

Connecting students to careers



Professionals to communities



And communities to better health.



www.NationalAHEC.org



National AHEC
Organization

Success of the AHEC Network



The AHEC (Area Health Education Centers) program was developed by Congress in 1971 to recruit, train and retain a health professions workforce committed to underserved

populations. The AHEC program helps bring the resources of academic medicine to address local community health needs. The strength of the AHEC Network is its ability to creatively adapt national initiatives to help address local and regional healthcare issues.

Today, 54 AHEC programs with more than 200 centers operate in almost every state and the District of Columbia. Approximately 120 medical schools and 600 nursing and allied health schools work collaboratively with AHECs to improve health for underserved and under-represented populations.

A Vital Continuing Role for AHECs

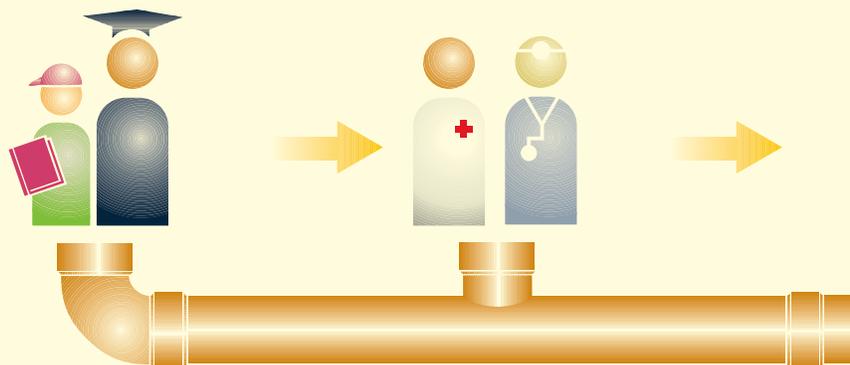
Imbalances in our healthcare system result in marked inequities in access to and quality of healthcare services. This perpetuates disparities in health status and the under-representation of minority and disadvantaged individuals in the healthcare workforce. AHEC programs play a key role in correcting these inequities and strengthening the nation's health care safety net. Through community-based interdisciplinary training programs, AHECs identify, motivate, recruit, train, and retain a health care workforce committed to underserved populations.

A National Pipeline For Community-

The impact of AHECs is reflected in their perfor

CONNECTING STUDENTS TO CAREERS

- ▶ Over 379,000 students introduced to health career opportunities
- ▶ Over 33,000 students received more than 20 hours of health career exposure, information and academic enhancements to prepare them for health professions training programs



CONNECTING PROFESSIONALS TO

- ▶ Over 44,000 health professions students at community-based sites
- ▶ Nearly 8,000 of the community-based training sites are in designated areas, including over 3,500 in designated areas and almost 1,000 at Community Health Centers
- ▶ Over 60% of the health professions students are from underserved areas

Key AHEC Initiatives & Outcomes

Recruit under-represented minority and disadvantaged students into health professions through a broad range of programs

Impact—Minority and disadvantaged students are significantly under-represented in health professions and are more likely to practice in underserved communities.

Develop and support community-based interdisciplinary training of health professions students in underserved areas.

Impact—Students who are exposed to underserved communities are more likely to return to these communities to practice.

Facilitate and support practitioners, facilities and community-based organizations in effectively addressing critical local health issues.

Impact—AHECs are flexible and efficient mechanisms for addressing a wide and evolving variety of healthcare issues on the local level.

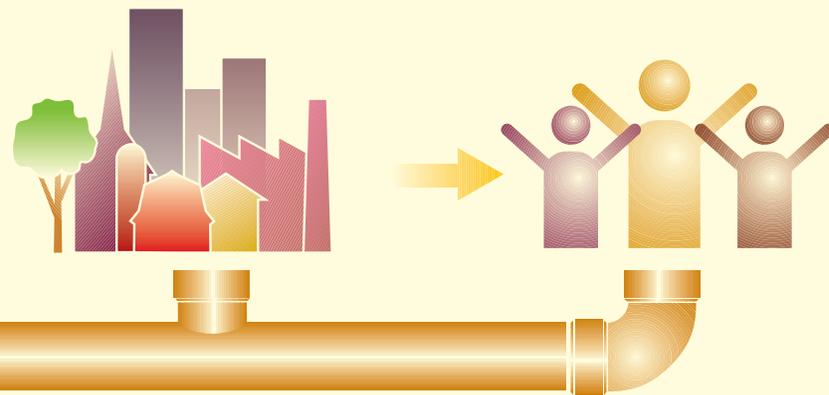
Provide continuing education and other services to improve the quality of community-based care.

Impact—AHECs provide continuing medical education on a wide variety of topics, to enhance the ability of physicians and other healthcare providers to provide high quality patient care.



Based Health Professions Education

performance. Data below is for the 2008 program year.



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES TO BETTER HEALTH

- ▶ Over 482,000 health professionals received training through AHEC continuing education programs
- ▶ Almost half of the continuing education program participants were physicians (26%) or nurses (20%)
- ▶ Awarded 1.1 million contact hours of continuing education programs

COMMUNITIES

received training at 17,530 community-

training sites were located in underserved Health Professions Shortage Areas (HPSAs) Centers

participants were physicians (42%) or nurses (19%)

NAO Committee on Research and Evaluation 2008, CPMS/UPR

AHEC funding at the federal level is through the Bureau of Health Professions, HRSA

The AHEC Mission

To enhance access to quality healthcare, particularly primary and preventative care, by improving the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals through community/academic educational partnerships.

“AHECs provide a unique and valuable infrastructure for “rolling out” a wide range of federal and state workforce development, professional education and health promotion initiatives. These programs have established relationships in local communities built on trust and demonstrated performance. State and federal agencies find they can reach communities faster and with fewer bureaucratic hassles if they use AHEC as a platform.”

- Findings reported in Executive Summary, An Evaluative Summary of the AHEC Program by the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002

“Area Health Education Centers improve access to quality health care, and are critical to expanding the pipeline of health professionals. What is so special about AHECs is that they do this through educational partnerships with the community and academia.”

- Sen. Chuck Hagel, R-NE

“AHECs do it all ... AHECs are essential: intricately woven into the fabrics of their regions, benefiting their communities in countless ways.”

- Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-MD

“Without AHEC, I would not have experienced life as a clinician in those communities. AHEC plays a vital role in exposing students to underserved areas. Because of my rotations arranged by AHEC, I was given the opportunity to become a more well-rounded clinician.”

- Natalie Ough, Physician Assistant



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NAO is the national organization that supports and advances the AHEC network in improving the health of individuals and communities by transforming health care through education.

National AHEC Organization (NAO)

7044 S. 13th St.
Oak Creek, WI 53154
Phone: 414-908-4953 Fax: 414-768-8001
Key Contact: Paul Rossmann
p.rossmann@NationalAHEC.org

Federal AHEC Branch

Louis D. Coccodrilli, MPH, Branch Chief
Parklawn Building, Room 9-05
5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857
Phone: 301-443-6950 Fax: 301-443-0157
lcoccodrilli@hrsa.gov