

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 3, 2009



For More Information Contact:

Jill Hirsekorn
SCRA
Office 843.760.3329
Cell 843.819.5115
jill.hirsekorn@scra.org

Clemson University, the Medical University of South Carolina and SCRA Receive USDA Nutrition Grant

*Grant Work Aims to Positively Impact Health of Elderly,
Underserved SC Adults*

CHARLESTON, SC – September 3, 2009 – Clemson University, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and SCRA have been awarded a United States Department of Agriculture grant for a Nutrition and Food Safety Education Program pilot study. Initiated through the Nutrition Research Consortium (NRC), the study specifically targets older South Carolinians for participation in nutrition and food safety programs taught at congregate 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 will teach skills that will improve participants' health and support longer and more independent living.

This study will examine the effectiveness of delivering a series of one-hour nutrition and food safety education sessions to older adults throughout South Carolina at congregate meal sites – senior centers, for instance. The sessions focus on healthy food choices, simple and healthy food preparation practices and safe food handling. The positive impact of sessions on health will be determined by measuring participants' weight, blood pressure and nutrition & food safety knowledge.

This collaborative project is led by Principal Investigator (PI) Angela Fraser, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Food Safety, Clemson University. Co-Principal Investigator is

Elaine Amella, Ph.D., GNP-CD, FAAN, Professor of Nursing, MUSC. Additional Co-Investigators include Martina Mueller, Ph.D. (MUSC); Kimberly Baker, MS, RD (Clemson); and Rhonda Matthews, MS (Clemson). Kathryn Beaver, RN, MS, of SCRA serves as project consultant to facilitate statewide networking and support program sustainability.

Dr. Fraser says that “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.” Fraser says that the Clemson and MUSC investigators will be outstanding stewards and make the best use of these USDA 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.”

The NRC was established in 2003 as a statewide collaboration to foster innovative research and outreach in nutrition, health and disease prevention. The Consortium is a collaboration among Clemson University, MUSC, the University of South Carolina (USC) and SCRA.

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

NRC researchers are working to address nutrition concerns that affect not only South Carolinians, but all Americans. Recent grants include:

- A \$2.7 million National Institute of Health (NIH) grant to Dawn Wilson at the USC, Sara Griffin at Clemson University and Brent Egan at MUSC that aims to help SC residents become more physically active, reduce risk factors for chronic disease and gain better access to health care.

- A collaborative NIH grant for \$3.4 million promotes physical activity and healthy eating in AME churches. Sara Wilcox at USC is working with food science specialist Marge Condrasky at Clemson University and Marilyn Laken at MUSC.
- In the cancer chemoprevention arena, NRC members Mike Wargovich at MUSC and Feng Chen of Clemson are studying West African medicinal plants that may be used to prevent cancer through funding received from NIH.
- Consortium members at USC, Clemson University and MUSC - along with several other partners - are involved in a nationwide study funded by the Department of Defense to examine the factors that influence overweight and obesity in children and adolescents. The intent of this research is to enable strategies resulting in fewer children and adults plagued with diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and other debilitating conditions that stem from obesity.

Among the many benefits the Consortium offers its members are collaboration efforts with other academic and government institutions, grant and budget writing support, and project management support. The NRC seeks to develop and support nutrition research teams to help stimulate collaboration and increase the rate of grant application submissions. The Consortium has sponsored four annual Nutrition Research Summits since 2003, bringing together researchers throughout South Carolina and the nation.

###

[About the Nutrition Research Consortium](#)

In 2003, Clemson University, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), the University of South Carolina (USC), and SCRA® launched the Nutrition Research Consortium. This innovative program – a first in the State—has the potential to create a crucial mass and superior research capacity that will ultimately result in a healthier South Carolina. Today, more than 50 of the state’s nutrition scientists are participating in Consortium research and outreach activities.

About SCRA

SCRA is a global leader in applied research and commercialization services with offices in South Carolina, Ohio and near McLean, Virginia. SCRA collaborates to advance technology, providing technology-based solutions with assured outcomes to industry and government, with the help of research universities in SC, the US and around the world.