



THE INSTITUTE FOR  
**RURAL HEALTH**



**BIENNIAL REPORT**  
**2014-2016**



## Message from the Director



The Institute for Rural Health (IRH) continues to serve the rural communities of South Central Kentucky with a mission-focused approach: *To steward a high quality of life for rural populations and underserved areas by engaging students and faculty in service learning and research, providing clinical services, and serving as a global resource for improving health in rural communities.*

**Engaging our Students and Faculty in Service-learning and Research:** Over the past two years, we have seen immense growth in the IRH. Our partnerships, external funding, student engagement

hours, and medical and dental procedures have increased exponentially. We have also added more program partners to include students from the Department of Public Health's Environmental and Occupational Health graduate program, as well as pre-medicine students from the Department of Biology.

**Providing Clinical Services:** Our students have had great exposure to the rural community through the use of the Mobile Dental Unit and Mobile Health and Wellness Unit. These units provide an avenue for our students to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills from the classroom into practice by providing preventative services or health education in our region. Over the past two years, our student engagement hours have increased over 56% and our students have performed 939 more procedures than performed during the 2012-2014 period.

**Serving as a Global Resource:** This growth comes in large part to the 47% increase in external funding we have received since 2014. These generous contributions allow us the opportunity to expand the services and research at the IRH. The number of publications and presentations have increased from previous years.

We would like to thank Dr. Neale Chumbler, Dean of the WKU College of Health and Human Services (CHHS), the students, and academic units within CHHS, the WKU Foundation staff, grantors, donors and our community partners for their continued support. We look forward to another year of proudly serving our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,  
Matt Hunt, Ed.D.  
Director

## MISSION STATEMENT

*To steward a high quality of life for rural populations and underserved areas by engaging students and faculty in service learning and research, providing clinical services, and serving as a global resource for improving health in rural communities.*

## RURAL AMERICA...

- 72% OF UNITED STATES' LAND AREA BELONGS TO RURAL COUNTIES\*
- 15% OF U.S. POPULATION LIVE IN RURAL COUNTIES\*

*\*Reference: U.S. Department of Agriculture*

WKU Institute for Rural Health (IRH), part of the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS), was created to identify rural health and human services needs and to facilitate collaborative arrangements engaging WKU students and faculty and community agencies in addressing these needs.

The IRH plays a major role in assisting CHHS in maintaining the focus of student engagement and community service.

## Our goals...

**Facilitate in the education of future health professionals** by engaging WKU students in service learning and multi-disciplinary activities within a diverse patient population



**Improve the health and wellness status of residents of WKU's regional service area** by providing health screenings, vaccinations, and oral health services at selected locations



*The IRH Mobile Health Unit offers valuable health screenings for clients who reside in rural communities. While working in collaboration with the nurse for the Mobile Health Unit, faculty members are able to provide an environment where students assist in delivering care to vulnerable populations within the community.*

-Chandra Ellis-Griffith, MSN, RN | Instructor, WKU School of Nursing



# Rural Service Data

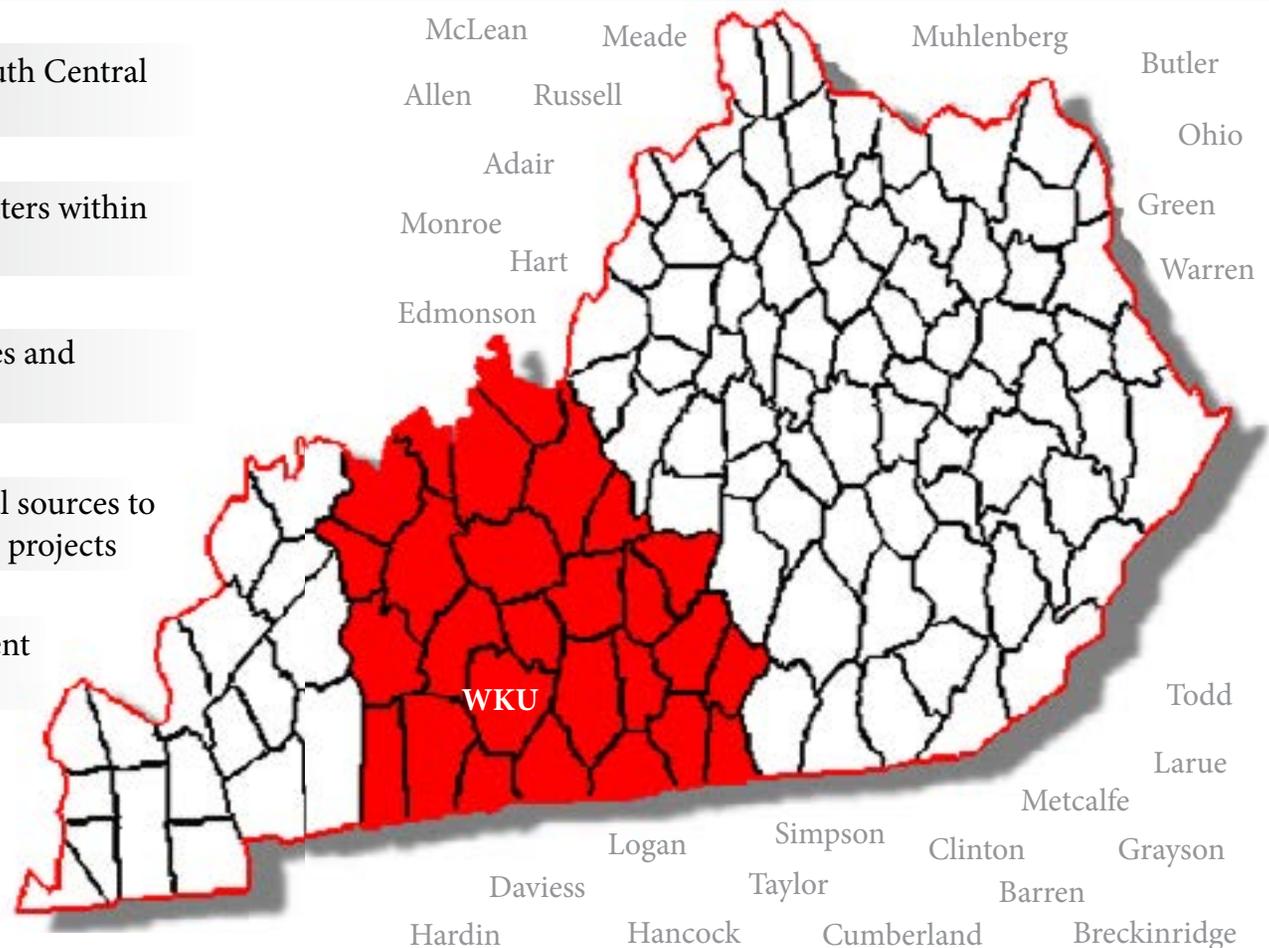
# 2014-2016

- Service area includes **27** counties in South Central Kentucky
- Experienced over **8,700** patient encounters within these rural counties
- Performed over **4,900** dental procedures and **11,500** medical procedures
- Generated over **\$350,000** from external sources to help fund service-learning and research projects
- Recorded over **8,000** student engagement hours

## SERVICES PROVIDED...

**Dental:** Kindergarten Screenings, Exams, Varnish Treatments, Cleanings, Restorations, Extractions, Sealants, Health Promotion

**Medical:** Influenza Vaccinations, Hemoglobin A1C, Blood Pressure Screenings, Cholesterol Screenings, Blood Glucose Screenings, BMI, Bone Density Screenings, Health Promotion



*\*IRH mobile clinical units also serve patients in Christian, Fayette, Jefferson, McCreary, Pike and Wayne counties.*

# Student Engagement

The Success of the IRH is a point of pride for CHHS and WKU. Continued success of the IRH means that more WKU students have experienced real fieldwork and more members of our rural communities have received both health care and health education, essential components and cornerstones of our mission. We believe that students learn from every patient, so the more patients that the IRH is able to encounter and treat, the more knowledge and real-world experiences the students of the CHHS receive as part of their education.

In the past two years, our students and staff have engaged in over 8,100 hours of service for our clients, experienced over 8,700 patient encounters, and completed over 16,000 procedures.

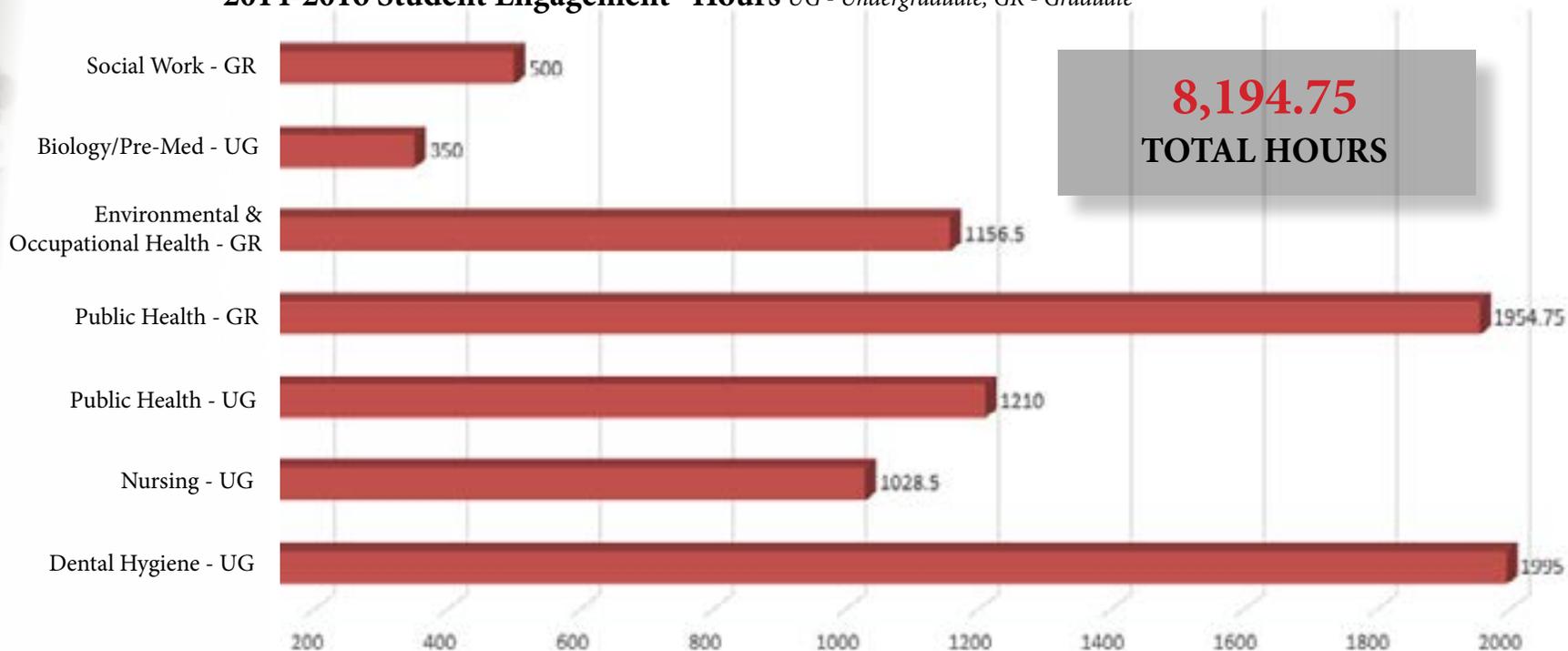
*The dietetic interns have broadened their supervised practice experiences by working with the IRH. They are working with populations they have had minimal contact with prior to this point in their education. The hands on learning aspect provides invaluable real life experiences.*

- Jane H. Simmons, MS, RDN, LD, Dietetic Internship Director



	Hours	Patient Encounters	Procedures
2012-2014	5,240	8,015	15,500
2014-2016	8,194	8,727	16,439

**2014-2016 Student Engagement Hours** UG - Undergraduate, GR - Graduate



# STUDENT TESTIMONIALS



**Ayodeji Joshua Omosule, MD**  
Master of Health Administration Program

*The greatest need of the rural community as far as I am concerned, is the lack of easy access to healthcare providers. Particularly counselling services for nutrition and food choices.*

Ayodeji works as a Graduate Research Assistant at the IRH, assisting with data collection, data management, and analyzing IRH data for services offered through the Mobile Dental Unit and Mobile Health Unit. After graduation, Ayodeji plans to start his medical residency training, using his health administrative knowledge, with the hope to make "healthcare easier."



**Jessica Stalings**  
Master of Public Health graduate, May 2016

*The greatest need in the rural community is preventative services. Many individuals in rural areas, especially in the state of Kentucky, have issues with access to health care, as well as transportation to receive health services.*

Jessica served as a health educator for the IRH, reviewing and auditing existing health education materials, and assisting with data management. She was also involved in the research, creation and delivery of various health education presentations and materials throughout the state of KY. Jessica currently serves as Community Health Coordinator for a critical access hospital in a rural community based out of Washington state.



**Naomi Crisp**  
B.S. Dental Hygiene graduate, May 2016

*The greatest need of the rural community is education. You can do so much with education, even if you don't have a lot of money.*

Naomi served with the IRH, working in the Mobile Dental Unit. She traveled to schools around KY, offering dental hygiene services to school-aged children; cleaning teeth and administering sealants. Naomi also provided education on proper hygiene care to the children, while gathering data for research. Since graduation, Naomi has been working as a full-time Dental Hygienist in a private practice.



**Megan Rogers**  
Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduate, May 2016

*The greatest need in the rural community is being able to have the out of pocket funds for routine health care.*

Megan served with the IRH as part of clinical rotation for her Community Health nursing class, working in the Mobile Health Unit to perform bone density tests, flu vaccinations, blood glucose screenings, and cholesterol screenings. Megan plans to continue her service in the rural community thru volunteer work. "It is important to come together as a community and help those who don't have access to healthcare."



**Elizabeth "Liz" Bynum**  
Nutrition & Dietetics graduate, May 2016

*The greatest need of the rural community is education and awareness.*

Liz served with the IRH by assisting the staff at the LifeSkills center in Glasgow, KY. Liz explained the cholesterol levels to the clients they served. Her time working with the IRH served as an eye opening experience. "They say the best medicine is prevention, and I believe that wholeheartedly. The first step is increasing public knowledge and awareness, and I believe this is being achieved through public health initiatives such as WKU's IRH."



**Bret Parks**  
Master of Social Work graduate, May 2016

*The greatest need of the rural community is access to services. Many individuals in underserved communities do not receive the health care services they need and deserve.*

Bret was able to participate in several projects with the IRH over the course of one academic year, completing 500 hours of service to fulfill his master's in social work curriculum internship requirement. During his time with the IRH, Bret worked with the Anabaptist communities where he was able to learn the cultures of this community group, and assist in educational sessions. Bret also assisted the IRH with data management and grant funding.

*The IRH would like to thank WKU faculty, staff, and students for collaborating and leading research efforts over the past two years.*

- 2014-2016 Publications: 3
- 2014-2016 Presentations: 4
- 2014-2016 Poster Presentations: 15
- 2014-2016 Poster Presentations with Student Involvement: 10

## Message from the Dean



The Western Kentucky University (WKU) College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) established the Institute for Rural Health (IRH) to serve a great need among our rural communities in South Central Kentucky. The IRH is a vital part to CHHS, to WKU, and to our surrounding communities; serving as a health ambassador through demonstrated outreach, service and applied research.

Preventative care and patient education are two of the most important factors that can influence the well-being of our communities. Through the IRH, and our Mobile Dental and Mobile Health Units,

our students and staff are able to tailor the delivery of patient-centered education and service learning in underserved rural regions of South Central Kentucky. Serving as a clinical rotation for the Nursing and Dental Hygiene programs, the IRH has performed over 16,400 medical and dental procedures since 2014.

The IRH also allows internship, research and service opportunities for students in the following departments: Biology, Family and Consumer Sciences, Public Health, and Social Work. Over the past two years, our students serving with the IRH, were provided with over 8,000 hours of real-world experiences in a rural setting.

In addition to providing many opportunities for students, the IRH also provides faculty and staff within the college and the university multiple opportunities for applied research. Since 2014, the IRH has generated over \$350,000 from external sources to help fund applied research programs and interventions that have improved patient care outcomes.

I encourage you to consider a partnership with the CHHS and the IRH. Your gift can help expand the services and outreach of the IRH. The future for the IRH and the health of our rural communities is bright!

Warm Regards,

Neale R. Chumbler, Ph.D.  
Dean, College of Health and Human Services

## 3 easy ways to GIVE...



**1 ONLINE**  
[www.alumni.wku.edu/irh](http://www.alumni.wku.edu/irh)

**2 CALL**  
1-888-WKU-ALUM  
(958-2586)

**3 MAIL**  
this card to the  
IRH

**Yes!** Start my gift to help expand the services and outreach of the Institute for Rural Health.

**My gift is eligible to be matched by my employer**  
*Please include your company's matching gift form - [www.matchinggifts.com/wku](http://www.matchinggifts.com/wku)*

\$100  Pay in full  
 \$250  Pay in full  
 \$500  Pay in full  
 \$1,000  Pay in full

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Pay in full  
 Installments

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per  Month\*  Year  
for \_\_\_\_\_ year(s)\*

\*Automatic Credit/Debit/EFT only

### INSTALLMENT OPTIONS

\$200 year/5 years  \$17 month/5 years\*

**Method of Payment** *Anytime online at [www.alumni.wku.edu/irh](http://www.alumni.wku.edu/irh)*

**Check (payable to WKU Foundation)**  **Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)**  
**Beginning date:** \_\_\_ / 15 / \_\_\_  
 **Credit Card/Debit Card** *(Fill in card information)* Please include voided check. Withdrawals made on 15th of each month)

Card Type \_\_\_\_\_ V-Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME \_\_\_\_\_ GRAD YEAR \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIPCODE \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_



## **THE INSTITUTE FOR RURAL HEALTH**

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