



BROWN
Alpert Medical School



**National AHEC
Organization**

*Connecting students to careers,
professionals to communities,
and communities to better health.*

National AHEC Week March 23-27, 2009!

What the heck is AHEC? AHEC (Area Health Education Center) 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 academic/community partnerships that link the resources of academic health centers with the needs of the communities. The AHEC challenge is to assist communities in obtaining the health resources and opportunities necessary to improve the quality of life, with a particular focus on underserved populations.

The AHEC program was established in 1971 through legislation under the U.S. Public Health Services Act. There are 52 medical schools and 2 nursing schools that have an AHEC program in the United States, affiliated with 208 community-based AHECs in 47 states and the District of Columbia.

The RI AHEC program was established in 2004, and is located at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. The Central RI AHEC Program, located in Pawtucket, was established in 2005 and serves the central portion of the state. The Northern RI AHEC Program, located in Woonsocket, serves the northern portion of Rhode Island, and was established in 2006. The Southern RI AHEC Program, located in Newport, was established in 2007. Each of the RI AHEC programs work with community based boards and advisory committees to meet the health care educational needs of the area.

The RI AHEC Network helps organize clinical training for students in medicine, nursing, allied health, pharmacy, mental health and social work at a variety of sites and helps recruit and retain health care professionals in rural and underserved areas. Additionally, the RI AHEC Network presents affordable, high quality educational lectures and workshops on health care issues for professionals. In fiscal year 2007, there were nearly 11,000 hours of continuing education offered by the RI AHEC Network with 2,300 participants. Additionally, 413 health professionals working in medically underserved communities were supported in some fashion by the RI AHEC Network.

Also in FY2007, The RI AHEC Network also worked with 170 medical preceptors and is affiliated with each of Rhode Island's academic health training sites that do outstanding work in teaching health professions students. The next time you see a student in the hospital or in a physician's office, you will see an example of how the RI AHEC Network is preparing health care professionals throughout our state to meet the health care needs of all citizens of Rhode Island.

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