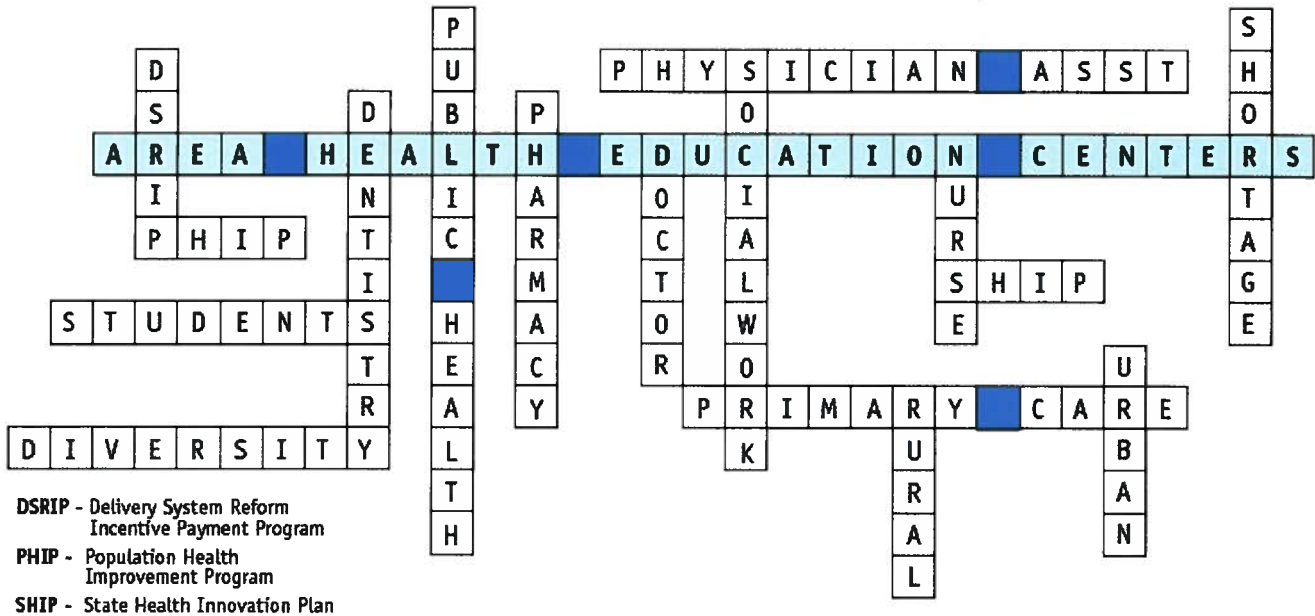




AHEC: Central to Building the Health Workforce for New York State



Testimony

Joint Legislative Public Hearing 2016-2017 Budget Health/Medicaid

February 3, 2016

Kathleen Callan, MSW
Assistant Director
NYS Area Health Education Center (AHEC) System

Leadership for the New York State AHEC System is provided by community-based centers, the Statewide Office at the University at Buffalo and regional offices at Upstate Medical University, Albany Medical College and The Institute for Family Health.

My name is Kathleen Callan. I'm the Assistant Director of the New York State Area Health Education Center System, commonly referred to as AHEC.

I am here today relieved that we are included in the 2016-17 Executive Budget proposal for level funding of \$2,077,000. Thank goodness there are no combined and reduced grant buckets as in last year's proposal. As always, we want to thank the New York State Assembly and Senate for your continuing support including last year's full funding restoration for our health career exposure and exploration programs.

State funds not only help our nine centers, three regional offices and the Statewide Office recruit and help train the next generation of health professionals to work in underserved rural and urban communities, state funds serve as the required match to our federal funding. State funding is an excellent return on investment – our funding consists of approximately one-third State dollars, one-third federal funds and one-third Grants/Other. You will hear examples from the "Grants/Other" section throughout the testimony as I describe competitive grants awarded to the New York State AHEC System.

While we are grateful for level funding it would be incorrect to tell you that we have enough funding to reverse New York's shortage of primary care providers. Since 2008, state funding to the NYS AHEC System has decreased by 17% while at the same time inflation has risen by 13%. We realize that the budget process is a tough time when legislators choose priorities from a state full of worthy programs. We believe expanding efforts to "Grow Our Own" professionals to provide critical health services – professionals like doctors, nurse practitioners and nurses, physician assistants, social workers, dentists and pharmacists – is worthy of additional investment. "Grow Our Own" programs for secondary and post-secondary students are a long-term solution to primary care shortages and increasing the diversity of the health care sector in New York State.

We are all aware that there is a transformation underway in New York and across the country in the way we expect the health system to deliver patient-centered care with increased efficiency. There is no way to accomplish the goals of DSRIP - Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment Program; PHIP – Population Health Improvement Program and SHIP – State Health Innovation Plan without an adequate supply of well-trained medical and allied health professionals. The workforce is the most important part of the health care infrastructure and it needs adequate investment.

The New York State AHEC System is deeply involved in all of the Department of Health initiatives mentioned above and is a consistent voice emphasizing that these programs must include recruiting and training of future health professionals who will carry on health system transformation. As neutral brokers with more than fifteen years of health workforce development, AHECs work with students at all age levels and convene community-based collaborations with health professions schools and health institutions to improve access to care.

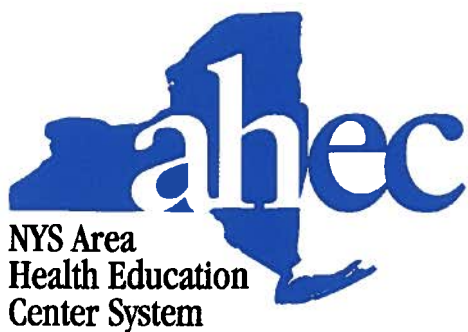
Last year, the New York State AHEC System continued our impressive outreach to students and professionals statewide through partnerships between the health workforce supply side (secondary schools and post-secondary academic institutions) and demand side (health care employers and communities).

- A total of 6,200 elementary and middle school students, nearly 6,000 high school students and nearly 1,200 college students participated in experiential health careers programs with health care providers in your districts. These programs include Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs competitively awarded through the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. Next year, this category will include students served through partnerships with State Department of Education Pathways in Technology (P-TECH) recipients.
- More than 2,500 medical, nursing and other health professions students were trained by 523 preceptors/faculty in AHEC-sponsored community-based sites (community health centers, hospitals, clinics and private practices) with an emphasis on underserved communities.
- Over 12,700 health professionals received continuing education training in 517 workshops, seminars, conferences and distance learning programs. Retraining initiatives provided health professions training for adult career-changers, displaced and re-entry workers. Several AHECs participate in the Department of Health's Health Workforce Retraining Initiative.

In addition to these numbers, our short-term, intermediate and long-term successes are described on page four of our 2014-15 Annual Report submitted to Commissioner Zucker this past July. An excerpt is included in your packet. By tracking students into college and beyond to a health career, we have evidence that demonstrates AHEC programs make a difference.

The best way to understand the true impact of AHEC is to talk to our students and hear firsthand how AHEC changed their lives by providing support, mentorship and hands-on experiences that led to or is leading to a health career and a focus on underserved populations. I would be happy to set up an opportunity for you to talk with AHEC participants back in your districts. You are also all invited to our Winter Open House on Wednesday, February 3 at 9:00am in 711A where students will tell their stories better than I could here.

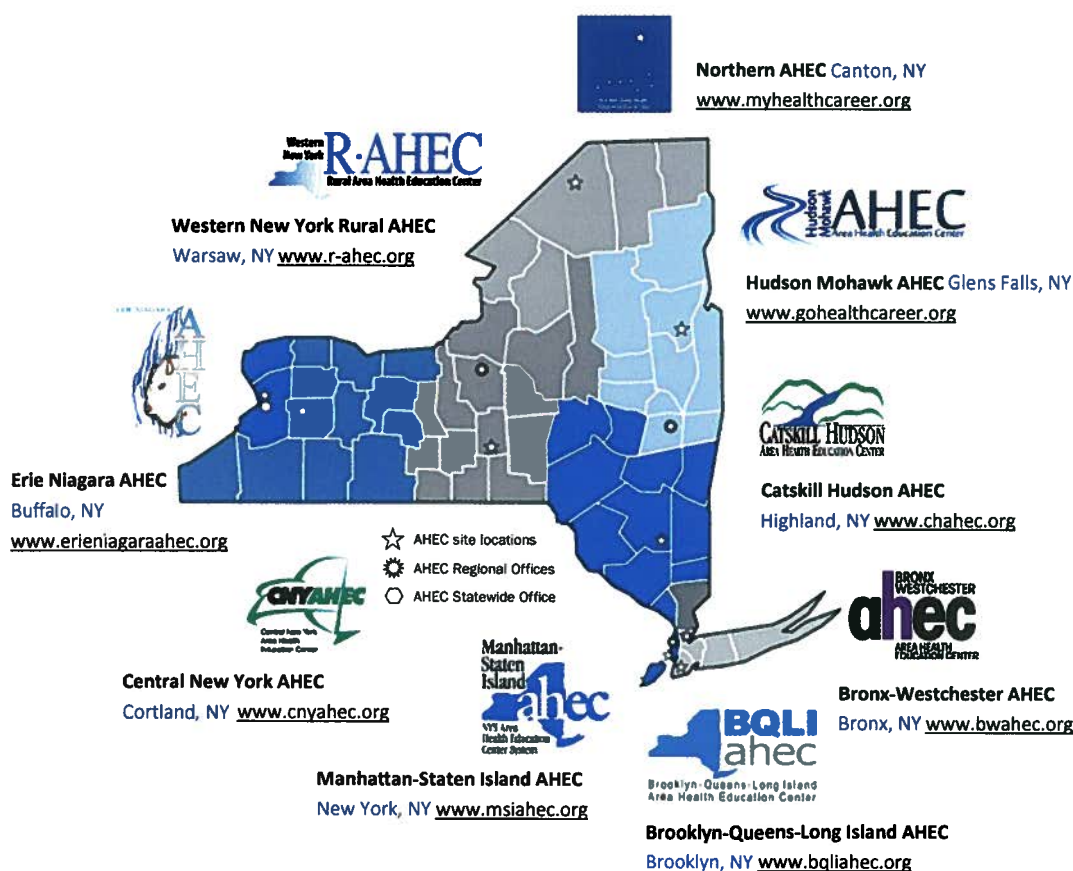
Thank you for this opportunity to speak about the New York State Area Health Education Center System (AHEC) and thank you for your continued support.



Project Objectives/Summary of Accomplishments July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015

NEW YORK STATE AHEC SYSTEM

**“Connecting Students to Careers, Professionals to Communities,
and Communities to Better Health”**



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Central Region Office at Upstate Medical University	Eastern Region Office at Albany Medical College	NY Metropolitan Region Office at Institute for Family Health
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Statewide Office at the University at Buffalo

Statewide Office
University at Buffalo,
Dept. of Family Medicine
77 Goodell St, Suite 220
Buffalo, NY 14203
716-816-7225
www.ahec.buffalo.edu

The New York State AHEC System, comprised of nine AHECs, three regional offices and the Statewide Office, implements community-based strategies that cultivate a more diverse health workforce, address health workforce shortages — particularly primary care, and improve access to quality health care for all New Yorkers.

Project Objectives/Summary of Accomplishments July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015

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.

Recruitment, Training and Retention Strategies

- ◆ 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.

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

According to 2015 HRSA data, there are approximately 3.9 million New Yorkers identified as residing in areas designated as "underserved" for primary care services in New York's 93 area (i.e., non-institutional) primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). It would require over 607 additional primary care practitioners in these areas to remove the shortage status.^[1] The slight majority of primary care HPSAs (50 or 54%) are located in urban counties as defined by the NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources^[2] and 43 (46%) of primary care HPSAs are located in rural counties. The NYS AHEC System's recruitment, training and retention strategies are solutions to current workforce shortages and NYS Department of Labor forecasts that health care jobs will grow at rates more than five times that of other occupations.

[1] Excludes facility HPSAs. As of March 31, 2015. See <http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/topics/shortageAreas.aspx>

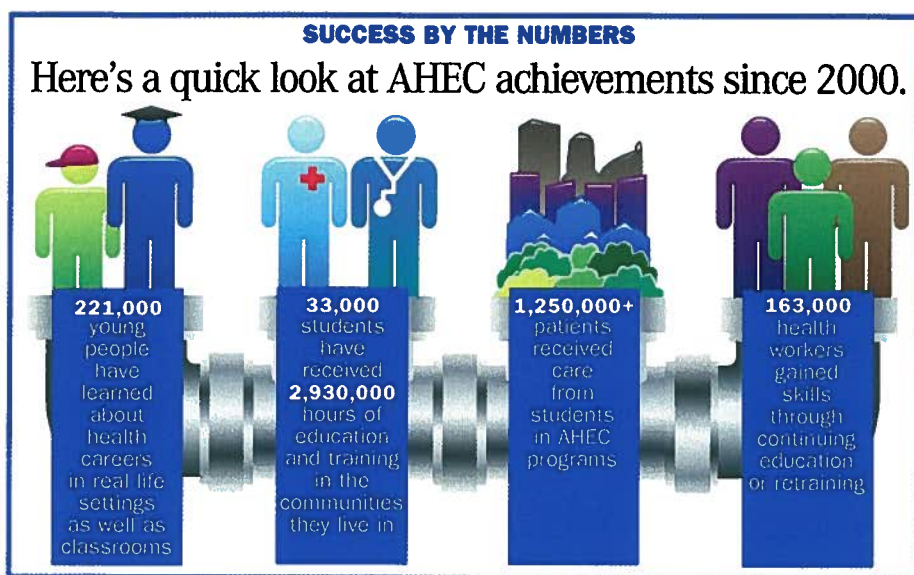
[2] Socioeconomic Trends in New York State: 1950-1990. Albany, NY: New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, September 1994. HPSA data as of May 2012 for rural/urban and September 2014 for HPSA types.

Project Objectives/Summary of Accomplishments

July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015

Overview: Outreach 2014-15

- ◆ A total of 6,200 elementary and middle school students, nearly 6,000 high school students and nearly 1,200 college students participated in health careers programs.
- ◆ Over 2,500 medical, nursing and health professions students were trained by 523 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.
- ◆ Over 12,700 health professionals received continuing education training in 517 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.

Alignment with NYS Department of Health Priorities

- ◆ The New York State AHEC System focused on NYS DOH initiatives: Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP), State Health Innovation Plan (SHIP), Population Health Improvement Program (PHIP) and the Prevention Agenda. October 2014 and February 2015 NYS AHEC System Advisory Board meetings included NYS DOH speakers who shared program-specific information which informed group discussion about AHEC involvement.
- ◆ In October 2014, the NYS AHEC System Statewide Office communicated directly with all local Performing Provider Systems (PPS) leads regarding ways AHECs could enhance Organizational Applications: Section 5 Workforce Strategy and Section 7 Cultural Competency/Health Literacy. Selected AHECs received subcontracts to write portions of DSRIP application. As submission and award processes progressed, four AHECs were included in implementation plans as overall workforce vendors or as subcontractors for workforce training and retraining. Additional AHECs are also involved in PPS workforce committees.
- ◆ Longstanding AHEC participation in Health Workforce Retraining Initiative included awards to R-AHEC, HMAHEC, NAHEC and the Institute for Family Health/NY Metropolitan Region.
- ◆ NYS AHEC System Director was appointed to SHIP/DSRIP Workforce Workgroup which held its first meeting in June 2015.

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:

- 191 academic institutions;**
- 302 elementary/secondary schools;**
- 417 hospitals/health care systems/clinics/networks; and**
- 366 community and professional organizations/government agencies/businesses.**

Project Objectives/Summary of Accomplishments July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015

"This program has given me the most hands-on, learning experience I have ever received. The advice, lesson plans and hands-on skills that I was able to gain, helped me to advance in my classes."

BQLI AHEC pipeline participant

"I got involved with the AHEC during my residency as a family medicine doctor...Had it not been for AHEC I would not have had the opportunity to live and work in this community that desperately needs funding and medical providers."

CHAHEC rotation participant

"With AHEC I was able to experience working with professionals [in bioinformatics], an opportunity that inspired my future."

ENAHEC pipeline participant

"HMAHEC is very much responsible for my choice to study nursing and without the programs I wouldn't have found out I wanted to become an NP..."

HMAHEC pipeline participant

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. Primary and secondary sources are used to track New York State AHEC System participants through the pipeline.

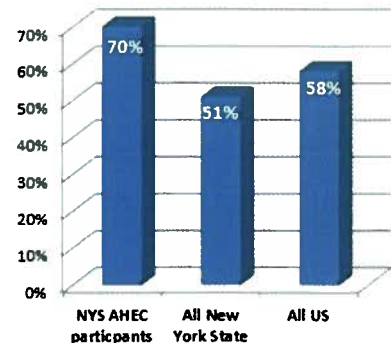
Short Term Outcomes

Multi-year evaluations of NYS AHEC System pipeline programs, of which a majority were multi-session career exploration programs (e.g. MASH, MedTech and MedQuest camps) and internship programs, measured students' change in knowledge and awareness of health careers through a pre/post instrument. Overall, each year students have given the programs positive evaluations. On average 93% of participants reported that the program met their needs and 94% reported that they found the activities interesting.

Ninety-five percent of students felt that the activities and presentations were helpful to someone thinking about working in the health care field and 95% of students said that they learned a lot about health care professions. Based on evaluation results, we have found that students increased their overall knowledge of health careers following entrance into AHEC programming, and students' view of health careers increased as a viable option after their participation in AHEC pipeline programs.

Intermediate Outcomes

The New York State AHEC System continued to implement longitudinal tracking via National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to ascertain college enrollment rates for past AHEC middle/high school students, now age 18 and older. The NSC is partnered with more than 3,300 colleges (2 and 4 year colleges as well as universities), representing 93% of US college students. NSC provides details on college enrollment, degrees received and often college major or concentration. In September 2014, the New York State AHEC System evaluation team submitted 9,909 unique names of past AHEC participants with birthdates to the NSC. The 9,909 unique names were students who had participated in a New York State AHEC System pipeline program anytime between August 2001 and August 2014, and were 17 years old or older as of June 2014. From the results of the NSC data, 70% of AHEC participants were found in the NSC, which shows that they attended at least one semester at a college or university. This rate of college enrollment exceeds that of the same age group in New York State (51%) and the US population (58%).



Long Term Outcomes



The Faces of AHEC webpage demonstrates the reach of New York State AHEC System programs by collecting and posting information regarding past participants' success. The Faces of AHEC website, updated in 2014, features students, their career trajectory and their participation in New York State AHEC programs. The Faces of AHEC web page will be expanded to feature more students within each AHEC region.