



Title VII Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Background & Recommendation

BACKGROUND ON AHECS

The national AHEC network consists of more than 300 AHEC program offices and centers, serving over 85% of the counties in the United States, with more than 45 years of experience.

The purpose of the AHEC program is to meet the needs of the communities they serve through robust community-academic partnerships, with a focus on exposure, education, and training of the current and future health care workforce, such as the development of an AHEC Scholars program. AHECs have a continual focus on improving the health care system by working with academic institutions, health care settings (including CHCs), behavioral health practices, and community-based organizations. Through these longstanding partnerships, the AHECs employ traditional and innovative approaches to develop and train a diverse health care workforce prepared to deliver culturally appropriate, high-quality, team-based care, with an emphasis on primary care for rural and underserved communities.

AHECs are embedded in the communities they serve, positioning them to respond rapidly to emergent training needs of health professionals, health professions students, and interprofessional teams on issues associated with natural disasters, disease outbreaks, and substance use disorders.

AUTHORIZATION AND FUNDING STATUS

- AHEC program's most recent authorization was \$125 million for FY2010 through FY2014.
- The FY 2018 funding level for the AHEC program is \$38.25 million.
- AHECs FY 2019 funding request: \$40.25 million

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TITLE VII AHEC REAUTHORIZATION

Statutory language sets a target of \$250,000 per AHEC center (or \$67 million annually for the national network) to support stable and consistent AHEC programs nationwide. An authorization level of \$67 million provides critical funding opportunities to support AHECs:

- Strengthen linkages between university health science centers and community health service delivery systems to provide additional training sites for students, faculty, and practitioners;
- Implement HRSA's new initiative - to develop an intensive, community-based AHEC Scholars Program which involves the education, training and placement of more than 3,500 health professions students annually in rural and/or underserved settings;
- Increase the return on federal investment by leveraging state and local resources to meet the required 1:1 funding match in support of health workforce development;
- Expedite the transformation of the health care system by training the workforce for a value-based, patient-centered, team-based practice environment for innovative models of care;
- Promote training for integration of oral health and behavioral health in primary care.

Questions should be addressed to:

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