety.

The Nutrition Research Consortium was established in 2003 as a statewide collaboration for innovative research and outreach in nutrition, health and disease prevention. The consortium is a collaboration among Clemson University, MUSC, the University of South Carolina and SCRA.

"The NRC is a testament to the power of collaboration between South Carolina entities," said Bill Mahoney, chief executive of SCRA. "As research awards have gotten more difficult to capture, NRC has remained competitive and successful in its target segments."

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