

**Birmingham/Atlanta VA
Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center
(GRECC)**

Special Fellowship in Advanced Geriatrics

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A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Description

Purpose

The Birmingham/Atlanta GRECC is a collaborative center of the VA Medical Centers in Birmingham, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia, and is affiliated with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and Emory University in Atlanta. The primary goal of the GRECC Advanced Fellowship in Geriatrics is to provide training for health professionals preparing for academic careers in Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology. This program is especially focused on training physicians, nurses, rehabilitation therapists, and psychologists.

Source of Support

Funding for the Advanced Fellowship comes from the VA Office of Academic Affairs. Fellows will select a primary site for their training based in the GRECC at either the Birmingham or Atlanta VA Medical Center.

Training Program

The Advanced Fellowship offers Fellows a number of academic career development training opportunities in geriatric medicine and gerontology. The Fellowship provides salary support that gives trainees protected time for research training or for clinician educator training, with up to 2 years of funding at up to the level of a PGY 4 and PGY 5 trainee. During this time, Fellows will complete an individualized career development program, a project that will be presented at a national meeting and/or published in a peer-reviewed journal, and a plan to support their further career development as a junior faculty member.

A sample timeline for the fellowship is illustrated below:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Month</u>								
	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>24</u>
1. Identify and confirm primary mentor and team	X								
2. Develop Career Development Plan (CDP) proposal		X							
3. Select research question or project & literature review		XX							
4. Submit CDP to Fellowship Steering Committee and revise as needed				X					
5. Develop aims and methodology with Mentor			XXX						
6. Submit project proposal to Steering Committee for approval						X			
7. Submit research plan for IRB approval (if relevant)						X			
8. Implement Research Project (Data Collection & Analysis)								XXXXXX	
9. Quarterly Progress Reports due		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
10. Presentations, publications, & grant applications								XXXXXX	

Mentors

The Advanced Fellowship requires the active involvement of mentors. Mentors are generally senior academic geriatricians or other senior faculty with a strong interest in aging who can provide content expertise and professional development guidance. Each trainee will select a senior faculty member to serve as their primary mentor. In many cases a mentorship committee composed of 2-4 mentors may be appropriate. A list of potential mentors and their areas of special interest is presented in **Attachment I**. Other faculty may serve as a trainee's primary mentor with the concurrence of the Fellowship Director and Associate Director. Whenever

appropriate, the Fellowship Steering Committee will work with trainees and their mentors to identify additional faculty representing either or both institutions, or in some cases other institutions, to form a Mentoring Committee for the trainee.

Expectations

Trainees are expected to meet regularly with their mentor(s), complete the fellowship core curriculum (summary presented in **Attachment II**), develop and implement an individualized career development plan, submit quarterly progress reports, and participate in seminars and conferences. They are expected to present their career development progress and project results at these conferences and at least one national scientific meeting, and to publish findings in scholarly journals. Trainees must agree to provide periodic reports after completing the fellowship to enable the GRECC to track the impact of the Fellowship in terms of extramural grants, publications, and presentations derived from the work supported through the Advanced Fellowship program.

Acknowledgments All presentations and publications derived from work supported by the Fellowship must acknowledge the VA Advanced Fellowship in Geriatrics as the primary sponsor.

Eligibility Criteria

Physician Fellows

Physician applicants are expected to be board certified in their primary specialty and board eligible with active pursuit of certification in their subspecialty. Individuals whose initial certification is in Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, or Psychiatry must also have completed an accredited subspecialty by the time of the VA Special Fellow appointment. In addition, physicians must:

- Have an active, full and unrestricted license to practice in the US
- Not be enrolled simultaneously in another accredited physician residency program
- Have required ECFMG documentation (if a foreign medical graduate)
- Have an appropriate visa (if a foreign citizen); preference will be given to U.S. citizens
- Demonstrate special interest in geriatrics and potential for embarking on a geriatrics-related career that will be of service to US veterans receiving care from the VA

Associated Health Fellows

Postdoctoral associated health fellows must have graduated from an accredited doctoral program including all required residency or internship experiences that prepare them for eligibility for VA employment. For psychology fellows, this includes an internship accredited by the American Psychological Association. This fellowship focuses on postdoctoral nurses, rehabilitation therapists, and psychologists; however, audiologists, dentists, optometrists, podiatrists, and pharmacists are also eligible to apply. In addition, associated health fellows must:

- Have completed one year of post-doctoral clinical training in the discipline, preferably but not exclusively in geriatrics
- Not be enrolled simultaneously in another accredited post-doctoral program in an associated health discipline
- Be a US citizen
- Demonstrate special interest in geriatrics and potential for embarking on a geriatrics-

related career that will be of service to US veterans receiving care from the VA

Application Submission Dates

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply as early as possible in order to start the Fellowship on July 1st. Completed applications received more than 6 months in advance (i.e. before December 31) will be given special consideration. In the absence of extenuating circumstances, applications will not be accepted after May 1st for starting the Fellowship on July 1st.

Contact information for program directors

	VA Contact	University Contact
Kathryn L. Burgio, PhD Director	Birmingham VA Medical Center GRECC (11G) 700 South 19 th Street Birmingham, AL 35233 Phone - 205-558-7064 FAX - 205-558-7068 Email: Kathryn.Burgio@va.gov	University of Alabama at Birmingham, Center for Aging, CH-19, Room 201 1530 3 rd Avenue South Birmingham, AL 35294 Phone: 205-934-3259 FAX: 205-934-7354 Email: kburgio@aging.uab.edu
Theodore M. Johnson, II MD, MPH, Co-Director	Atlanta VA Medical Center GRECC 1670 Clairmont Rd. Decatur, GA 30033 Phone - 404-728-7775 FAX - 404-417-2912	Wesley Woods Center 1841 Clifton Rd. NE Atlanta, GA 30329 Phone: 404-728-6295 FAX: 404-728-6425 Email: Ted.Johnson@va.gov

B. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Purpose

This application guideline package is intended to assist applicants in preparing competitive applications for the Advanced Fellowship. **Applications that do not conform to these guidelines will not be reviewed.**

Before completing an application, applicants are required to set up a conference call and/or in-person interview with the Program Director or Co-Director (contact information above).

Review Criteria

In preparing applications, candidates are advised to keep in mind the enclosed review criteria that will be used to assess their application (**Section D**). Please note, however, that the review criteria are **not** intended to serve as a presentation outline. The application guidelines section below provides specific guidance on application format.

Application Format

Applicants should use the following format: Type size for this application should be a minimum of 11-point font and a density of no more than 15 characters per inch. Please note that narrative sections such as Career Goals and Objectives; Career Development and Training Activities (if applicable); and Project Plan are to be double spaced (i.e., no more than three lines per vertical inch). The Project Plan section is limited to ten (10) pages. Essential Appendices can be included. Applications must include the following components in the order they appear below.

APPLICATION FORM COVER PAGE (Section C.) Provide ALL requested information.

ABSTRACT (Up to one page) Briefly summarize objectives and proposed strategy for accomplishing them.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH Include a complete CV for the applicant, and NIH-style Biographical Sketches for any proposed mentors that are not listed in **Attachment I**.

CAREER GOALS and OBJECTIVES (Up to 2 pages - double spaced) Applicants should describe overall career goals and objectives and how they build on prior training and other experiences. Explain how the Advanced Fellowship will fit into and advance career plans. If the applicant has not completed a fellowship in Geriatric Medicine or post-doctoral training in Gerontology, this section must indicate the candidate's established interest and/or commitment to Geriatrics.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN and TRAINING ACTIVITIES (Up to 2 pages - double spaced) Discuss briefly each of the training activities in which you might want to be engaged that are not included in the core curriculum (See **Attachment II**). Indicate the time and effort you think might be involved, and describe the enhanced knowledge, skills, and abilities that you hope to gain from the activity.

PROJECT PLANS (Up to 10 pages - double spaced) This section should describe the applicant's plans for the major project that will be conducted during the training period.

A detailed project plan is not necessary as you will be expected to develop this plan during your fellowship. If you do not have a detailed plan, use this space to discuss the types of projects you are interested in and why.

For applicants primarily interested in research who have already developed a project, use the following section headings to describe your proposed research project:

- Statement of Hypothesis and Specific Aims
- Background, Significance, and Rationale
- Preliminary Studies and any Results
- Research Design and Methods
- Human Subjects (if applicable)
- Vertebrate Animals (if applicable)

For applicants primarily interested in becoming a clinician educator provide, to the extent you can, information on:

- Your educational focus - describe specific educational activities in which you propose to develop expertise, i.e., teaching, development and evaluation of educational products, administration and service (e.g. quality improvement initiatives).
- Formal coursework and/or extramural programs related to teaching and faculty development you would like to complete
- An educational program or clinical improvement project, addressing the following items:
 - Synopsis of the educational program
 - Background, Significance, and Rationale (i.e., Needs Assessments)
 - Statement of Specific Educational Objectives
 - Program Design and Methods
 - Plan for Evaluation

The following sections apply to all applications:

LITERATURE CITATIONS - Literature cited should be listed on a separate page in a standard bibliographic format.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT - Include letters from at least 3 individuals with whom you have worked closely who can support your credentials for this fellowship.

APPENDICES – Include one or more appendices that you feel are essential to the application. Please do not include excessive material – this can be forwarded later in the application process if needed.

Submission Instructions

Please submit your application electronically, using Microsoft Word and/or PDF formats to the

Fellowship Director and Co-Director listed above at the end of **Section A**. An original and two copies of the entire application should also be mailed to the Program Administrator. **Address all questions to the Fellowship Director.**

C. APPLICATION FORM COVER PAGE

Applicant's Full Name and Degree(s): _____

Current Title: Fellow (PGY ____) Instructor Assistant Professor

School, Department, and Division: _____

Address, including ZIP: _____

Office Telephone: _____ **FAX:** _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Requested Start Date: _____

Signatures: **Full Name (typed)** **Signature**

Candidate _____ _____

D. REVIEW CRITERIA

These review criteria will be used by the Special Fellowship Steering Committee to assess each application. They are provided here so that candidates will understand which items are important to reviewers.

- Do the candidate's previous training, experience, and past accomplishments indicate a good probability that the candidate will accomplish the fellowship objectives?
- Do the applicant's qualifications and past accomplishments suggest the potential for a bright future in academic medicine?
- Is the plan for career development and training activities appropriate and feasible, i.e. how likely is it to achieve its intended purpose in terms of enhanced knowledge, skills, abilities and development?
- Is the candidate's research plan (if applicable) compatible with the major foci of the GRECC and/or the areas or mentorship expertise available in the program and likely to lead to future funding?
- Is the candidate's plan for a clinician educator project (if applicable) appropriate, feasible, and innovative?
- Strength of letters of support
- Personal qualities as judged by letters of support and interviews

ATTACHMENT I

POTENTIAL MENTORS AND AREAS OF INTEREST

<u>Potential Mentor and VA and Academic Positions</u>	<u>Areas of Expertise</u>
Richard M. Allman, MD Director, GRECC Professor of Medicine Director, UAB Center for Aging Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, & Palliative Care, Deep South Resource Center for Minority Aging Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mobility ▪ Cardiovascular disease ▪ Racial health disparities ▪ Geriatric quality improvement ▪ Clinical epidemiology
Marcas M. Bamman, PhD Associate Professor, Dept of Physiology and Biophysics, Dept of Nutrition Sciences, Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, & Palliative Care Director, GRECC Core Muscle Research Laboratory Assoc. Dir., Center for Aging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skeletal muscle physiology ▪ Sarcopenia ▪ Load-mediated molecular mechanisms of hypertrophy and atrophy ▪ Exercise physiology
Cynthia Brown, MD GRECC Investigator Associate Professor of Medicine Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, & Palliative Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mobility and related conditions ▪ In-hospital bed rest and walking ▪ Rehabilitation
Kathryn L. Burgio, PhD Associate Director for Research, GRECC Professor of Medicine Director, Section of Social & Behavioral Sciences, Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, & Palliative Care Director, UAB Continence Program Research Director, Genitourinary Disorders Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behavioral medicine ▪ Urinary incontinence ▪ Fecal incontinence ▪ Pelvic floor disorders ▪ End of life care
Katharina Echt, PhD Atlanta Site, Director for GRECC Education Assistant Professor of Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health Literacy ▪ Aging and Technology
Stuart Frank, MD Chief, Endocrinology Section, Birmingham VA Director, Endocrinology Division Professor of Endocrinology Cell Biology, Physiology & Biophysics,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growth Hormone Action ▪ Prolactin Action ▪ Signal Crosstalk
W. Timothy Garvey, MD GRECC Investigator Birmingham VA Medical Center Chair and Professor, Department of Nutrition Sciences Director, Diabetes Research and Training Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Molecular, metabolic, and genetic patho-physiology of Type 2 Diabetes, insulin resistance, obesity, and the Metabolic Syndrome. ▪ Clinical criteria for the Metabolic Syndrome. ▪ Direct application of basic research technologies in the study of humans
Patricia S. Goode, MD Associate Director for Clinical Programs, GRECC Professor of Medicine Director, Geriatric Education Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, & Palliative Care Medical Director, UAB Continence Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving functional status and quality of life ▪ End-of-life care ▪ Urinary incontinence ▪ Fecal incontinence ▪ Pelvic floor disorders
Kenneth Hepburn, PhD Professor and Associate Dean for Research, Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, Emory University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role of caregivers in dementia

<p>Theodore M. Johnson, II, MD, MPH Atlanta Site Director, Birmingham/Atlanta GRECC Associate Professor of Medicine Director, Division of Geriatrics and Gerontology Emory University</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Urinary incontinence ▪ Nocturia
<p>Alayne G. Markland, DO, MSPH Director, GRECC Continence Program Associate Professor of Medicine Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, & Palliative Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fecal Incontinence ▪ Urinary Incontinence ▪ Pelvic floor disorders
<p>John Mountz, MD, PhD Staff Physician and Director, Transgenic Mouse Facility Birmingham VA Medical Center Professor of Medicine, Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, & Palliative Care, UAB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Autoimmune disease ▪ Gene therapy including adenovirus and adeno-associated virus
<p>Chesley Richards, MD, MPH Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Assoc. Professor of Medicine, Emory University</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Epidemiology, prevention and control of infections in elderly residents of long term care facilities
<p>Dale C. Strasser, MD Associate Professor, Dept. of Rehab Medicine Emory University</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rehabilitation treatment effectiveness ▪ Functional abilities in frail, older adults
<p>Steven L. Wolf, PhD, FAPTA Professor, Dept. of Rehabilitation Medicine Emory University</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rehabilitative interventions for mobility, falls, stroke

ATTACHMENT II

OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES FOR FELLOWS

Infrastructure Available to Support Advanced Fellows' Training

Infrastructure	Birmingham VA/UAB	Atlanta VA/Emory
Office space	Office space for the fellow is identified at the VA	Office space for the fellow is identified at the VA
Computers and IT support	The fellow will be provided with VA computer that will be loaded with all programs necessary to complete educational and research activities. Additional computers and software are available at the UAB Division offices Both the VA and UAB have excellent, readily available IT support	The fellow will be provided a computer in the VA office that will be loaded with all programs necessary to complete educational and research activities. Additional computers and software are available at the Emory Division offices Both the VA and Emory have excellent, readily available IT support
Email	The fellow will have email capability at the VA, as well as at UAB. UAB email system enables email access throughout the world, including document transfer	The fellow will have email capability at the VA as well as at Emory. Emory Webmail enables email access throughout the world, including document transfer
Internet and Intranet Access	The fellow will have access to the world-wide web at both the VA and UAB, as well as to the VA intranet	The fellow will have access to the internet at both the VA and Emory, as well as to the VA and Emory University intranets
Telephone	The fellow will have a telephone in the VA office, as well as a pager	The fellow will have a telephone in the VA office, as well as a pager
Statistical support	Statistical support is available through the GRECC Data and Analysis Core. GRECC biostatisticians, Drs. David Redden, David Roth, and Gerald McGwin have ongoing collaborations with several of the core mentors	In addition to statistical support through the GRECC statisticians and faculty, advanced statistical consultation is available through Dr. Michael Kutner, chair of the Department of Biostatistics in the Emory School of Public Health
Formal course work	Formal coursework is available at the UAB School of Public Health, which offers an MPH, a masters degrees in Clinical Research, as well as Health Informatics	Formal coursework is available at the Emory School of Public Health as outlined in the Curriculum section, including the opportunity to complete a Masters of Science in Clinical Research
Potential collaborations with other Centers	Fellows with specific interests could potentially work with faculty involved at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The UAB ADC or McKnight Brain Institute ▪ The Roybal Center for Translational Research on Mobility and Aging ▪ The VA C-SMART (REAP) or UAB Center for Outcomes and Effectiveness Research and Education ▪ UAB Center for Aging, Center for Metabolic Bone Disease, Arthritis Center, Comprehensive Cancer Center, Palliative Care Center, or Genito-Urinary Disorders Center. 	Fellows with specific interests could potentially work with faculty involved at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Emory ADRC and/or Neuroscience Center ▪ The Yerkes Primate Center ▪ The Emory Predictive Medicine Institute ▪ The Lowance Center for Human Immunology ▪ The Emory Vaccine Center ▪ The Georgia Medical Care Foundation (the Georgia Medicare Quality Improvement Organization) ▪ The CDC
Access to databases	VA:	VA:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr. Burgio has data available to palliative care services at VA medical centers throughout VISN 7 ▪ Dr. Ahmed has data related to congestive heart failure care within the VA and CBOCs affiliated with the Birmingham VA <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr. Allman has data from an NIA-funded observational cohort study of 1000 older, community-dwelling older adults that includes 500 men (60% are veterans) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Johnson has obtained large datasets from clinical trials for BPH • Dr. Richards has access to databases on infectious disease, including infection control data in the VA nursing home
Access to research subjects	<p>VA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GRECC has established mechanisms for recruiting inpatients for studies of mobility and palliative care. • Outpatient studies of exercise to enhance mobility and continence care have also been carried out by GRECC investigators <p>UAB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UAB Minority Health Research Center and the Division of Preventive Medicine have established a Recruitment and Retention Core to facilitate recruitment of older subjects, particularly minority African Americans, and have been successful recruiting for large cohort studies such as the Women’s Health Study, the Prostate, Lung, Colon, and Ovarian Cancer Study. 	<p>VA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Johnson has extensive experience recruiting VA outpatients for clinical research and can guide fellows in these efforts <p>Emory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Emory Center for Health in Aging has a “Research Registry on Aging” which includes over 600 potential research subjects, and a relationship with Park Springs, a continuing care retirement community with close to 500 residents, many of whom are willing to participate in longitudinal research • Dr. Wolf (core faculty) has extensive experience recruiting community dwelling older adults and assisted living facilities for research participation • The newly established VistaCare inpatient hospice on the Wesley Woods campus is developing a database that can potentially be used for research and quality improvement projects
Research project support	<p>Advanced fellows will be able to apply for additional research support through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SCEGM • The Southeast Affiliate of AFAR • The Resource Center for Minority Aging Research (RCMAR) • Other Center pilot programs (e.g. the UAB CTSA, ADC, and Comprehensive Cancer Center) 	<p>Advanced fellows will be able to apply for additional research support through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SCEGM • The Southeast Affiliate of AFAR • Other Center pilot programs (e.g. ADRC; School of Nursing Center for Symptoms, symptom Interactions, and Health Outcomes)

Primary Clinical Sites Available for Advanced Fellows

Type of Site	Birmingham VA	UAB	Atlanta VA	Emory
Acute Hospital	Full service acute care facility with 4 medical units and the Safe Harbor Palliative Care Unit	Palliative and Comfort Care Unit, Acute Care for the Elderly Unit	Full service acute care facility with 4 medical units	Wesley Woods geriatric hospital – 100 beds with medical, psychiatry, and rehabilitation beds
Inpatient Consultation Services	Geriatric Consult Team, Palliative Care Consult Team	Palliative Care Consult Team	Geriatric palliative care/pain consults	Geriatric medicine consults on the psych and rehab units at Wesley Woods Geriatric transitional care service at Emory Crawford Long
Primary Care Geriatrics Clinics	Primary Care Clinics Home Based Primary Care	Geriatric Clinic at McDonald Clinic (400 visits per year)	Geriatric clinic with approx. 2600 patients and 10,000 visits per year	Wesley Woods geriatric clinic with approx. 4,000 patients and 15,000 patient visits per year Geriatric clinic at Grady Hospital with approximately 800 pts
Specialty Geriatrics Clinics	Geriatric Assessment Clinic Continenence Clinic Fall Prevention and Mobility Clinic Heart Failure Clinic Palliative Care Outpatient Program Telemedicine Program Home Based Palliative Care	Geriatric Consults Memory Disorders Osteoporosis Clinic Heart Failure Low Vision Driving Assessment Continenence Clinic Palliative and Supportive Care Camellia Medical Group (Concierge Service)	Continenence Memory Geropsychiatry	Continenence Wound care Pain (in Rehab Medicine) Dizziness/Balance (in Rehab Medicine)
Nursing Home Care	Nursing home experience available at Tuscaloosa VA medical center	100 bed private, Medicare and Medicaid certified nursing home at Mount Royal Towers with 46 Medicare skilled and 54 long-term stay patients	Approx. 1/3 of 100 bed facility is subacute, 2/3 long-stay	18 bed long-term acute hospital 2 nursing homes on Wesley Woods campus with avg. of approx. 80 Medicare skilled and 240 long-stay patients/day
Home Care	Home based primary care serving approximately 90 patients	Home care visits in palliative and geriatric care	Home-based primary care program serving 98 patients	Wesley Woods geriatric hospital works with several home health agencies (but does not have a physician home visit program)
Hospice	Contract hospice	Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, & Palliative Care provides medical directorship for 2 local hospices	Contract hospice with approx. 10 patients served per month	24-bed inpatient hospice on Wesley Woods campus Faculty member serves as medical director of outpatient hospice