

*Muge Akpinar-Elci, MD, MPH*

## **ABSTRACTS OF RESEARCH GRANTS**

### ***Brody Brothers, MT7751, 2007***

**Optimization of heart failure patient management in rural North Carolina using a hub and spoke model: A novel strategy to improve quality of care and reduce costs**

**Principal Investigator: Pitzalis M.,**

**Investigators: OC Elci, M. Akpinar-Elci, W. Casio, R. Little, L. Novick**

Heart Failure (HF) poses significant health and financial burdens on patients and on the society. The major cost-driver in HF is the high incidence of hospitalizations. Despite clinical-trial evidence and evidence-based national guidelines, life-saving drug and device therapies are underutilized. The gap widens when race, ethnicity, sex, education level, socioeconomic status and geographic location are considered. HF hospitalization is higher in African-Americans, Hispanics and American Indians/Alaska Natives than among whites. Hospitalizations were highest in the Southeastern United States (1). The Hub and Spoke HF Project received a grant from the Brody Brother Foundation to create a coordinated system of health care communications and information targeting three counties: Pitt, Hertford, and Edgecombe, and their adjacent areas. The main aims of the project include increasing evidence-based HF management by maintaining ongoing and timely contact with the patients involving their primary care providers; enhancing patient self-care and, therefore, improving survival and quality of life. HF hospitalizations and health care costs will also be reduced in rural eastern NC. Communication is ensured by a telemedicine network that will also be used to disseminate new treatment strategies, transmit real-time data from spokes to the hub (Brody School of Medicine/Pitt County Memorial Hospital) and vice-versa, request consultations, follow-up selected patients.