



NORTH CENTRAL

Wisconsin Area Health Education Center



Serving Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Marathon, Pepin, Pierce, Portage, Taylor, Waupaca, and Wood counties

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News from North Central Area Health Education Center (NCAHEC)

Hello! I am excited to share a little bit about AHEC and some news from our center.

Created by Congress in 1971, the national AHEC program is a health professions education and outreach program designed to encourage universities and educators to look beyond their institutions to form partnerships that meet community health needs and promote cooperative solutions to local health problems. AHECs are in 48 states and federally funded through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

In Wisconsin, funding for AHEC is also appropriated through the state legislature. The **Wisconsin AHEC** State Program Office administers the funds through the UW School of Medicine and Public Health, directing the provisions of the grant to seven non-profit regional centers that cover all 72 counties.

The mission of **WI AHEC** is to advance health equity in our rural and underserved communities through education and training opportunities that aim to increase the diversity, distribution, and development of our healthcare workforce.

North Central AHEC serves an 11-county region that stretches across the central part of the state and addresses health disparities and healthcare workforce shortages through the many programs we offer (see page 2).

The pandemic continues to pose challenges to delivering community-based programs but early on we successfully shifted to a virtual format. Through it all, we have continued to grow our center and expand program offerings to serve more students as well as better serve our communities. Our center employs two Education and Outreach Coordinators and a health administration student intern. Our student intern will assist us in developing some of our special projects this semester.

Nicole Thill

North Central AHEC Team Takes Top Prize in Interprofessional Case Competition!



On January 7th -8th, 2021, Wisconsin Area Health Education Centers virtually hosted its 8th annual Interprofessional Healthcare Case Competition. This traditionally in-person event brought together interdisciplinary teams of health professions students across multiple professional schools and programs, both private and

public, to develop and present a proposed solution to a healthcare challenge. Eight teams were selected out of thirteen to compete at the state meet. The finalists were judged by a panel of interprofessional leaders within Wisconsin's healthcare community and represented all seven of the Wisconsin AHEC regions and the state program office.

Student teams were assigned a case study comprising of a complex health-care dilemma, in which each team was expected to work together for two months to conduct an analysis of interprofessional efforts during the care of a patient within the community. The top teams then virtually presented their recommendations for enhanced interprofessional collaboration to a panel of judges.

Cash prizes were awarded to the top three teams. The first place award (\$3,000) went to the **NC AHEC Team**, consisting of **Hannah Marti-Phelan** (Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin-Central WI), **Sierra Smith** (Social Work, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point) and **Shannon Faehling** (Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin-Central WI).

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

North Central Grant Projects & Community Based Experiential Learning (CBEL) Programs

- **Advocates of Medicine Pathways:** Four-year grant in partnership with MCW-CW to prepare rural and Hmong students for medical school.
- **COVID-19 Education Grant:** NCAHEC partners with three community organizations to advance COVID-19 education through telehealth services.
- **Future Physician's Day:** Day-long workshop that offers high school and college level students a glimpse into medical school and a career in medicine.
- **Rural & Underserved Immersion Program:** A deep dive into rural healthcare and medically underserved communities in WI.
- **Mental Health First Aid – Adult & Youth Programs:** A national certification program to teach skills to respond to the signs of mental illness and substance use
- **Substance Use in Wisconsin Immersion Program:** A two-day program for higher education students to learn about substance use disorders, services available, and career opportunities in Wisconsin.
- **Pipeline Programs:** Healthcare career exploration for high school students (limited to 10% or less of programming)
- **Overcoming Addiction Workshop:** Day long workshop for college level students and community health professionals.

Wisconsin AHEC - Statewide Programs

- **AHEC Scholars: (Est. 2018):** A national AHEC program that includes didactic and community based experiential learning (CBEL). Two-year commitment and Scholars receive stipend for participation. Open to HRSA designated health professions with aim to increase primary care professionals in rural and underserved populations.
- **Wisconsin Express: Weeklong,** community based cultural immersion program. Open to higher education health profession students. Statewide locations with a variety of cultures and communities.
- **Community Health Internship Program (CHIP):** Paid 8-week, 40-hour community health internship open to any higher education health profession student. Runs June-July.
- **Interprofessional Case Competition:** Teams of college students from all AHEC regions compete by developing a proposal that addresses a complex case that has real-life societal issues to solve. Top 8 regional teams proceed to state competition to present in front of judges. Cash prizes for top three teams.
- **Chronic Preventive Care Rotation (CPC):** 12-week community engagement project for 3rd year medical students organized in conjunction with UW School of Medicine and Public Health.

Update: North Central Programs

Through education and outreach we work with academic partners, health system clinicians and providers at community organizations to plan and facilitate statewide programs for both AHEC Scholars and health profession students. Here are a some 2020-21 highlights.

- 48 current North Central AHEC Scholar students .
- 25 students participated in the Virtual WI Express, May 2020 program, combining our two sites (*Eau Claire and Marshfield*), to offer 4-days of cultural immersion on topics of Aging, Veterans, Chronic Illness and the Plain Community. WI Express 2021 is scheduled to run virtually again, May 23-26, 2021.
- 25 students participated in Rural & Underserved series, learning about rural health care from WI Office of Rural Health, Central WI Aging, Disability and Resource Center (ADRC) and Taylor County Human Services.
- Fall recruitment for Interprofessional Case Competition yielded several teams from NC region to participate in 2020-21 event.
- 25 students participated in January Substance Use in WI CBEL; 2-day immersion experience in partnership with Family Health Center (FHC) of Marshfield, Inc.
- 40 students participated in 2 sections of Mental Health First Aid (Adult & Youth)
- 33 students will be placed at 25 host sites in the region and supported by NCAHEC in upcoming Community Health Internship Program (CHIP), running June - July 2021.

AMP Students

The Advocates in Medicine Pathway (AMP) Program is a partnership between the Medical College of Wisconsin- Central Wisconsin and the UW Stevens Point at Wausau campus.

The program is funded for four years through an Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin grant. The program provides support and professional development for students from rural and Hmong backgrounds who are interested in becoming physicians.

Ten (10) students will be selected each year to participate and the first cohort began the program in January 2021.

AMP program activities include community-based experiential learning, didactic learning, MCAT test prep, mentoring by medical school faculty and current medical students, participation in the AHEC Community Health Internship Program (CHIP), medical school application assistance, practice interviewing, and more!

All of these experiences will help develop students into optimal candidates for medical school. The hope is that these students will have the opportunity to train and practice in Central Wisconsin.

Check out a recent news clip here: <http://bit.ly/WSAWAMP2021>



We look forward to getting back out in our communities as soon as safely possible. In the meantime, thank you for taking the time to read our updates and we invite you to check in with us anytime.