

THE TRIBUNE

AUGUST 2024

Measuring Real-World Impacts Rural CTSA Evaluators Using Novel Tool in Collaborative Project



Jessica Presley, MPP (left), with members of her TRI evaluation team, Shani Worrell, Ed.D., and Alex Jauregui-Dusseau, DH.Sc.

A gathering of eight rural-state Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) institutions in October 2023 turned out to be especially fruitful for Jessica Presley, MPP, TRI senior director of evaluation, and her counterparts.

In fact, the connections she made at the Consortium of Rural States (CORES) annual meeting resulted in a significant collaborative project that will be presented at the annual meeting of the American Evaluation Association (AEA) on Oct. 26 in Portland, Ore.

In addition to UAMS, CORES members are the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center, University of Kansas, University of Kentucky, University of Utah Health, University of Iowa, Pennsylvania State University and Dartmouth College.

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Dear Colleagues,

Evaluation is an important part of every CTSA program as it provides a system for tracking our accomplishments and responding to feedback when changes are needed to improve our program. In this month's TRIBUNE, we share the accomplishments of TRI's evaluation team. TRI's senior director of Evaluation, Jessica

Presley, MPP, and her team have been invited to present at the American Evaluation Association's (AEA) annual meeting. This honor stems from a significant collaboration that Jessica and her counterparts from the Consortium of Rural States (CORES) initiated during the consortium's annual meeting last fall.

Jessica's work centers on leveraging the Translational Science Benefits Model (TSBM), a tool designed to capture the real-world impacts of research, particularly in rural communities. Her team's efforts to apply the TSBM across nearly two dozen TRI programs will be instrumental in highlighting the broader societal impacts of TRI-supported research.

The AEA presentation marks the completion of the first phase of the CORES project, a collaborative endeavor that is identifying trends and gaps in research impacts within rural communities. This work showcases our commitment to rural health and places TRI at the forefront of evaluation practices for other CTSA programs across the US.

Please join me in congratulating Jessica and her team for their outstanding contributions. Their work continues to elevate TRI's mission and impact.

Sincerely,

Laura James, M.D.
Director, TRI
Associate Vice Chancellor for Clinical
and Translational Research, UAMS

Measuring Real-World Impacts (continued from page 1)

Presley and other CORES evaluators will co-present: “Rural Health Impacts: Leveraging the Translational Science Benefits Model (TSBM) to Capture Larger Research Consortium Trends.” She will be joined at the meeting by TRI colleagues Alex Jauregui-Dusseau, DH.Sc., and Shani Worrell, Ed.D.

A NEW MODEL

The TSBM was developed in 2017 by Douglas A. Luke, Ph.D., at Washington University in St. Louis as a tool for measuring and showcasing the real-world impacts of research. The tool helps researchers and funding agencies assess the benefits of research beyond scientific presentations and manuscripts. By tracking societal benefits, the TSBM helps ensure that research expands beyond knowledge generation to societal impacts. The TSBM model has been widely adopted by evaluators across the CTSA consortium, including by Presley in her team’s evaluation of TRI.

The AEA presentation represents the completion of the first phase of the CORES project.

“We have compiled translational research activities that impact rural communities from our CORES institutions and coded them as a potential or realized clinical, community, economic, or policy impact according to the primary TSBM domains,” Presley said. “Our goal is to identify any common trends or gaps in TSBM impacts in our rural communities to either inform future research in our rural communities or adapt the TSBM model to ensure and improve alignment with rural communities to evaluate impact.”

EVALUATION CHALLENGES

For TRI’s evaluation, Presley’s team is applying the TSBM approach to retrospectively analyze projects from past CTSA award cycles.

“Moving forward, we are asking TRI’s K12 and T32 trainees to identify the potential TSBM impacts their research could produce,” she said. “Identifying impacts early in the research process will allow researchers to be more intentional in working towards larger societal impacts. This will also allow evaluators to actively track indicators of impact throughout the research process.”

With more than 10 years of experience as a program evaluator, Presley said her three years as TRI’s senior director of evaluation have presented exciting new challenges that should benefit from collaboration with other rural-state CTSA evaluators.

In her team’s evaluation of nearly two dozen TRI programs and initiatives, her work includes determining how effective they are at:

- Preparing a diverse group of early career researchers to become independently funded researchers, implementation scientists, entrepreneurs and mentors
- Establishing and expanding community-based research that involves partnerships between UAMS-affiliated faculty and community-based organizations
- Expanding research and programs that benefit the health of rural populations

“The TRI’s scope is expansive and wide-ranging, so evaluation of the TRI is multi-faceted and can be challenging,” Presley said.

INSPIRED COLLABORATION

Her fellow CTSA evaluators are in the same boat, which has inspired a strong spirit of collaboration.

“We are coming together and learning from each other and collaborating on approaches to address the unique challenges rural-state CTSA’s face,” said Presley, who is pursuing a PhD in interdisciplinary evaluation.

The evaluators have set up a repository for sharing numerous resources, including some of the survey instruments they are using.

Presley noted that TRI’s External Advisory Board last year praised TRI’s rural research efforts but wanted to know how TRI was measuring impact in rural communities. She learned that TRI wasn’t the only CTSA struggling with the question.

“We realized that it’s been a challenge for all of us as evaluators,” she said.

In response, the CORES evaluators began their collaborative TSBM project, which first maps all of the activities that the individual institutions are doing within rural populations and will determine the health and social benefits that resulted from their projects.

“We’re comparing and contrasting and doing a deep dive to see what conclusions we can draw from our rural research efforts,” Presley said. “For example, can we develop some best practices based on what we learn to help us broaden impact within our rural communities?”



Enhancing the impact of rural research is a priority for CORES evaluators.



Research Expo 2024 and New Research Faculty Orientation Sept. 12!

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Attention all researchers and research staff: Please join us Thursday afternoon, Sept. 12 for Research Expo 2024 and the UAMS Research & Innovation New Faculty Orientation and at the Reynolds Institute on Aging Building, first floor.

The informative, fun afternoon begins at 2:30 p.m. with the New Faculty Orientation in the Jo Ellen Ford Auditorium, followed by Research Expo 2024 from 4 - 6 p.m. The event is sponsored by TRI and UAMS Research & Innovation.

Research Expo 2024 will include more than 40 vendor tables with information about research support resources and services from across UAMS, Arkansas Children's Research Institute and Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System.

New faculty are encouraged to attend the orientation to gain insights into the breadth of resources available in the Division of Research & Innovation and TRI. Seasoned faculty and research staff are also welcome to attend. The orientation will include brief overviews of the services offered by the Division of Research & Innovation and TRI, and a Q&A session.

Join your colleagues for this special two-part event! Drop by and enjoy the food and beverages and presentation of awards to TRI Summer Writing Challenge winners. You'll leave with helpful new contacts and information you need to succeed!

Please complete this brief registration form or use the QR code to let us know you are coming to the Research Expo.

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TRI Study of the Month

Principal Investigator: Geoffrey Muller, M.D., assistant professor, UAMS College of Medicine, Department of Anesthesiology; and director for the Acute Pain Service.

Summary: A multicenter clinical trial comparing two ways to provide anesthesia for surgery, called THRIVE: Trajectories of Recovery after Intravenous Propofol Versus Inhaled Volatile Anesthesia.

Significance: The research team is looking at how well patients receiving total intravenous anesthesia, or TIVA, recover from surgery compared to patients receiving inhaled volatile anesthesia, or INVA. Results may help patients and their doctors select the most appropriate type of general anesthesia for surgery in the future.

TRI Services: Medicare coverage analysis, study budget development, regulatory and nurse/clinical coordinator support, administration of Clinical Trial Management System, and post-award financial management.

Sponsor: Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute



Geoffrey Muller, M.D., meets with TRI's Gwendolyn Cobbs, B.S.N., RN, lead study coordinator, to discuss the clinical trial.

Register Now for Sept. 10 Advancing Arkansas Lifespan Research Conference



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Please join us for the second annual Advancing Arkansas Lifespan Research Conference on Tuesday, **Sept. 10, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.** at the UAMS Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging building.

Our keynote speaker is Neal Halfon, M.D., MPH. He is the founding director of the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities and a nationally recognized expert in life-course research.

All are invited to this free conference to advance lifespan research by Arkansas researchers through sharing of inspiring avenues of investigation and facilitation of new collaborations. Additionally, the conference includes nine other speakers and will feature opportunities for networking and active discussion between attendees and presenters.

Lifespan research is advocated by the NIH and its National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences to strategically promote health and combat diseases as they progress across the lifespan.

The conference is a collaboration between TRI, Arkansas Children's Research Institute, and the College of Medicine Lifespan Creativity Hub.

Register here or use the QR code.

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