



Pictured from left to right are: Mary Brown, 104; Sarah Phillips, MD, a third-year resident, Department of Family Medicine at Memorial Hospital; and Anna Testa, age 100. Both women are residents of Jeanne Jugan Residence in Pawtucket.

Memorial's geriatric program prepares residents for expanding aging population

RI has the highest percentage of adults 85 years of age and older in the US

PAWTUCKET— Mary Brown, 104, a former World War II Army Corps nurse and public health official, who lives at the Jeanne Jugan Residence in Pawtucket, is just one of the older adults **SARAH PHILLIPS, MD**, has cared for in her three years of her family medicine residency at Memorial Hospital's Department of Family Medicine.

The curriculum in geriatrics includes clinical rotations in the acute care setting, assisted living, nursing and rehabilitation facilities as well as in the home setting. Family resident physicians conduct monthly home visits to older adults who have difficulty leaving their homes for primary medical care.

Family medicine and internal medicine residents also take part in interprofessional clinical team seminars in geriatric assessment which bring together health professional students in nursing, pharmacy, physical therapy and nutrition from the University of Rhode Island (URI), as well as social work and nursing students from Rhode Island College (RIC).

In Rhode Island – which has the highest percentage of adults 85 years of age and older in the country (U.S. Census, 2010) and ranked ninth for the proportion of those 65 and older (15.5%) in 2012 – the impact is exacerbated by

shortages of health care professionals including physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers and allied health professionals. Growth of the state's geriatrics population is outpacing the number of specialists equipped to address their needs.

With recent funding from the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program, Memorial's interprofessional geriatric education program and clinical geriatrics program will expand to include other Care New England's operating units, URI, RIC, state primary care networks and community-based agencies.

PHILIP CLARK, ScD, a URI professor and director of the Rhode Island Geriatric Education Center, will lead the efforts to establish a statewide model of interprofessional team training in geriatric care to improve the quality of care of the state's older adults. **ALICIA CURTIN, PhD**, director of Geriatrics of Memorial's Department of Family Medicine, states, "We are excited about collaborating in this statewide initiative to meet the critical need of preparing health care professionals, caregivers, families and patients to care for our aging population." ❖