

## **Engaging Rural Communities to Identify and Address Gaps and Barriers in Healthcare for Dementia**

Our PCORI Pipeline to Proposal (P2P) findings identified the expressed needs of rural Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) individuals and caregivers in Montana. Town hall participants reported that healthcare providers were reluctant to identify cognitive impairment and diagnose ADRD, and when they did diagnose or refer to a specialist, very little was offered in the way of resource support, best care practices, or long-term planning. Participants wanted someone to communicate regularly with - someone who would insure that follow-through takes place and needs are met. Effectively implementing the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit (AWV) and Care Planning benefits in healthcare organizations is an important step toward addressing the concerns of patients with ADRD and their caregivers and assuring that the care they receive will meet their needs. For this to occur, all key stakeholders - patients, families and healthcare providers and organizations - must become knowledgeable collaborators, actively involved in identifying gaps and barriers in current dementia care, finding and prioritizing solutions, and engaged in patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR).

This project proposes to develop a collaborative relationship between all key stakeholders to look at creative ways to improve early dementia detection and ways to provide the necessary community resources for individuals with dementia and their caregivers. In sparsely populated rural areas with limited medical resources, finding effective healthcare solutions may be more challenging. The long-term goal is to ensure that ADRD individuals and their caregivers in rural Montana receive proactive, evidence-based dementia care tailored to their needs and preferences.

Partners include Glendive Medical Center (GMC), a 25-bed acute care critical access hospital in Dawson, County in eastern Montana, Central Montana Medical Center (CMMC), a 25-bed critical access hospital in Lewistown in Fergus County, Montana and another healthcare organization to be determined.

This project was partially funded through a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute® (PCORI®) Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Award EAIN-5547.

Project Investigator: Patricia Coon, MD

Project Co-Investigators: Soo Borson, MD

Jan Smith, BS, Family Caregiver and Patient Advocate

Project Team: Betty Mullette, MSN

Matt Byerly, MD

Ya-Huei Li, PhD

Holly Garcia, BSHA

Kathie Burke, BS, Family Caregiver and Patient Advocate