

Florida Area Health Education Centers (AHECs)

University of Florida AHEC Program • Gainesville

- ❶ West Florida AHEC, Crestview
- ❷ Big Bend AHEC, Tallahassee
- ❸ Suwannee River AHEC, Alachua
- ❹ Northeast Florida AHEC, Jacksonville

University of South Florida AHEC Program • Tampa

- ❺ Gulfcoast North AHEC, Land O' Lakes
- ❻ Gulfcoast South AHEC, Sarasota

Nova Southeastern University AHEC Program • Fort Lauderdale

- ❼ Central Florida AHEC, Apopka
- ❽ Everglades AHEC, West Palm Beach

University of Miami AHEC Program • Miami

- ❾ Miami-Dade AHEC, Miami
- ❿ Florida Keys AHEC, Marathon

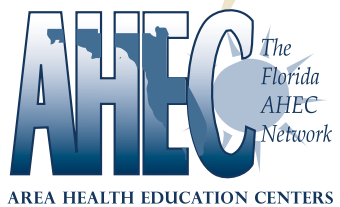
Florida State University AHEC Program • Tallahassee

THE FLORIDA AHEC NETWORK

www.flaheec.org



Creating community and academic partnerships for the health of underserved communities.



The Florida Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Network

is an extensive, statewide system for health professional education and support founded upon 10 regional area health education centers. Each center is supported by an AHEC program at one of the state's five medical schools. This organizational structure enables the centers to draw upon the resources of the academic health centers in addressing local health care issues. Over the past decade the Florida AHEC Network has addressed the primary health care needs of Florida's most vulnerable populations by:

- **Caring for Communities**
- **Connecting Communities with Resources**
- **Encouraging Students to Pursue the Path to Health Careers**
- **Serving while Learning**



Caring for Communities

With 10 centers strategically located throughout Florida and program offices at each of the state's five medical schools, the Florida AHEC Network is able to promote community health and serve as a vehicle for matching the educational needs of health professions faculty and students with the healthcare needs of local communities. The Florida AHEC Network coordinates clinical training opportunities for health professions students in rural and underserved communities and facilitates community-based health education programs that promote wellness and prevent disease in medically underserved communities.

- Last year the Florida AHEC Network provided more than 1.1 million hours of clinical training to health professions students and residents at community-based settings in order to expose them to the needs, challenges and practice opportunities that exist in these locations. The dollar amount placed on such care is valued at over \$17.5 million.
- Almost 70 percent of these hours took place in medically underserved sites.

Connecting Communities with Resources

There are many parts of Florida in which access to quality continuing education programs or library services is not readily available. Rural and underserved providers can't afford to hire their own trained health information specialists, support a professional medical library or travel to attend continuing education programs. The Florida AHEC Network provides information and support services for community health professionals working in underserved areas.

- Last year the Florida AHEC Network provided more than 84,450 hours of professional continuing education to practitioners throughout the state. Over 61,900 of these hours were for practitioners in underserved sites.
- A total of 16,868 individuals received continuing education from the Florida AHEC Network. Almost 13,000 of these individuals were from underserved sites.
- Florida AHEC Network staff provided over 8,100 hours of technical assistance to partners in community clinics, schools, health departments, community health centers, social service agencies and other organizations.

Encouraging Students to Pursue the Path to Health Careers

Culturally reflective healthcare allows patients an opportunity to be treated by health care providers who are similar to their own racial and ethnic backgrounds. The Florida AHEC Network inspires youth to explore the opportunities available for a career in health. We recruit young people, especially underrepresented minorities and disadvantaged youth, from elementary school to college, into health professions training programs and follow them through their professional training with the goal of having them practice in rural and underserved sites. Student enrichment programs such as health career camps, mentoring programs and academic preparatory courses are designed to generate interest in health careers particularly among disadvantaged and underrepresented youth.

- Last year more than 56,000 hours of enrichment programs were provided to students in grades K-12 as well as to students in technical schools, community colleges and universities.
- Of 1,078 students attending these programs, 77 percent were racially underrepresented or economically disadvantaged.
- The Florida AHEC Network had an 88.5 percent increase in the number of enrichment program participants from 2003 to 2006.

Serving While Learning

Service learning combines the experience of community service with the benefits of academic study and personal reflection. By exposing students to real-life issues and solutions, students gain valuable insight into their future careers. Service learning is extensively used by AHECs as a means to accomplish educational objectives for health professions students while delivering services to underserved populations.

- 2.3 million Floridians live in health professions shortage areas. An additional 608 primary care physicians are needed to meet their basic health care needs.
- By 2020, Florida will need 61,000 more nurses than are currently projected to be available.
- 56 percent of Florida medical students chose primary care residency programs from 2004-2006. The national average is 38 percent.
- Only 61 percent of medical residents remained in Florida after completing their residency programs.
- Just 20 percent of Florida MDs graduated from medical schools in Florida.