



Summary of National AHEC Week 2008 Activities March 24-March 28, 2008

National AHEC Week 2008 proved to be very successful, with twelve State AHEC Programs and many regional AHECs participating to some degree, and building upon the initial success of National AHEC Week 2006 when a statement recognizing the AHEC and HETC Network was read on the floor of US House of Representatives by Congressman Lee Terry (R-Nebraska) and shared with AHEC colleagues at the National AHEC Conference in Omaha, Nebraska on June 12, 2006.

In 2008, AHEC State Programs and Regional Centers chose to highlight their programs in a variety of ways during National AHEC Week. Take a closer look, and please be sure to read the pages that follow that describe in more detail some of the initiatives!

- **Alaska 2008**

- Interior Alaska AHEC set up a display in the lobby of the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, the host institution. We were able to list some of our statistics for current program participants, and had brochures and newsletters available for pickup.

- **Arizona 2008**

- The Arizona AHEC Program provided program literature at the Arizona Health Sciences Center via a table top display all week.

- **Arkansas 2008**

- UAMS AHEC-Southwest published a newsletter with highlights and celebrated with gourmet popcorn for all the staff.

- **Colorado 2008**

- The Colorado Area Health Education Centers provided health screening, health education and health career education to thousands of visitors at the 2008 National Western Stock Show. The Colorado AHEC exhibit included heart risk assessment for adults and children, blood pressure checks, cholesterol screening and heart attack risk reduction education. In addition, the exhibit

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had information on a host of healthcare careers, program brochures and handouts.

- Over 110 faculty and staff, and over 100 health science center students, volunteered at the exhibit. Several thousand Stock Show attendees visited the Colorado AHEC exhibit and learned about AHEC, health careers and health care.
- The Colorado AHEC Centers provided blood pressure screening to over 1000 visitors, heart risk assessments for 850 adults and education to 680 schoolaged children.
- Visit Colorado AHECs at: <http://www2.uchsc.edu/ahec/>

- **Florida 2008**

- USF AHEC sponsored an event for NAW. Over 70 people attend this event at USF College of Medicine, along with a simulcast for our teaching hospital in South Tampa. <http://hscweb3.hsc.usf.edu/health/now/?p=414>. The event was highlighted on the USF Health Website. We also displayed banners in the Colleges of Medicine, Nursing and Public Health.
- Gulfcoast North AHEC: The week was promoted at the Pasco County Health Fair's Celebration of Community and Health, on March 29th at the Moore-Mickens Education Center in Dade City. Hosts of the event included Premier Community Healthcare Group, Inc., H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute, the Tampa Bay Community Cancer Network, and Farmworkers Self-Help, Inc. This event offered the community a variety of health screenings, education, activities and tobacco cessation. GNAHEC's Community Health Workers in training also participated. The week was highlighted on the GNAHEC website.
- Gulfcoast South AHEC: Displays promoting National AHEC Week were set up at Manatee County Rural Health Services on March 25th and the Sarasota County Health Department on March 26th and 27th. Information about the week was provide in the e-news, posted on the website and summarized in a press release. GSAHEC also promoted National AHEC Week as part of its annual recognition luncheon held on March 27th honoring community partners who support AHEC activities in its four county service area.

- **Indiana 2008**

- Indiana AHEC Program held its first Annual Meeting on Tuesday, March 25, 2008 during National AHEC Week. The theme of the event is "The NEXT GENERATION". The Annual Meeting is designed to be a celebration of the AHEC mission and the many partners who have made the AHEC successful in Indiana. There will be a student poster session as well as table-top displays highlighting each of our regional AHECs.

- **Louisiana 2008**

- Southwest Louisiana AHEC activities included:
 - ✚ "What is SWLAHEC?" Media appearances (KATC-3 "Good Morning", KDCG- Noon report, KPEL- talk radio, KRVS- public radio)

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- ✚ World No Tobacco Day Awareness- shoe donation for 1,200 pairs of shoes to represent estimated 1,200 people daily in U.S. who die of tobacco-related causes. Shoe displays at designated high schools through SWLAHEC Youth Tobacco Coalitions. Other agencies will re-distribute the shoes following WNTD on April 2, 2008 (Goodwill, Acadiana Outreach, Salvation Army)
- ✚ “Buy a Brick” campaign to raise funds for SWLAHEC home office relocation.
- ✚ Daily prizes to website registrants: baseball hats, limited edition prints, t-shirts, coffee mugs, etc
- ✚ AHEC display at University Medical Center Learning Resource Center
- ✚ “Top 10 ways to celebrate” suggestion list published in the SWLAHEC March e-news

- **New Jersey 2008**

- Garden AHEC is a hospital-hosted AHEC so we had a large AHEC display highlighting Garden AHEC activities, and information on our state AHEC program and NAO. Since we do a lot of CE programming, we have a raffle going at each of the three hospitals to win a gift certificate towards one of our upcoming CE seminars. We also published our newsletter a week before National AHEC Week with a "Did You Know" article discussing AHEC.

- **Ohio 2008**

- The Bryan Area Health Education Center (BAHEC) celebrated National AHEC Week, March 24-28, 2008 by saluting our local physician preceptors. This was done by a press release submitted to the following local newspapers that represent the five-county region that BAHEC serves – The Bryan Times, Defiance Crescent News, Fulton County Expositor, and Northwest Signal.
- In an effort to educate the public regarding BAHEC, all of the articles began with a description of BAHEC and a brief history of the AHEC program. Then the focus moved to reporting that there are 65 physician preceptors in the BAHEC area, along with a breakdown for that specific county. The article also related that throughout its existence, BAHEC has placed a total of 2446 medical, 272 physical therapy, 99 occupational therapy, 16 nurse practitioner, and 43 physician assistant students. A few recent medical student quotes were then provided regarding clerkships specifically for that county. Finally, each of the physician preceptors was listed by name and saluted for their service in educating the physicians of tomorrow.

- **Rhode Island 2008**

- RI AHEC Network (The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University & Central, Northern, and Southern RI AHECs) participated in a “meet and greet” event at the RI Statehouse to introduce RI AHEC to legislators as part of the RI Public Health Association Health Policy Legislative Forum.
- Wrote an article highlighting the work of the RI AHEC Network that was submitted to and posted on the RI DoH website and the website of the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University.

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- A Gubernatorial Proclamation celebrating National AHEC Week 2008 was awarded to the RI AHEC Network by Rhode Island Governor Donald Carcieri.

- **Texas 2008**

- Provided displays which the AHEC staff will host in the cafeteria one day and in the Biomedical Research Center one day, so other employees at the facility will learn more about what AHEC does.
- The University of Texas at Tyler College of Nursing is providing the Lake Country Area Health Education Center with a display case for the rest of the semester, and we will be able to showcase AHEC work for the rest of the semester.
- Monday, March 24th: Big Country AHEC staff presented Dr. Kevin Finley with the Preceptor of the Year award. A reception honoring Dr. Finley was held at the Knox County Hospital in Knox City, Texas. Knox County Judge Travis Floyd and Tom Smith, Executive Director of the West Central Texas Council of Governments (Big Country AHEC is located at the West Central Texas Council of Governments). Dr. Finley has served as preceptor for six medical students through Big Country AHEC services. Additionally, he is a highly respected physician throughout Knox County and a wonderful advocate for AHECs.
- Tuesday, March 25, 2008: Big Country AHEC set up an information table at Cisco Junior College's Abilene Campus. Approximately 36 Hot Jobs were given out along with Big Country AHEC information brochures. Cisco has a large population of nursing and pre-health students that can one day benefit from the services AHEC offers.
- Wednesday, March 26, 2008: The Abilene Reporter News ran a press release from Big Country AHEC regarding National AHEC Week. Specifically, the article outlined the above mentioned activities and introduced each staff member and their roles at Big Country.

- **External Partners 2008**

- A recognition of National AHEC Week was posted to the NACHC (National Association of Community Health Centers) website
- An article on National AHEC Week appears in the March 2008 issue of the Health Care Careers e-Letter of the American Medical Association (AMA):
<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/18400.html#5>

Congratulations to these Program and Centers, and a huge thank-you to our external partners who participated in NAW 2008!

Next year National AHEC Week will be March 23-27, 2009, and the National AHEC Week Committee hopes that more Programs and Centers will participate so as to build significantly on this year's successes.

Please keep an eye out for announcements regarding next year's National AHEC Week! We hope to engage every Program and Center so that we cover the country with AHEC-related events.

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Stay tuned, and keep doing the great work that you all do!

Robert M. Trachtenberg, MS
Associate Director, Rhode Island AHEC Program
The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University

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**Bryan Area Health Education
Center - BAHEC**

Connecting Students to
Careers, Professionals to
Communities and

AHEC FYI

To: Sherrod Brown

Stephen Buehrer

Bruce Goodwin

Bob Latta

George Voinovich

Lynn Wachtmann

From: Patsy Miller, R.N.,
B.S.N.

Director

Ext. 1136

Email: bahec@chwchospital.org

BAHEC Center

433 W. High Street

Bryan, OH 43506

Ph: 419-636-1131,

Date: April 1, 2008

The Bryan Area Health Education Center (BAHEC) celebrated National AHEC Week, March 24-28, 2008 by saluting our local physician preceptors. This was done by a press release submitted to the following local newspapers that represent the five-county region that BAHEC serves - *The Bryan Times*, *Defiance Crescent News*, *Fulton County Expositor*, and *Northwest Signal*.

In an effort to educate the public regarding BAHEC, all of the articles began with a description of BAHEC and a brief history of the AHEC program. Then the focus moved to reporting that there are 65 physician preceptors in the BAHEC area, along with a breakdown for that specific county. The article also related that throughout its existence, BAHEC has placed a total of 2446 medical, 272 physical therapy, 99 occupational therapy, 16 nurse practitioner, and 43 physician assistant students. A few recent medical student quotes were then provided regarding clerkships specifically for that county. Finally, each of the physician preceptors was listed by name

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and saluted for their service in educating the physicians of tomorrow.

If you have any questions regarding BAHEC, please don't hesitate to contact our office.

Williams - Defiance - Fulton - Henry - Paulding Counties

BAHEC is generously supported by local physicians, nurses, allied health practitioners, hospitals, health departments, and others who believe in educating health professionals for today and the future.

Funding for **BAHEC** is provided by The University of Toledo College of Medicine; Ohio Board of Regents; National AHEC Program, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services; and other public and private grants and contributions.

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BAHEC Celebrates National AHEC Week - **March 24-28, 2008**

The Bryan Area Health Education Center (BAHEC) is a community-driven, nonprofit organization whose goal is to improve access to health care in rural and medically underserved areas. This is accomplished by forming community partnerships that link the resources of academic health centers with the needs of the community. The AHEC program was established in 1971 through legislation under the U.S. Public Health Services Act. There are 54 AHEC programs with more than 208 centers in 47 states. AHECs create and facilitate a coalition of medical schools, nursing and allied health programs, hospital, community health centers and health professionals to provide an increased level of health care.

BAHEC became part of The University of Toledo College of Medicine in 1981. BAHEC serves a five county area in Northwest Ohio, which include Defiance, Fulton, Henry, Paulding and Williams counties. UT is one of seven medical education centers in Ohio. BAHEC currently has 65 physicians as preceptors in the five counties and 20 in Williams County. During the 2006-07 school year BAHEC facilitated the placement of 112 medical, 15 Physical Therapy, 6 Occupational Therapy, 4 Nurse Practitioner, and 2 Physician Assistant students. Up through the years, BAHEC has placed a total of 2446 medical, 272 Physical Therapy, 99 Occupational Therapy, 16 Nurse Practitioner, and 43 Physician Assistant students in the area.

One of the AHEC goals is to recruit physicians into rural and underserved areas. Currently there are 11 physicians practicing in the BAHEC area that were former medical students. For a lot of the students, this is their first time visiting or practicing in a rural setting. One student wrote on his evaluation - "Being in Bryan has helped me realize the impact of medicine in smaller communities and the greater demand for physicians in different fields. This experience has made me consider strongly working in a smaller community in the future." Another student recently stated this to the BAHEC staff about his surgical rotation - "People are just so friendly here, I may just have to come back here to practice."

During this National AHEC Week, BAHEC salutes the physician preceptors in Williams County. They include: Rajya Atluri, M.D.; C.A. Bell, M.D.; Diane Bernardi, M.D.; Diane Conrad, M.D.; William Finerty, D.P.M.; W. Dow Harvey, M.D.; Kerry Hicks, M.D.; Robert Kanney, M.D.; Rick Meyer, M.D.; Kevin Park, M.D.; D.S. Rao, M.D.; Michael Sauber, M.D.; Glen Seaman, M.D.; Robert Sharrock, M.D.; Hardev Sroa, M.D.; Marvin Stalter, M.D.; A.R. Tantoco, M.D.; L.E. Tantoco, M.D.; C. Nicholas Walz, M.D.; and, Peggy Watson, M.D.

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National AHEC Week

The San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center (SLV AHEC) is celebrating National AHEC Week from March 24-28, 2008. The SLV AHEC is one of five AHECs in Colorado and fifty four in the United States. All AHECs have as their central mission to enhance access to quality health care, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of health care professionals through community/academic educational partnerships.

The SLV AHEC also provides HIV prevention education, the Summer Health Institute for Health Careers- a program for high school students interested in health careers, educational program on health topics for health care providers and community members, as well as collaboration with health care agencies and providers.

Health Tip- germs transfer from your hands to your body through your eyes, mouth and skin, so wash your hands often using soap and water.

The SLV AHEC would like to thank health care providers and community members for allowing us to serve the San Luis Valley for the past 29 years.

To contact the SLV AHEC for more information, call 589-4977.

National AHEC Week, March 24-28, **2008:** **Introducing AHEC**

What the heck is an AHEC? In honor of National AHEC Week, March 24-28, 2008, it would be my pleasure to introduce you to the local and nationwide AHEC community.

An AHEC is an Area Health Education Center. In 1971, Congress established the AHEC program to build a healthcare workforce dedicated to medically disadvantaged populations. The nationwide system of Area Health Education Centers was established to improve the supply, distribution, diversity and quality of the health workforce, and increase access to health care in medically underserved areas. The AHEC program is a long-term initiative that has focused on the relationship between university health-science centers and community health-service systems. Currently, more than 54 programs (52 medical schools and 2 nursing schools) and 208 regional centers have been established in 47 states and in the District of Columbia. AHECs are funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

AHEC programs are typically located in medically underserved areas, and they work towards the goal of improving the quality of healthcare in these regions. Their collective mission is "To enhance access to quality health care, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of health care professionals through community/academic educational partnerships." The governing body of AHEC is the National AHEC Organization (NAO), whose theme is "Connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health."

The initiatives begun by AHECs across the country have produced wonderful results. In 2006, more than 52,000 high school students – 63% of whom were racial and ethnic minorities or disadvantaged whites – were introduced to health careers and participated in academic enhancement programs. AHECs coordinated the training of over 111,000 medical professions students, as well as the continuing education of over 368,000 health professionals. Nationwide data for 2007 is expected by the end of April, 2008.

In Rhode Island, the AHEC program office is located within the Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University. Three regional centers focus their work on the catchment areas of Northern, Southern, and Central Rhode Island. The Central RI AHEC was established in 2005 and is located in Pawtucket; the branch serving Northern RI is in Woonsocket and was founded in 2006; and the Southern RI division was recently launched in September of 2007 and is based in Newport.

I am pleased to report that in fiscal year 2007, The RI AHEC Network (the three regional centers and the program office) provided 11,000 hours of continuing education to 2,263 health professions students, health care providers, and community health leaders. Topics and trainings included Bioterrorism and Emergency Preparedness for Health Care Providers, Women and Cardiovascular Disease, Health Disparities and Access to Care, Elder Oral Health, Accessing Free & Reduced Pharmaceuticals for Community Health Centers and Free Clinics, and Primary Care and the Integration of Behavior Health. Additionally, the RI AHEC Network directly worked with, in some capacity, 413 providers throughout RI who provide services in medically underserved areas or to medically underserved individuals. Finally, the RI AHEC Network worked with 857 medical, nursing, pharmacy, public health, and allied health students from Brown, Rhode Island College, Salve Regina, Community College of Rhode Island, and the University of Rhode Island, which is clearly indicative of the state-wide focus of the RI AHEC Program.

Currently, all three Rhode Island AHEC branches are moving forward with innovative projects in line with their mission of increasing the quality and accessibility of health care throughout the state. The Central RI office features the REACT program, which is an initiative to introduce minority high school students to health careers. In addition to educational sessions, students are given firsthand experience sampling various health careers to find out which ones they may wish to pursue further. As an additional resource for students, the Central RI AHEC is collaborating with Brown University to plan a health careers fair this coming fall. All major Rhode Island hospitals

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and schools, as well as several smaller, private organizations, will be in attendance to recruit students, while professionals from a variety of healthcare subspecialties will hold workshops to highlight the nature of their careers.

The Central office is also recruiting pre-med college students to participate in an interdisciplinary teamwork program at Rhode Island College this summer. RIC is holding a 6-week course that emphasizes the importance of communication and teamwork among healthcare professionals to reduce medical errors and increase health care quality. They hope that all Rhode Island colleges will soon expand their curriculum in healthcare education to include interdisciplinary teamwork training.

The Northern Rhode Island AHEC was recently given a generous donation of \$17,500 from Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island to create a scholarship for health interpreter and cultural competency training. Cultural competency and communication are crucial in reducing barriers to care for diverse populations. The scholarship was made available for individuals from designated Rhode Island organizations who participate in a medical interpreter training program. We expect that nearly 2,500 individuals will be trained over the next year in cultural competency and/or interpretative services.

The Southern RI AHEC is the newest center, and they are in the process of collaborating with local colleges and social service programs to establish lasting partnerships. Two projects funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are presently underway in Newport. The first is Healthy Residents, Healthy Homes: AHEC is partnered with the Newport Housing Authority to identify environmental and health barriers in the homes of individuals with asthma. They strive to eliminate environmental impediments to health within the homes, and to connect these asthmatic residents, along with their families, to medical homes and community resources. The goal of the project is to decrease emergency room visits and to improve the quality of health among Housing Authority residents.

The second initiative is a 2-year funded project under the EPA Care Grant, aimed at assessing and improving the environment in the city of Newport. A cross-sectional coalition representing the many occupational sectors of the city was asked what they saw as the major environmental issues impinging upon the city; these perceptions were then compared with factual data to determine what environmental problems are most pervasive and detrimental. Three subcommittees have been set up to assess 1) indoor air quality, 2) outdoor air quality, and 3) traffic and emissions. The Southern RI AHEC hopes to receive a second grant that would allow them to execute interventions and reduce environmental hazards in Newport.

AHECs are aspiring to gain recognition throughout the state in order to build meaningful relationships with local health care facilities, community organizations, and educational institutions. We aim to make great strides in improving the overall quality of health care throughout the state and throughout the nation. To find out more about the AHEC network, please visit the following websites:

<http://biomed.brown.edu/ahec/index.php>
www.centralriahec.org
www.northernriahec.org
www.nationalahec.org

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Text of a weekly email announcement made by Richard Krugman, MD, Dean of the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine, and Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs:

“This is national AHEC week. I can’t think of a better way to celebrate than with the story of Mary Arceneaux. Mary lives in Cortez in Southwestern Colorado. She benefits from an AHEC or Area Health Education Center. This vital national program helps provide health care and recruits health care workers to rural areas. One good turn deserves another. So Mary decided to rent living space to one of our medical students, Joyce Gallegos, during Joyce’s February-March rotation Cortez’s Southwest Memorial Hospital. It was a nice thing for Mary to do. But recently, Mary did something even nicer. According to Western Colorado AHEC executive director Carol Giffin-Jeansonne, Mary Arceneaux sent an un-cashed \$410 housing expense check to Giffin-Jeansonne at the AHEC office in Grand Junction. With the un-cashed check came a handwritten note. It said simply: “I’m returning this check because the cost for housing this student is very minimal. Please accept it back. Thanks.” Mary calls Joyce “a delight.” I’d say the same thing about Mary. The AHEC folks will get her a gift certificate to Starbucks, her favorite coffee house. Her spirit of cooperation is an inspiration for the entire AHEC network and its important mission. The Colorado AHEC exhibit at the National Western Stock Show provided blood pressure screenings to over 1,000 people, cardiac risk assessments and education to 850 folks and heart health risk and education to 680 school children. In addition, AHEC provided information on health careers to hundreds of elementary and high school visitors. Meanwhile, the Central Colorado AHEC sponsored the Denver Regional Science Fair for nearly 300 students, providing awards to dozens of junior high and high school scientists and sending two winners to an international science fair. In June, AHEC’s Summer Health Institute will host 65 high school students from across Colorado for a week of intense exploration of health careers, science education, and clinical shadowing.”

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