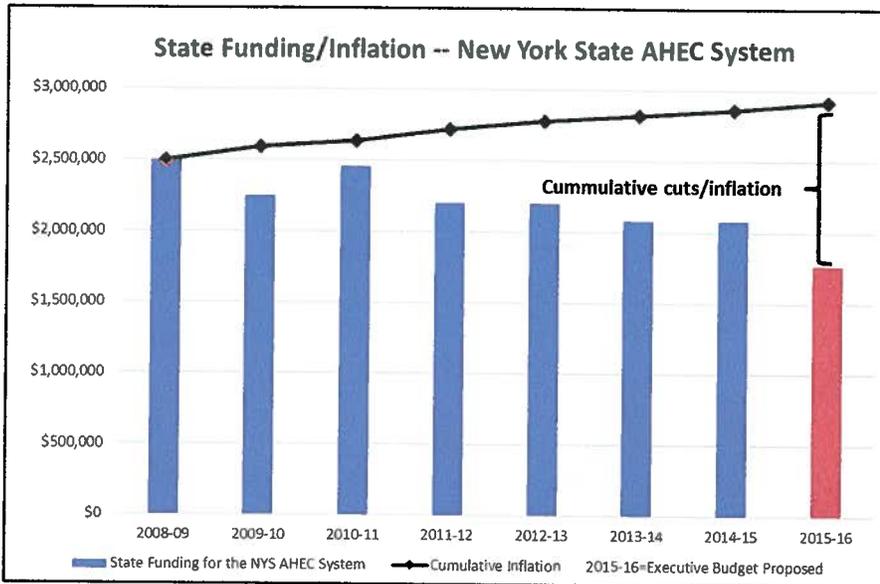


**New York State Joint Legislative Hearing
Health/Medicaid
February 2, 2015**

Testimony Submitted by Mary J. Sienkiewicz, MBA, Director
New York State Area Health Education Center (AHEC) System

1) RETAIN \$2,077,000 – level designated funding – for the New York State AHEC System AND REJECT proposed process to pool health workforce funds for line item programs.

Reductions will devastate programs for middle/high school/post-secondary students, health professions students and health care providers at our nine AHECs. Competitive pools will hinder summer 2015 programs.



2) Funding Crisis

State funding to the New York State AHEC System has decreased by nearly \$450,000 or 17% since 2008 and has been impacted by cumulative inflation of over 13%. During this time, we accomplished more with less and the same with less – with this proposed allocation we are at risk for doing less with less. Our annual budget request for 2015-16 to Commissioner Zucker sought more funding to meet workforce demands. The proposed Executive Budget’s competitive pools and decreased funding will limit AHEC programs and weaken the workforce pipeline.

3) The New York State AHEC System is a proven health workforce leader...from pipeline to practice...with cost-effective, outcomes-driven strategies that keep skills and talents in New York.

- Recruit people of all ages – especially from underserved and minority communities, both urban and rural – to all health careers and disciplines.
- Place students/interns in underserved communities, where they are more likely to work after training.
- Provide continuing education/professional support to practitioners, develop careers ladders and promote workforce re-entry programs for displaced workers.
- College enrollment of AHEC participants exceeds national and state rates. Previous AHEC program participants are now health professionals and precept medical, nursing and health professions students.
- **State funding for AHEC is an excellent return on investment: State – 30.3%, Federal – 33.6% and Grants/Other – 36.1%. State funding is required to leverage federal funding and other grants/contracts.**

4) Workforce is the Infrastructure of the Health Care System

- Provider shortages already limit access to care; forecasted growth will further strain the health care system.
- The New York State AHEC System’s nine independent community-based centers, three regional offices and the Statewide Office have over a decade of health care workforce development experience serving as a neutral broker with all health care disciplines and organizations.
- New York State is transforming primary care with federal/state dollars. Without adequate support for health career pipeline programs, reform initiatives could be delayed as professionals are already in short supply.
- The New York State AHEC System’s “Grow Our Own” programs are a long-term solution to primary care shortages and increasing the diversity of the health care sector. **Each year AHECs receive less than adequate funding, our ability to recruit, mentor, help train and track prospective health care workers is diminished.**

RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

Mission:

The New York State AHEC System focuses on strategies to enhance access to quality health care and improve health care outcomes by addressing the health workforce needs of medically disadvantaged communities and populations through partnerships between institutions that train health professionals and communities that need them most.

- ◆ Develop clinical training opportunities for future health professionals in medically underserved areas; recruit faculty committed to working with them.
- ◆ Encourage young people, especially from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds, to pursue health careers.
- ◆ Provide continuing education and professional support to practitioners, develop career ladders and promote workforce re-entry programs.



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

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Expand/support health professions training programs and community-based training experiences for medical students, health professions students and post secondary students.
- 2) Increase quantity, quality and diversity of health professions faculty committed to working with medical, health professions and post-secondary students in medically underserved areas.
- 3) Enhance local health care workforce through continuing education programs for medical and health care professionals, development and support for career ladders, and promotion of programs that support re-entry workers.
- 4) Increase elementary, secondary, community college and college students' knowledge and awareness of health careers through pipeline programs that promote medicine and health professions as viable options, particularly for students from disadvantaged and underrepresented minority backgrounds, in order to promote a culturally diverse workforce.
- 5) Assess and respond to the health workforce needs of New York State at the regional, county, and where possible, at the sub-county level.
- 6) Enhance statewide support for centers and regions and dynamic statewide needs-based Area Health Education Center System.

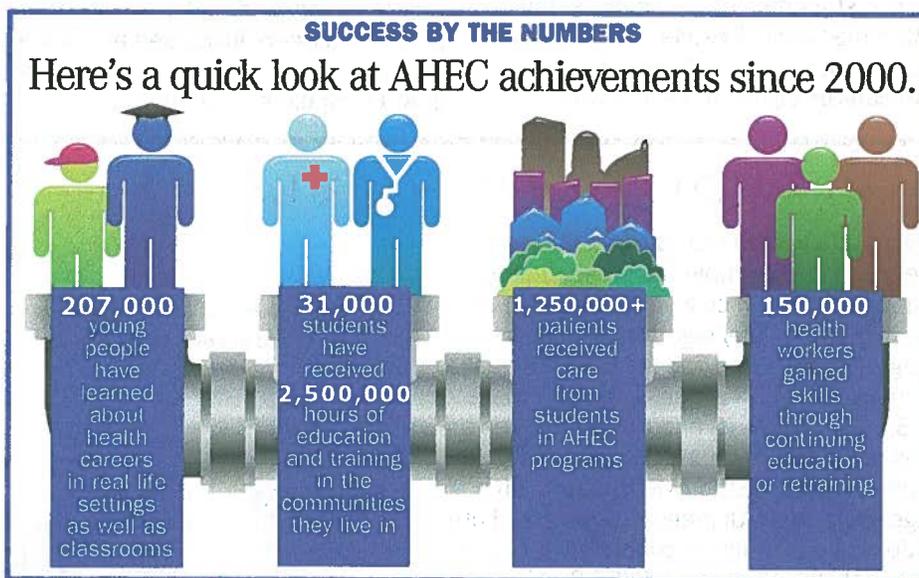
PURPOSE/NEED

New York State suffers from a shortage of health care professionals and lack of diversity in the health workforce. More than 4.4 million people reside in the state's primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), a figure that exceeds the primary care HPSA populations of 48 other states.

The New York State Area AHEC System's recruitment, training and retention strategies are solutions to current health workforce shortages and New York State Department of Labor forecasts that health care jobs will grow at rates more than five times that of all other occupations.

OVERVIEW: OUTREACH 2013-14

- ◆ Nearly 5,600 elementary and middle school students, more than 5,000 high school students and over 1,800 college students participated in health careers programs.
- ◆ Over 2,000 medical, nursing and health professions students were trained by 525 preceptors/faculty in AHEC-sponsored community-based sites (e.g., community health centers, hospitals, clinics and private practices), with an emphasis on underserved communities. Faculty were provided professional development opportunities to improve teaching skills.
- ◆ Nearly 13,500 health professionals received continuing education training in 463 workshops, seminars, conferences, and distance learning programs/series. Retraining initiatives provided health professions training for adult career-changers, displaced and re-entry workers.



Note: These are round numbers. Please call the Statewide Office for detailed statistics.

NYS AHEC NATIONAL LEADERS

The New York State AHEC System Director completed a one-year term as National AHEC Organization (NAO) Past President and Manhattan-Staten Island AHEC Executive Director completed her term as NAO President. Both provided leadership for the July 2014 NAO conference "AHEC: Driving Access to Quality Healthcare Through Innovation, Implementation & Impact." The New York State AHEC System Director chaired NAO's Culture of Evaluation and Learning Work Group focused on collection, review and dissemination of tested evaluation methodologies to ascertain long-term AHEC outcomes.

Making All of New York State a Campus

The New York State AHEC System has established affiliation agreements, participating school agreements and/or collaborative partnerships (to support training, pipeline and/or continuing education programs) with:

- ◆ 218 academic institutions;
- ◆ 352 elementary/secondary schools;
- ◆ 459 hospitals/health care systems/clinics/networks; and
- ◆ 391 community and professional organizations/government agencies/businesses.

"I like how different people with different occupations visit us.

Listening to the requirements of their career is very informative. I love the inspiration and motivation that is given to us."

11th grade HCOP student

"MASH Camp caused me to rethink my career path and think more about the health professions. MedQuest further enforced my decision to become a physician. The two programs got me really excited about the health sciences."

AHEC pipeline program participant who is currently a medical student

"My experience with AHEC helped to solidify my desire to practice medicine in my home community in Western NY. Having the opportunity to work with physicians in this setting during training was influential in my ultimate decision to return here to practice medicine."

AHEC rotation student now a board certified family medicine doctor.

EVALUATION/OVERALL PROCESS

The New York State AHEC System continues to utilize a process-impact approach to evaluate organizational development and programs. This approach incorporates quantitative and qualitative measures to determine the extent to which the AHEC initiatives are implemented as planned and to measure health professions program and community experiences outcomes and impacts.

SHORT TERM OUTCOMES

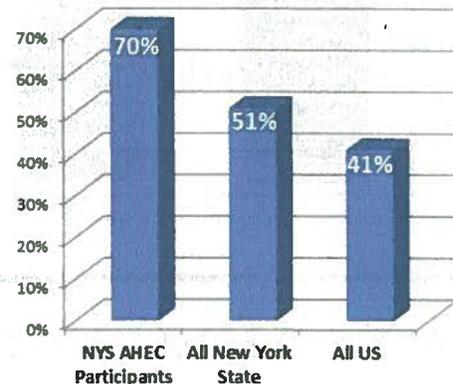
AHECs administered pre/post evaluation instruments to middle school, high school and college-age pipeline program students. The evaluation measured students' change in knowledge and awareness of health careers and assessed students' interest in pursuing health professions. Results indicate that students' knowledge and awareness of health careers significantly ($p < .001$)

improved by 13.2% following program participation. Also based on pre/post results, it can be inferred that students significantly increased their overall knowledge of health care careers following entrance into AHEC programming, and that students' view of health careers increased as a viable option as a result of their participation in AHEC pipeline programs.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

The New York State AHEC System Statewide Office continued to implement longitudinal tracking to ascertain college enrollment rates for past AHEC middle/high school students, now age 18 and older. The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) is partnered with more than 3,500 colleges (2 and 4 year colleges as well as universities), representing 98% of US college students. NSC provides details on college enrollment, degrees received, and often includes college major or concentration. Of the 9,909 past New York State AHEC System participants, between the ages of 18 - 29 years, for whom the New York State AHEC System had adequate identifiable information, the NSC indicated that 70% ($n=6,907$) of them attended at least some college. This rate of college enrollment exceeds that of the same age group in NYS (51%) and the US population (41%) (US Department of Education, 2012).

Percentage of 18-29 year olds enrolled in college for at least one semester



LONG TERM OUTCOMES

Faces of AHEC webpage demonstrates the reach of New York State AHEC System programs by collecting and posting information to the website regarding participants' successes/future education/career plans/degrees/job acquisition, and the role that AHEC played. AHECs across New York State have success stories about young people working as nurses, technicians, social workers and doctors in underserved areas. In addition, previous AHEC program participants are precepting medical, nursing and health professions students and serving on AHEC boards.