with dementia and other chronic conditions, through novel person-centered approaches. This symposium examines how the two GWEPs expanded upon a foundation of previous efforts to serve older adults with lifelong disabilities, the methods by which they built and fostered effective networks, the resulting system improvements, and suggested strategies to move from “pretty good” to best practices.

COMMON PURPOSE: NETWORKING INITIATIVES TO FOSTER DEMENTIA-CAPABLE CARE FOR LIFELONG DISABILITIES
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As individuals with I/DD live longer, Alzheimer’s disease is on the rise, particularly in individuals with Down syndrome. Practitioners have recognized that the I/DD system does not possess the expertise to provide appropriate care for this population as it ages. A series of federally funded initiatives in Rhode Island – supported by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Administration for Community Living (ACL), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) – have begun to equip health care and direct care professionals to meet the needs of individuals with I/DD and AD. Using a “connector” model, the GWEP at RIGEC has woven together these efforts, aligned program goals from disparate funders, built connections between the Aging Network and the disability system, and worked with the National Task Group on Intellectual Disabilities and Dementia Practices (NTG) to create sustainable resources for the health care and direct care workforces.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: A MODEL FOR LIFELONG DISABILITIES AND DEMENTIA CARE
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In 2015 the Rhode Island Geriatric Education Center (RIGEC) was one of 44 organizations funded by HRSA to implement the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP). A primary objective was to develop and deliver Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) education to patients, families, caregivers, and health professionals, with a focus on special populations. Concurrently, Seven Hills Rhode Island, a nonprofit agency that serves people with disabilities, received a grant from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) to provide education and resources to health professionals and caregivers of people with I/DD. As goals for both projects aligned closely, they worked together, fostering a strong partnership, amplifying the opportunity to offer high-quality educational programs and reach target audiences. Lessons learned from this networked approach are critical to informing sustained improvements to the I/DD and health care systems in subsequent GWEP projects.

COMMUNITY NETWORKS ADDRESSING AGING WITH LIFELONG DISABILITIES
Edward F. Ansello1. 1. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, United States

Adults aging with lifelong developmental disabilities (I/DD: Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, etc.) continue to pose a challenge to the Aging Network, developmental services, and healthcare systems. Some funded projects, model programs, and episodic initiatives have helped advance intersystem collaboration but there is still scant federal or state public policy specific to aging with lifelong disabilities. The Area Planning and Services Committee (APSC), a product of three consecutive AoA grants on building and testing intersystem cooperation/collaboration between these systems, is a partnership of community-based organizations and academe operating in metro Richmond since 2003. Its successful hands on, interdisciplinary management process has implemented needs assessments, statewide training, staff development, dementia awareness, etc., and been a model for the Virginia Geriatric Education Center (VGEC) Plenary overseeing all GWEP programs. The APSC history informs VGEC GWEP’s incorporating I/DD content into faculty development programs, microlearning, ECHO, and other practitioner training.

SESSION 3470 (SYMPOSIUM)

RAISING OUR VOICES: THE BENEFITS OF AN INTERGENERATIONAL CHOIR FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR CARE PARTNERS
Chair: Debra J. Sheets, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
Discussant: Theresa A. Allison, University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco, California, United States

This interdisciplinary symposium focuses on the Voices in Motion (ViM) choir, a novel social intervention to address issues of stigma and social isolation among older adults with dementia and their caregivers. ViM is an intergenerational choir for community-dwelling older adults with dementia (PwD) and their caregivers. Local high school students participated in the choir and added to the lively social interactions. Two professionally directed ViM choirs were fully implemented in 2018-2019 with a public performance in the Fall and Spring seasons. This symposium brings together multiple methodologies to investigate the effects of choir participation on cognition, social connections, stigma, and quality of life for the dyads. Results in the individual papers demonstrate the positive impact of choir participation on dyads (n=26) for measures that include cognition (MacDonald), well-being and quality of life (Sheets), and social connections (Smith). Taken as a whole, the papers indicate that this social intervention offers an effective non-pharmacological alternative approach for older adults with dementia. Choir participation has important and significant impacts on psycho-social well-being and quality of life. The body of evidence presented points to the importance of
NOTEWORTHY: THE IMPACT OF A CHOIR FOR OLDER ADULTS WITH DEMENTIA ON THE WELL-BEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF CAREGIVERS

Debra J. Sheets, Stuart W. MacDonald, Andre Smith, and Mary Kennedy, 1. University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Informal caregivers provide 80% of the care needed to support community-dwelling older adults with dementia. Over time caregivers often face adverse effects on their health, quality of life and well-being; particularly those caring for someone with dementia. This study examines the impact of participation in the Voices in Motion (ViM) choir on caregiver burden, mood and quality of life. A measurement burst approach was used to investigate intraindividual variability on key psychosocial and health indicators. Results indicate that choir participation significantly improves caregiver well-being (e.g. mood, burden) and quality of life. Findings suggest that choirs offer significant caregiver support and respite. The discussion focuses the public policy and on the potential economic implications which suggests a shift is needed in the services available to older adults with dementia and their caregivers.

THE MAGIC OF MUSIC FOR IMPROVING PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH FOR THOSE WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

Stuart MacDonald, Debra J. Sheets, Andre P. Smith, Mary Kennedy, and Sandra Hundza, 1. University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Arts-based interventions for persons with dementia and their caregivers represent an inexpensive, non-invasive, and non-pharmacological intervention with the potential to improve psychological function as well as reduce healthcare costs. The paper presents an overview of Voices in Motion (ViM), and the impact of this social-cognitive intervention on changes in psychological function for those with dementia and their caregivers (current n=26 dyads). Choir rehearsals were held on a weekly basis, and included a social discussion component. A range of outcomes (neuropsychological and physiological function, neural activation) were assessed using an intensive repeated measures design that facilitates both between- and within-person analyses, including nuanced evaluation of whether psychological function improves post intervention relative to an individual’s personal average, yielding a conservative within-person test of the benefits of intervention. Discussion focuses on the promise of such interventions for mitigating dementia symptoms and facilitating the psychological health of caregivers.

THE EMERGENCE AND BENEFITS OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN TWO COMMUNITY-BASED DEMENTIA CHOIRS

Andre Smith, Debra J. Sheets, Mary Kennedy, Tara Erb, Ruth Kampen, and Min Zhou, Chandra Berkan Hozempa, and Stuart W. MacDonald, 1. Department of Sociology, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, 2. University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Community choir participation for persons with dementia (PwD) confers benefits to health and well-being, including the benefit of socializing which can reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Using the concept of social capital, this study examines the degree to which two intergenerational Voices in Motion choirs facilitate the development of social relationships between PwD, caregivers, and high school students. Data collection involved interviews with 17 dyads of PwD and caregivers, completion of a social relationship questionnaire, and focus groups with a total of 29 high school students. The results show a gradual increase in the level of interactions between all participants, with students in particular interacting more frequently with PwD. Over time, trust and reciprocity emerged within the choirs as more people shared information about themselves. Students’ understanding of dementia changed over time as they learned to appreciate PwD as unique human beings with rich life stories and experiences.

SYSTEMATIC CHANGES IN GAIT PURSUANT TO CHOIR PARTICIPATION FOR CAREGIVERS AND PERSONS WITH DEMENTIA

Sandra Hundza, Stuart W. MacDonald, Debra J. Sheets, and Andre P. Smith, 1. University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Choir interventions confer psychological benefits for persons with dementia (PwD) and their caregivers. However, less is known about whether physiological function also exhibits improvements pursuant to such social-cognitive interventions. The present study, based upon a subsample of the Voices in Motion (ViM) project, explored whether participation in an intergenerational choir results in systematic improvements in gait velocity (indexed using a GAITRite computerized walkway) for both informal caregivers (n=14; 71.4% female) and PwD (n=14; 64.3% female). Longitudinal burst data from the first of three cohorts spanning 4 assessments over 3.5 months was analysed using multilevel modeling. Whereas caregivers exhibited significant improvements (p<.05) in gait velocity, PwD showed no improvement. Ongoing analyses are exploring additional cohorts, and whether improvements in gait dynamically covary with reductions in comorbidities (e.g., neuropsychological function, caregiver burden, depressive affect). These results underscore the potential of choir for facilitating both psychosocial and physiological function for caregivers and PwD.

SESSION 3475 (SYMPOSIUM)

RESILIENCE, COPING, AND HEALTH IN MIDDLE TO LATE LIFE

Chair: Roland J. Thorpe, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, Maryland, United States
Discussant: Keith E. Whitfield, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, United States

Stress and resilience are two factors that are receiving attention as key determinants that can provide insights that underlie the deleterious effects on the overall health and