Welcome Dr. Wendel-Hummell: CRADO’s New Assistant Director

Dr. Carrie Wendel-Hummell has been with CRADO for five years and is experienced in managing major research projects. Carrie is now our Assistant Director. She received her Ph.D. in May 2015, with Honors. Her field is Medical Sociology. Carrie’s dissertation on mental health received national and international attention.

Carrie brings a wealth of hands-on experience to her new role and we are delighted to have her stepping into this position.

KU Leadership in Research Symposium Scheduled November 2015

The Work Group on Community Living (WGCL) is sponsoring the KU Leadership in Research Symposium: Experience of Aging with Long-term Disabilities: Opportunities to Further Research. The goal of the event is to bring together researchers, advocates, invited guests, and thought-leaders in the disability and aging fields to inform and sustain the vision of full participation for people aging with a disability.

WGCL is a collaborative research initiative that draws on the combined expertise of researchers at the University of Kansas who have built four specialized programs to benefit people with disabilities and older adults. These programs are: The Center for Research on Aging and Disability Options (CRADO), the Institute for Health and Disability Policy (IHDP), the Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities (KUCDD), and the Research and Training Center on Independent Living (RTC/IL).

The mission of WGCL is to develop and study innovations related to needs across the lifespan of people who have lifelong or early onset disabilities. The overall aim is to maximize their wellbeing and independence.

The keynote speaker will be Kathy Greenlee, an alumna of KU and the KU School of Law. Secretary Greenlee directs the Administration for Community Living, United States Department of Health and Human Services.

The Symposium will serve as the foundation for an on-going collaboration to advance research and practice to support community living.

Director’s Corner

A message from Dr. Rosemary Chapin, Founding Director of CRADO

Our Center has a new name and logo. The former Office of Aging and Long Term Care (OALTC) is now the Center for Research on Aging and Disability Options (CRADO). The mission of CRADO is to develop and evaluate essential supports and services designed to maximize the independence and wellbeing of older adults and people with disabilities. We engage in community-driven, strength-based research to help guide policy and practice focused on key health and social service transitions. Educating the next generation of leaders in our field is integral to our mission. The name change reflects new partnerships and emphasis on people aging with long-term disabilities. Our logo reflects our expanded mission and highlights our goal of expanding options for older adults and people with long term disabilities.
CRADO Goes Global

Dr. Rosemary Chapin, CRADO Director, and Alicia Sellon, Graduate Research Assistant, attended the 44th Annual British Society of Gerontology Conference in Newcastle England in July 2015. Alicia presented their paper Increasing Opportunities for Older Adults to Engage in Volunteerism: A Focus on Strengths. Volunteering is a powerful mechanism for decreasing depression and improving quality of life. However, older adults with less wealth and education and those from racial/ethnic minority groups are less likely to be asked to engage in volunteer activities and may miss out on these benefits. New approaches are needed to increase volunteer opportunities for all interested older adults.

The Strengths Perspective offers a framework for researchers and practitioners to explore the micro and mezzo level factors that need to be addressed to remove barriers to participation in volunteer activities. Presentations on this topic are part of CRADO’s initiatives to increase understanding of how the Strengths Perspective can be used to guide researchers and practitioners as they seek to understand how to engage all interested older adults and people with disabilities in volunteerism.

Dr. Chapin briefs Natalie Turner, Senior Policy Advisor, International Affairs AARP, on her research in Scotland, Ireland, and England focusing on public long term care policy. They discussed how European innovations designed to actively engage older men and people with dementia in the community can be adapted for use in the United States. Dr. Chapin is a member of the AARP National Policy Council and Natalie Turner was integral in creating opportunities for Dr. Chapin to interview public policy experts in Europe.

The 2015 Alzheimer’s Association International Conference provided a venue for planning future research into the unique needs of people with lifelong disabilities who develop Alzheimer’s disease. Dr. Chapin is pictured here discussing potential collaborative research with Dr. David Johnson, an expert on the link between healthy aging and dementia.
CRADO Student Spotlight

- Name: Hye Jin Kim
- Where she calls home: South Korea
- Position at CRADO: Graduate Research Assistant
- Where she is in the program: 5th Semester of the Ph.D. program
- Major interests: Poverty and health issues among older adults. She is currently focusing on health of grandparents and economic well-being.
- Biggest strength: She has had unique experience in working with the Korean National Pension Service
- Future goals: She would like to work in a research agency that develops policies and programs for older adults. She would also enjoy teaching.

Medicaid Functional Eligibility Instrument Project

The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) has contracted with CRADO to develop a Medicaid Functional Eligibility Instrument (MFEI). The MFEI will be used to determine eligibility and support needs for Medicaid Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) for customers who have physical disabilities (PD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), or who are frail elders (FE). The nursing home population will also be included. CRADO is partnering with the Research and Training Center on Independent Living (RTC/IL) and staff from the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) to complete this project.

Focus groups were held around the state at the beginning of the project to gather community input and the MFEI Advisory Workgroup provides ongoing feedback and support. A draft MFEI has been developed and is currently being pilot tested in different regions of the state. Revisions are being made as needed. Our team will also provide in-depth training to Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) assessors statewide on the final MFEI.

This work has recently been expanded to develop an instrument to determine the need for LTSS for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). CRADO is continuing to partner with RTCI/IL and KUMC. The MFEI-I/DD will be used to determine eligibility for I/DD services, including intermediate care facilities (ICF-I/DD) and home and community based services (HCBS-I/DD) programs.

Focus groups will be conducted and an Advisory Workgroup has been convened. Upon selection of a base assessment instrument, the MFEI-I/DD will be developed and tested throughout the state.

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