

NATIONAL AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER ORGANIZATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2008



**National AHEC
Organization**

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

www.NationalAHEC.org



A Message from the NAO President

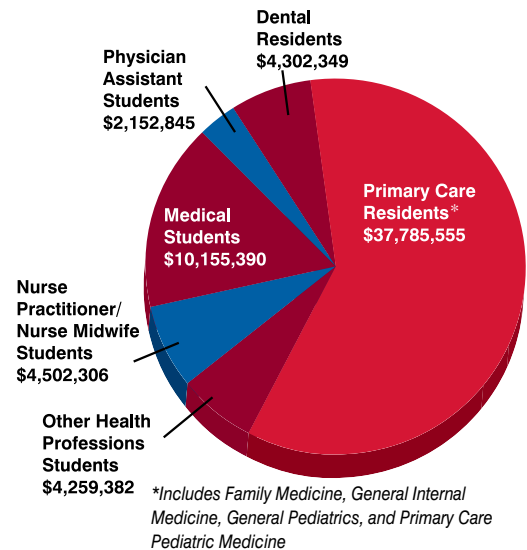
The National AHEC Organization (NAO) is the professional membership organization representing a National network of Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) consisting of university-based program offices and community-based centers. This report demonstrates AHEC's continued effectiveness in health professions workforce development, training and education.

Title VII Health Professions Training Program originally authorized AHEC to develop and provide support for the health professions workforce critical to the Nation's two safety net programs. AHECs are the workforce development mechanism that supports both Community Health Center programs and the National Health Service Corps. AHECs provide the pipeline, moving underrepresented students into higher education, health careers, and the health professions workforce. This promotes improvement of access to care by building capacity and promoting the pursuit of health career education from within communities. It promotes the diversity of the health professions workforce by targeting underrepresented students while helping to eliminate health disparities in the health professions workforce.

In this era of shifting healthcare resources, AHEC's role has become more critical. AHECs are the established link between academic health programs and communities; AHECs are the link between academic health science research and translation of research into community service; AHECs are the link between K-12, higher education, and promotion of health careers. In this report you will see highlights of the University of South Florida AHEC's college-level pipeline programs and an overview of programs like the California State University Online RN to BSN program sponsored by Shasta Community AHEC Center in rural Northern California.

Many AHECs expand their work into community-based health education and training programs to fill gaps created by the National economic crisis. Examples highlighted include the Asthma Clinic in North Carolina, the Northeast Minnesota Health Career Enrichment Program, and Hudson Mohawk AHEC's successful pipeline program. These examples demonstrate the differences AHECs make in communities—to individuals and to students—and they are the tip of the

Value of Health Services Delivered in FY2008 (Percent of \$63,157,827)



iceberg if you look across the country for successful projects conducted in both program offices and centers.

We are great collaborators; we know that it takes partnership to accomplish major change. We have a strong network for national public health and research information dissemination to health professions training programs, community-based programs and centers. We are aligned with the National Health Service Corps, National Rural Health Association, National Association of Community Health Centers, and other strategic partners as we work closely with HRSA and other federal agencies to respond to the crisis of healthcare workforce shortages and healthcare reform. With over 38 years of successful programming, and in the words of visionary National AHEC Organization leadership: "We are on the ground and ready to go." Please join us.

Rose Yuhos, RN, NAO President, 2008-2009



Health Quest

To a Career in Health Care: A Success Story

By Jill Walls, Hudson Mohawk AHEC Program Director, Glens Falls, NY

Dressed in green scrubs with a stethoscope around his neck, Michael Whalen looks like one of the many dedicated staff at Inter Lakes Health Center. What one doesn't see is the story behind the scrubs and stethoscope.

Michael was chosen as a high school freshman to take part in Health Quest, a pipeline program of the Hudson Mohawk AHEC. Michael was placed at Inter Lakes Health Center in Ticonderoga, New York. The Health Quest experience led to Michael becoming an employee at Inter Lakes, where he worked every summer during high school and throughout the school year.

The staff at Inter Lakes were initially skeptical about Health Quest, but they were quickly impressed with Michael's dedication. During his first few weeks he walked around with a notepad, stopping people and asking questions. His commitment paid off, and nurses began to nurture him and took a vested interest in his success.

Michael thought he might be interested in health care but didn't know exactly where that could take him until Health Quest. Through Health Quest and continued employment, Michael developed a focus and saw that his future lay in health care. He joined the local EMS, where he is respected for not only his eagerness to learn, but also his abilities.

Michael graduated from high school and enrolled in the Registered Nursing program at Clinton County Community College. His ultimate goal is to become a physician, specializing in ER/Trauma or Pediatrics.

When asked if he would return to work at Inter Lakes, Michael paused, slowly smiled, and said, "I will always keep in touch with the hospital and see if they need help and even if I am working elsewhere—I will stay connected to Inter Lakes. Going back to Inter Lakes is like going back home."



Hudson Mohawk AHEC Health Quest Participant, Michael Whalen, and Inter Lakes Health Center Director of Nursing, Pat Chamberlain, RN

Students Introduced to Health Careers

(20+ hour programs)

Grades K-8.	184,268
Grades 9-12.	181,446
College.	13,833

Total Students 379,547

Students in Enrichment Programs

(> =20 hour programs)

Grades K-8.	8,369
Grades 9-12.	21,558
College.	3,201

Total Students 33,128



The Importance of Health Education to Individuals and Communities

California State University (CSU) Chico, Sponsored by Shasta Community AHEC Center

RN to BSN Online Nursing Program

By Alice Knipe, BSN, RN, CPN

I am a first-generation college graduate. Education has always been very important in my family. My parents inspired me to find something better than working in the fields. My goal during high school was to obtain a career and go to work. I was not able to afford the tuition for a State or University education at that time, so I attended the local junior college.

I acquired my associate degree in nursing and worked on a medical surgical unit for five years. After transferring to a pediatric unit, I was given the opportunity to manage the unit and have been doing so for the past 18 years.

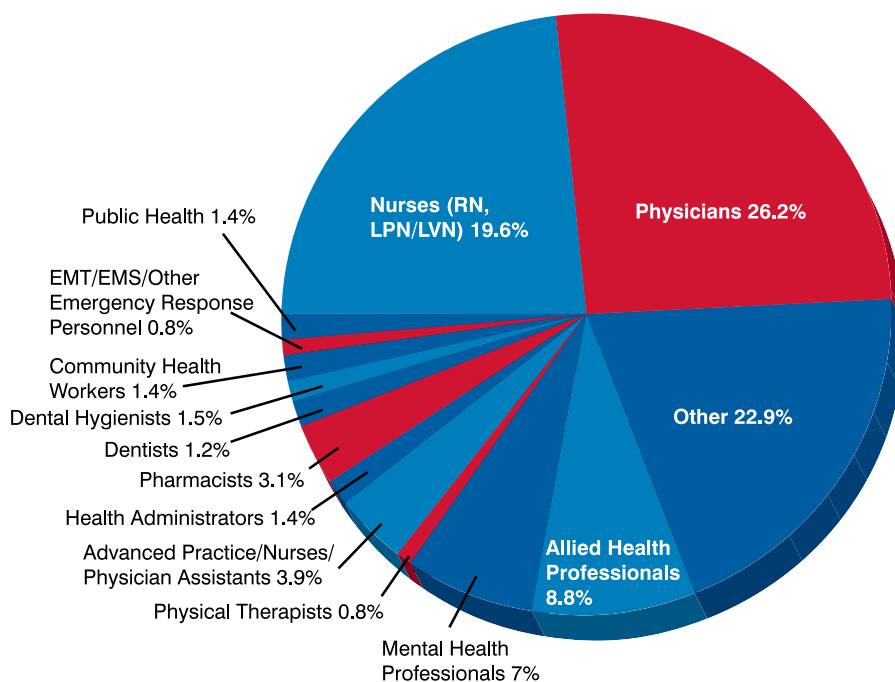
My desire to continue my education was stimulated by the interaction with the nursing students from CSU Chico. Working as a preceptor to the students stimulated my desire to teach, but it was not financially feasible for me to pursue the BSN program full-time.

The development of the online program was the solution to achieve my higher educational goals. The program allowed for continued employment and minimal disruption of my family life. The program offered classes in a self-directed atmosphere that allowed easy access to the instructor and students. I graduated in 2003 with my BSN from CSU Chico and am currently enrolled in their MSN online program.

Teaching for the California State University system is one of my future goals. The availability of higher education online allows the opportunity for others who have limitations and restrictions to take the step of acquiring advanced degrees. I look forward to participating in other online programs to continue my education in either a specialty nursing field or obtaining my PhD in Nursing.

Health Professions in Continuing Education Programs

**(Total Participants: 482,281
Total Contact Hours: 1,160,178)**





Providing Better Access to Health Care

PharmD Provides Care at Asthma Clinic in North Carolina

The management of chronic diseases is a challenge for patients and healthcare providers across the United States. Management of diseases like asthma takes a team approach similar to that being provided at the Asthma Clinic in Rockingham County, North Carolina. For the past 11 years, Peter Gal, PharmD, director of pharmacy research and education services for Greensboro AHEC, has collaborated with Debra Allen, a nurse practitioner, and other practitioners to provide care to asthma patients.

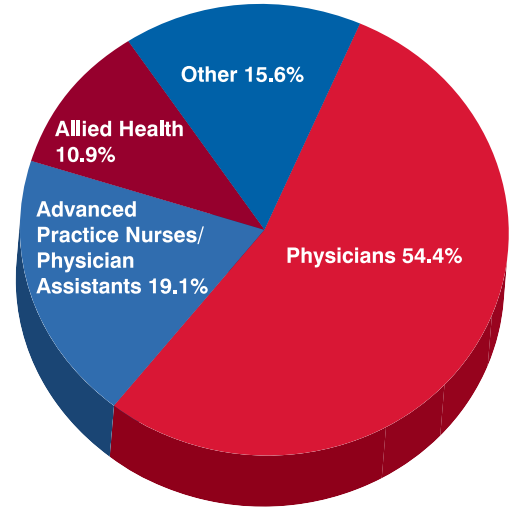
“Since starting the Asthma Clinic, Peter has provided expert one-on-one care to asthma patients in need of a comprehensive care plan,” said Allen. “Before Peter began providing his clinical services, patients did not have access to such expertise or they had to travel out of town to receive care.”

All referred patients have access to this clinic regardless of their ability to pay. “The Asthma Clinic continues to grow with increased referrals from practitioners due to its positive outcomes,” adds Allen. “Also, patients are comfortable sharing important information, such as smoking habits, with Peter because he is approachable and non-judgmental.”

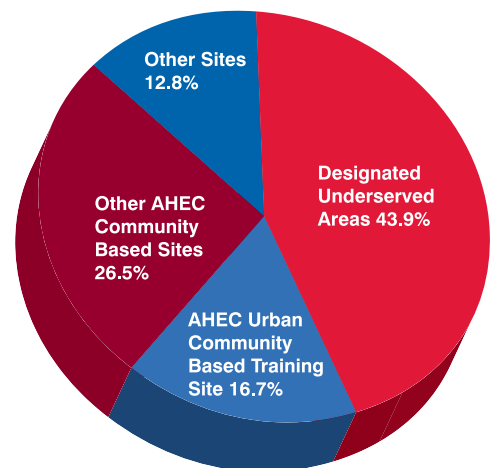
Through the Prescription Assistance Program, some uninsured patients are able to receive samples of medication when needed. “These actions have had a positive impact on the healthcare costs for our community by helping patients manage their disease better and avoid visits to the local Emergency Department,” concludes Allen. “Peter always encourages patients to take control of their disease and he, along with Greensboro AHEC, have touched the lives of many in Rockingham County.”

Peter Gal continues to provide his clinical services to the Asthma Clinic on a monthly basis where he follows 50-60 cases a year.

Community Faculty Preceptors (percent of 16,692 Preceptors by discipline)



Community-Based Training* (percent of 17,530 Sites)



*Sites meeting more than one designation were counted more than once.



Encouraging Healthy Habits and Healthcare Careers



A display of items at a health fair to promote healthier living

Northeast Minnesota AHEC Launches Health Career Enrichment Program

After conducting a regional K-12 needs assessment, the Northeast Minnesota AHEC realized that health workforce development was lacking at the elementary school level. Moreover, alarming rates of pediatric obesity and a lack of proper nutrition knowledge were significant concerns for residents in the region.

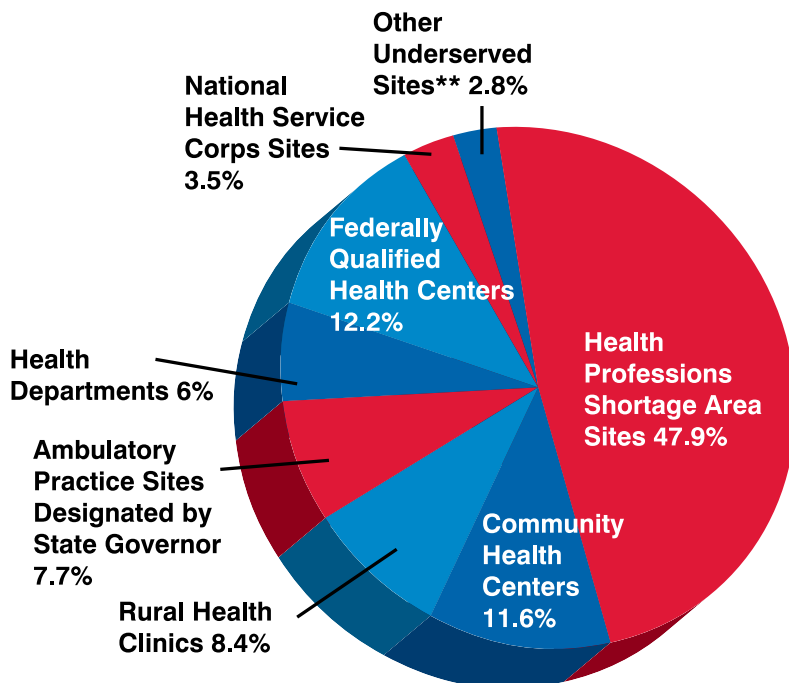
Brittany Morgan, a Health Career Specialist who is also a licensed health teacher in Minnesota, decided to address these glaring needs by developing an innovative program to make the Northeast Minnesota AHEC's K-12 pipeline more inclusive. The result is Northeast Minnesota AHEC's Health Career Enrichment Program (H.C.E.P.). The program utilizes a kit for first through sixth grade students that focuses on healthy habits and health careers.

The H.C.E.P. is a comprehensive, flexible program that lets the teacher meet the educational needs and objectives of the students in their classroom. A kit is delivered to a classroom and left with a teacher for two weeks. Each kit contains an in-depth curriculum, hands-on activities, videos, and worksheets.

This program has been enthusiastically embraced by over 960 elementary students in Northeast Minnesota.

The H.C.E.P. has met with rave reviews from instructors throughout Minnesota and was adopted by the Minnesota 4-H program. When evaluated, a third-grade teacher stated, "Thank you for providing this wonderful resource because our funds don't allow for health career resources."

Designated Underserved Areas** (percent of 7,703 Sites)



**Health Care for the Homeless Sites, Indian Health Service Sites, Public Housing Primary Care Grantees, Migrant Health Centers



Allowing Students Opportunities to Tackle Real-Life Health Issues

University of South Florida AHEC Showcases Its Pipeline Programs

By Anne DeLotto Baier and Anne Maynard, MPH

The University of South Florida Area Health Education Center took its opportunity to shine recently when the program hosted a visit by representatives from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration and administrators from three local federally qualified health centers (FQHCs).

The visit provided the opportunity to showcase two of AHEC’s “pipeline” programs that target promising underrepresented and disadvantaged youth interested in pursuing careers in health—Interdisciplinary Community Health Scholars (ICHS) and Pre-Medical Student Enrichment Program (PSEP).

ICHS brings teams of students from various health professions together for the summer to help tackle real-life public health issues. Public health graduate students Renee Clarke and LaShanta Rice and medical student Alyssa Brown displayed an educational toolkit their team created for Clean Start, a Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota County initiative to help women have substance-abuse-free pregnancies.

PSEP includes enrichment in the sciences, verbal reasoning, and test taking skills. Participants shadow community physicians, review for the MCAT (medical college entrance examination), work with patient simulators and standardized patients in the Center for Advanced Clinical Learning, and attend clinical seminars on such topics as health disparities, obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

AHEC introduces PSEP and ICHS students to community partners such as local FQHCs. The three FQHC executives present spoke highly of their regard for AHEC and their work with students. “It seems as if the best of the best come to us through you,” reported Brantz Roszel, CEO of Suncoast Community Health Centers.

The desperate need for diverse health professionals who understand patients from different cultural backgrounds and who speak different languages was stressed. The students were commended on their interest in AHEC and care of medically needy populations. And the FQHC executives were unanimous in their desire to one day recruit these health professionals to practice in their clinics!



L-R: ICHS team members Renee Clarke, LaShanta Rice and Alyssa Brown displaying their Clean Start: Helping Women to Have Substance Free Pregnancies toolkit

Health Professions Students Trained at Community-Based Sites (percent of 44,675 Students)

