

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 5, 2016

### **University of Southern Indiana**

**Editor's Note:** This release and downloadable photo can also be found on our [website](#). Dr. Ann White, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions, is available for media interviews. Please contact Ben Luttrull, media relations specialist, at (812) 461-5259 to schedule availability with White.

## **USI College of Nursing and Health Professions garners \$2 million in grants \$1.7 million earmarked for mental health initiatives**

The University of Southern Indiana's College of Nursing and Health Professions has landed more than \$2 million in competitive federal funding that will ultimately improve health care delivery in rural and underserved areas, especially in the area of mental health services. The announcement comes on the heels of a recently released assessment identifying behavioral/mental health as a priority for the region.

USI has received two new grants from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: a \$1.7 million grant to implement the Primary Care/Mental Health Integrated (PCMHI) Model and a \$350,000 grant to fund a traineeship program for USI students pursuing advanced degrees in nursing.

The \$1.7 million grant will be implemented over three years and will be used to integrate primary care and mental health services in southwestern Indiana, southeastern Illinois and northern Kentucky. Only 17 of these grants were awarded in the United States during the current grant cycle.

"The timing couldn't be better, because the same week we learned of this grant, local health care leaders announced the results of the 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment, identifying behavioral/mental health as one of four priority areas in both Vanderburgh and Warrick counties," said Dr. Ann White, dean of USI's College of Nursing and Health Professions. "It will take collaboration in our community to move the needle on mental health outcomes, so USI is pleased to contribute to this initiative."

White said the project will address the critical need for high-quality, integrated primary care/mental health practitioners in the region. "This model will incorporate graduate-level nurse practitioner students, graduate-level social work students and a registered pharmacist working in interprofessional practice teams," she said. "Team members will collaborate within the model through interventions and preventive care planning in various care settings, with the goal of increasing the number of primary care sites that provide mental health care onsite or by referral."

An additional HRSA grant will fund the USI Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship Program, which will assist up to 60 students in their final year of the Masters of Science in Nursing and Post-Masters Certificate programs to graduate on time with less debt by providing scholarships for tuition, fees and books. "This program will target three nurse practitioner specialties: Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner," said Dr.

Mellisa Hall, chair of USI's graduate nursing program. "Priority will be given to diverse students who plan to work in rural and underserved areas, because the goal of this traineeship program is to increase the number of advanced practice nurses for these communities." She said by providing financial support to these students, they can better concentrate on their studies and complete the required clinical hours for on-time degree completion.

HRSA is the primary federal agency for improving health and achieving health equity through access to quality services, a skilled health workforce and innovative programs. HRSA's programs provide health care to people who are geographically isolated, economically or medically vulnerable.

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*Founded in 1965, the University of Southern Indiana enrolls more than 10,000 dual credit, undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students in more than 80 majors. A public higher education institution, located on a beautiful 1,400-acre campus in Evansville, Indiana, USI offers programs through the College of Liberal Arts, Romain College of Business, College of Nursing and Health Professions and the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education. USI is a Carnegie Foundation Community Engaged University and offers continuing education and special programs to more than 15,000 participants annually through Outreach and Engagement. USI is online at [www.usi.edu](http://www.usi.edu).*

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