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## **GEROCHAMP**

The purpose of the online Geriatrics curriculum is to provide core knowledge for medicine, nursing, psychology, social work, physical therapy and other multidisciplinary professionals. Revolving around the Age Friendly Framework of Geriatric 4Ms and 26 AAMC competencies in Geriatrics, this curriculum offers micro-lecture format with pre/post testing and provides UND-accredited Digital Badge for successful completers.



## **OVERVIEW OF DAKOTA GERIATRICS**

The Dakota Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) continues with another round of funding from HRSA. As you will read in this newsletter the Dakota GWEP is an educational innovator. We test new ideas and ways to improve Geriatrics knowledge amongst the healthcare workforce. Our goal is to optimize older adult healthcare. Why do we need better Geriatrics education? Research finds that evidence - based Geriatrics healthcare is not always practiced. Furthermore, unsettling trends such as increasing fall rates indicate that we need to do a better job of keeping older adults safe. The Dakota GWEP provides a rich menu of educational options ranging from a serious game to online curriculum that provides learner - centric opportunities to become an expert in older adult healthcare. We encourage you to explore our educational platforms and participate in our social media offerings to become a Gero Champion !

## **HEALTH AMBASSADOR TEAMS FOR SENIORS (HATS)**

Dakota Geriatrics' Interprofessional Community Service-Learning program, called Health Ambassadors Teams for Seniors (HATS), seeks to introduce students to the full spectrum of older adult health status and wellness promotion. We recruit multidisciplinary students to participate either through volunteer service or through formal course work created by GWEP IPE faculty to perform modified annual wellness exams on older adults via in-person or telehealth delivery.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Our Age- and Dementia- Friendly social media platforms are used to spread awareness of our program and Geriatric Knowledge. Geriatric clinical pearls are coupled with imagery to provide recurring delivery of evidence-based best practices in older adult healthcare. Please, help us grow our audience by following and reposting our posts.

 [Like Us on Facebook @DakotaGeriatrics](#)

 [Follow us on LinkedIn @DakotaGeriatrics](#)

## LONG TERM CARE CURRICULUM

Microlearning modules on Age-Friendly Healthcare, Quality Improvement, Resiliency, and Infection Control are delivered to trainees weekly via text messaging. We currently are looking to expand partnership with ND and SD nursing homes, especially those that want their own Learning Management system.



[Link](#)

## GERIATRIC GAME

An interactive game on older adult population health for healthcare trainees and professionals. Learners discover how routine application of the Geriatric 4Ms optimizes population health of older adults. Currently in the beta testing phase, we're asking faculty to trial the game and provide feedback. [Link](#)



[Link](#)

## PROJECT ECHO

UND Geriatrics along with Center for Rural Health presents monthly telementoring events through two projects under ECHO. Geriatrics ECHO covers discussion topics under the Geriatric 5Ms of What Matters Most, Medications, Mentation, Mobility and Multicomplexity while IPE ECHO discusses various aspects of Interprofessional education and team-based older adult care. Content experts present for 20 to 30 minutes about a specific topic coupled with a case report. This presentation followed an open question and answer period. These CME events bring together an audience of multi-disciplinary professionals and trainees.



[Link](#)

## GERIATRIC RURAL CLINICAL ROTATIONS

We are working on identifying the best methodology to incorporate Geriatric content into the UND and USD rural clinical rotations' programs, ROME and FARM, and identifying TTOUR (Tribal, Tribal Organization, Underserved and Rural) training sites. We are working on exploring ways to embed micro lectures on Geriatrics best practices into the curriculum.

## ANNUAL SYMPOSIA

1. **Age Friendly Healthcare in American Indian Elders:** This event includes national and regional experts in care of older adults from American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) communities. Half day live virtual CME event for 2025 is planned for February 28, 2025.

2. **Navigating Dual Diagnosis of Mental Health in People Living with Dementia.** In partnership with Alzheimer's Association, this half day CME event will include presentations and a panel discussion on behavior health and dementia dual diagnosis on March 27, 2025.

3. **6th Annual Dementia Friendly Healthcare and Community Symposium** bring national experts in assessment and management of dementia for a full-day live virtual event (May 2025)



[Link](#)



[Link](#)

REGISTRATION WILL BE AVAILABLE  
CLOSER TO DATE

## A LETTER FROM THE PROJECT DIRECTOR

Donald Jurivich, DO

As the author C.S. Lewis once said, “You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.” In a similar sense, our next phase of the Dakota GWEP strives to bring better older adult healthcare to tribal, rural, and underserved communities. The GWEP has an ambitious agenda but its mission can be described in three objectives: create partnerships, educate about Geriatrics, and promote clinical transformation into Age-Friendly Health Care.

Why do we need to focus on improving older adult health care? Several studies show that healthcare providers still attribute symptoms of disease to old age. Memory loss is not a normal part of aging. Pain is not a normal part of aging. Low mood and fatigue are not a normal part of aging. Many other examples exist of both older adults and providers believing that symptoms are just part of usual aging. “What do you expect? You aren’t getting any younger,” is the often-used retort. This response is ageism.

More contemporary thoughts about aging are based on new research that shows we can delay or even reverse some aging processes. Until this research gets translated into clinical practice, we focus on the Geriatric 4Ms as part of health promotion to prevent disability in later life. For example, focusing on the 4M of What Matters Most to the Older Adult helps sharpen our efforts in healthcare to avoid things like prescribing unsafe medications that might interfere with achieving What Matters Most. Similarly, we examine how the 4M of “Mobility” can be addressed with older adults to prevent falls and improve physical and cognitive functioning. Many people and providers do not understand that one of the keys to preventing dementia is a robust physical activity program. Sedentariness also accelerates aging. Thus, the job of the GWEP is to better inform providers and the public about anti-aging prescriptions.

Many of the original GWEP educational programs and products continue through this next phase of GWEP funding. Our signature online curriculum called Gero Champ offers digital badging to certify your knowledge and expertise in Geriatrics and soon it will offer CME credits. Telementoring continues with the ECHO program, a monthly Zoom session on various Geriatric topics. Community service learning for our healthcare students continues through in-person and telehealth sessions that now involve rural sites and soon to include tribal locations. If you haven’t heard, we launched our serious game on Age-Friendly Health Care, so if you have a chance to play it, go to [www.GeriAct.com](http://www.GeriAct.com). Similarly, please join our social media handles Age-friendly on Facebook, Instagram, X, Threads and Bluesky.

In addition to our established Geriatric education products, the GWEP is working with the USD and UND Departments of Family Medicine to augment their rural rotations with Geriatric and Interprofessional content. We wish to expand our game with rural, indigenous, and health equity modules. We are creating an internship for CNAs and nurses in long-term care, and we are expanding the nursing curriculum in long-term care to help address the national shortage of nurses in this setting.

An ongoing commitment of the GWEP is to help mentor clinics and nursing homes with the adoption of Age-Friendly Health Care. This is a national movement fostered by IHI to optimize older adult health care by utilizing the Geriatric 4Ms: What Matters Most, Mobility, Medications, and Mentation. CMS will soon require health systems to apply the Geriatric 4Ms as part of their everyday operations, so we look forward to helping them achieve this health system change, particularly with our rural and tribal partners.

In closing, I am reminded of our mission to create reciprocal partnerships with academia, health care, and the community. So, in this vein, I invite you to consider your engagement with the GWEP and express your interests and thoughts about how we can better train the healthcare workforce in Geriatrics and optimize healthcare through the Age Friendly framework.