Area Health Education Centers Program: An Overview

Rural Health Innovations: National Rural Health Resource Center
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Agenda

• AHEC Program Overview
  • AHEC Footprint
  • AHEC Model

• AHEC Scholars Program
  • Behavioral Health Integration

• AHEC Opioid-Related Activities
  • Vermont AHEC
  • Nevada AHEC

• Strategic Partnerships
  • Montana AHEC (Montana State University)
  • West Texas AHEC (Texas Tech University)

• Q&As
AHEC Program Overview

• **Purpose:**
  • To develop and enhance education and training networks within communities, academic institutions, and community-based organizations.

• **Goal:**
  • To prepare a diverse, culturally competent primary care workforce representative of the communities served
  • To improve health workforce distribution throughout the nation, particularly among rural and underserved areas and populations
  • To develop and maintain a health care workforce that is prepared to deliver high quality care in a transforming health care delivery system with emphasis on rural and underserved areas and communities
AHEC Program

• **Grantee Snapshot:**
  - 49 AHEC Program Awardees
  - Awardees subcontracted with 261 regional community-based AHEC centers
  - Centers operate in 46 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Guam and the Republic of Palau

• **Target Population:**
  - High school students (grades 9-12)
  - Undergraduate students
  - Health professions students
  - Practicing health professionals

• **Current Project Period:**
  - September 1, 2017-August 31, 2022
STREAMLINED AREAS OF FOCUS

**Distribution • Diversity • Practice Transformation**

- **AHEC Scholars**
  - HRSA/AHEC branded interdisciplinary educational and training program

- **Core Topic Areas**
  - Inter-professional Education • Behavioral Health Integration • Social Determinants of Health • Cultural Competency • Practice Transformation • Current/Emerging Health Issues

- **Strategic Partnership Activities**
  - Strategic partnerships to coordinate educational/training activities to maximize the impact and outcome

- **Statewide Evaluation**
  - Must develop and implement a statewide evaluation in collaboration with AHEC Centers

- **Community-Based Experiential Training**
  - Training must be team-based and specialized in rural and underserved areas and populations

- **Pipeline**
  - Limited funding to support youth public health pipeline (9th - 12th grade) program

- **Continuing Education**
  - Limited funding for continuing education activities focused on the Core Topic Areas for health professionals
HRSA/AHEC Branded Interprofessional Education Program Includes:

• Longitudinal program with interdisciplinary curricula.
• Community-based, experiential or clinical training in rural and/or underserved settings (e.g., PCMH, team-based).
• Diverse student cohort with representation from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented minorities.
• Establishment of strategic partnerships that will support the successful implementation.
• Individual-level data on program participants, with required one-year post-completion data on employment outcomes (e.g., rural/underserved primary care).

• One of the key focus areas is behavioral health integration
Enhanced AHEC Model
Driving Innovation

- AHEC Scholars Programs
- Serve on the admissions committee for the school of medicine (or nursing, if applicable)
- Establishment of Strategic Partnerships
- Develop and Implementation of a Statewide Evaluation
- National Recognition on health literacy, opioid and substance use disorder (OUD, SUD) treatment and telehealth
Opioid-Related Activities

**Vermont AHEC**
- Promote the Prescription Drug Monitoring System
- Disseminate “Improving Opioid Prescribing: Solutions for Vermont Practice Fast Track and Facilitator Toolkits”
- Work with prescriber education
- Develop and deliver QI programs to practices in the topic areas of opioid prescribing
- Train medical students on proper opioid prescribing rules in VT

**Nevada AHEC**
- Educate providers about Nevada opioid prescribing laws
- Hosted opioid summit in the region to create awareness of the opioid crisis
- Project ECHO
AHECs & Strategic Partnerships

• **Montana AHEC**
  • Recipient of Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) funding
  • Coordinating field placements for community health workers (CHWs) and students enrolled in behavioral health training programs.
  • Career Development/Job Placement upon completion of degree program/certification

• **AHEC Activities**
  • Medical and allied health students complete clinical hours within a community health clinic in which they spend most of their time with the behavioral health team with a poverty focus.
  • Behavioral Health Career Camps (high school students)
AHECs & Strategic Partnerships

• **West Texas AHEC (Texas Tech University)**
  - Recipient of Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) funding
  - Established CHW Program with a behavioral health focus
  - Veteran-specific curriculum included
    - Cultural competency
    - Telehealth/Telemedicine
  - 20 hour rotations at behavioral health sites (recruited 30 CHW participants)

• **AHEC Activities**
  - CEUs in behavioral health integration into primary care
  - AHEC Scholars Program
Questions
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