

South Carolina

AHEC Scholars

Handbook



South Carolina
AHEC
Area Health Education Consortium



South Carolina AHEC

South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC) connects students and professionals with the tools, training and resources necessary to develop an effective healthcare workforce, with a focus on primary care for rural and underserved areas. Our education, recruitment and retention programs serve as a bridge between academics and communities, connecting students to health careers, health professionals to communities and communities to better care. Since 1972, South Carolina AHEC has strived to improve the training and distribution of health professionals to build and support the healthcare workforce South Carolina needs to connect all communities to better health.

AHECs and the Scholars Program

The South Carolina AHEC Scholars program is a part of a national initiative to prepare tomorrow's health professionals to become leaders in interprofessional, transformative practice who serve those who need it the most.

SC AHEC has received federal funds from HRSA (Grant #U77HP03019) to assist in the development and implementation of the AHEC Scholars program.

Table of Contents

- About the SC AHEC Scholars Program 3**
 - Areas of Focus 3**
 - Core Topics3
 - Primary Care and Serving the Underserved3
 - Program Benefits 4**
 - Eligibility Requirements 4**
 - Who Can Apply?.....4
- Program Requirements..... 5**
 - Expectations for AHEC Scholars 5**
 - Data Collection.....5
- Experiential & Didactic Opportunities 6**
 - Didactic vs. Experiential 6**
 - Overview of Opportunities 6**
 - Rotations, Fieldwork and Clinical Experiences..... 7**
 - How Can I Count Experiences and Activities Not Listed Here? 7**
 - AHEC Scholars Online Module Descriptions 7**
- AHEC Scholars Advisors & Faculty 11**
 - Regional AHEC Coordinators..... 11**
 - Lowcountry AHEC11
 - Mid-Carolina AHEC12
 - Pee Dee AHEC12
 - Upstate AHEC.....13
 - Ways to stay connected 13**
 - South Carolina AHEC Scholars Faculty 14**
- Frequently Asked Questions 16**
- AHEC Scholars Checklist..... 18**
 - Activity Tracking Sheet – Year 1..... 19**
 - Activity Tracking Sheet – Year 2..... 20**

About the SC AHEC Scholars Program

The South Carolina AHEC Scholars program is a part of a national initiative to prepare tomorrow's health professionals to become leaders in interprofessional, transformative practice who serve those who need it the most.

The program consists of didactic and experiential training opportunities with a focus on interprofessional primary care and service to rural and underserved populations. AHEC Scholars will receive preference for innovative, team-based clinical fieldwork placements, in addition to networking opportunities with leaders and primary care professionals from across the state and nation.

Areas of Focus

Core Topics

Per requirements from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), all training will be focused around the following core topics:

- **Interprofessional Education** supports a coordinated, patient-centered model of health care that involves an understanding of the contributions of multiple health care professionals.
- **Behavioral Health Integration** promotes the development of integrated primary and behavioral health services to better address the needs of individuals with mental health and substance use conditions.
- **Connecting Communities and Supporting Health Professionals** aims to increase training and development of CHWs and paraprofessionals to be the connectors who are able to serve as liaison between health professions and the community to facilitate access to service and improve community/population health.
- **Virtual Learning and Telehealth** leverages technology to extend access to education and care to individuals who may not otherwise be able to travel or reach health services and learning.
- **Social Determinants of Health** are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.
- **Cultural Competency** seeks to improve individual health and build healthy communities by training health care providers to recognize and address the unique culture, language and health literacy of diverse consumers and communities.
- **Practice Transformation** aims to fully support quality improvement and patient-centered care through goal-setting, leadership, practice facilitation, workflow changes, measuring outcomes, and adapting organizational tools and processes to support new team-based models of care delivery.

Primary Care and Serving the Underserved

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee on the Future of Primary Care [defines primary care](#) as "the provision of integrated, accessible health care services by clinicians who are accountable for addressing a large majority of personal health care needs, developing a sustained partnership with patients, and practicing in the context of family and community."

In South Carolina, all but one county is designated as a full or partial health professions shortage area. With so many South Carolinians in need of access to health care, the need for health professionals to practice full-scope primary care in rural areas is great.

Program Benefits

- \$500/year active in the program (up to \$1,000 total)
- Network and receive mentoring opportunities with established leaders in primary care and rural health in South Carolina
- Network with other AHEC Scholars across the nation
- Receive preference for innovative team-based clinical fieldwork placements/rotations
- Increased competitiveness for SC AHEC rural incentive grants
- Certificate recognizing you as an AHEC Scholar and leader in primary care

Eligibility Requirements

Who Can Apply?

Graduate Health Profession students from the following disciplines are encouraged to apply and participate in AHEC Scholars. Preference will be given to individuals with/that meet one or more of the following:

- South Carolina resident
- Rural background
- Commitment to a rural lifestyle
- Commitment to primary care

Students are eligible to apply to the South Carolina AHEC Scholars Program if accepted/enrolled in one of the health professions degree programs listed below in South Carolina and are able to participate in and complete 2 years of the AHEC Scholars program preferably coinciding with graduation.

Applications are accepted in the Fall, Spring and Summer of each year. Preferred application times are listed for some training programs below:

- Dental Medicine – 2nd or 3rd Year
- Nurse Practitioner – 1st or 2nd Year (for programs over 2 years)
- Master of Social Work – 1st Year
- Medicine - 2nd or 3rd year
- Pharmacy – 3rd Year
- Physician Assistant Studies – 1st Year

Program Requirements

The AHEC Scholars program provides students with innovative, interprofessional training and mentoring focused on building the skills and competencies needed to help transform primary care and improve patient care.

To successfully complete the AHEC Scholars Program, students will:

1. Attend orientation
2. Complete baseline evaluation survey
3. Participate in the AHEC Scholars program for at least 2 years
4. Complete 40 contact hours of experiential and 40 hours of didactic activities during each of the two years of the program. Opportunities include:
 - Primary care focused interprofessional simulation activities
 - Partnering with SC primary care leaders on quality improvement initiatives
 - Fieldwork placements/rotations in team-based practice settings
 - Access to online courses focused on core topics
5. Maintain enrollment in an eligible health profession academic program and be in good academic standing
6. Complete AHEC Scholars program evaluation
7. Complete a follow-up evaluation 1 year after exiting the program

Expectations for AHEC Scholars

South Carolina AHEC expects that its AHEC Scholars will:

- Complete training in each of the core topic areas (see page 3)
- Complete evaluations to assist with quality improvement of the AHEC Scholars program
- Actively engage with your interprofessional colleagues

Data Collection

South Carolina AHEC is committed to the delivery of quality services and information to its scholars. Accordingly, all participants within the AHEC Scholars program will be asked about their involvement for quality improvement. Additionally, SC AHEC has received federal funds from HRSA (Grant #U77HP03019) to assist in the development and implementation of the AHEC Scholars program. Demographic information and assessment data will be collected and reported as requested by our funders and will not identify individuals. If you have any questions regarding the reporting of data, please contact Jennifer Bailey at baileyje@musc.edu.

Experiential & Didactic Opportunities

Didactic vs. Experiential

Didactic education consists of online learning modules and elective classes in which material is presented through lectures and readings for example. You will see and hear material in this type of learning. Didactic education must be focused on the core topic areas: interprofessional education, behavioral health integration, connecting communities and supporting health professionals, virtual learning and telehealth, social determinants of health, cultural competency, and practice transformation. This can include a variety of activities such as the AHEC Scholars online modules, Interprofessional Electives, lectures, seminars as well as others. Active scholars are required to complete 40 hours (contact hours not semester hours) per year in addition to required courses for the health professions degree program. Please see the following menu of activities.

Experiential training gives students the opportunity to apply/practice what has been learned in didactic settings. For the AHEC Scholars program, experiential learning should involve direct patient care and be focused on rural or underserved populations in a team-based setting.

Academic Credit to AHEC Scholars Contact Hours Conversion

1 academic credit hour = 15 AHEC Scholars contact hours
2 academic credit hours = 30 AHEC Scholars contact hours

Overview of Opportunities

The following is a listing of possible activities to meet the criteria identified by the AHEC Scholars program. Each month, a newsletter is sent to AHEC Scholars to highlight additional opportunities.

AHEC Scholars Online Modules	The SC AHEC Learning Portal has over 80 contact hours of online modules addressing each of the core topic areas. Scholars will have some required modules and many choices for other core topic content that are self-paced and online. Please see the module details for the number of didactic credits available. Access information will be provided after acceptance to the AHEC Scholars Program.
Experiential Activities	
Interprofessional Electives/Activities	Varies by institution – Scholars credit is available for elective courses that are not part of your required academic program curriculum
Non-Credit Experiential IP Activities	Varies by institution. Please check with your HPS/AHEC Scholars Coordinator(s).
Volunteer at Health Clinics or Health Screenings	Examples include: Charleston area Students: MUSC CARES Medical Clinic, Shifa Clinic, One80 Place, ECCO Clinic, St. Andrews, Dream Center Clinic, Fetter Clinics Columbia Area: Healthy Columbia, The Free Medical Clinic, FoodShare

Institute for Primary Care Seminars	The SC AHEC Institute for Primary Care Seminars are held monthly between September and April each year. (1.5 didactic hours per live session attended)
Interprofessional Team Case Conference (ITCC)	During the virtual case conference, students from across the state bring the knowledge of their respective fields to the table to develop an interprofessional care plan and to discuss patient/person-and family-centered care, identification of social determinants impacting a patient's health, identification of needed clinical services and community resources, care coordination, and population health implications. (3 didactic hours)
High-Fidelity Simulation	During the interprofessional simulation, students will participate in three team-based rural primary care scenarios at a regional simulation lab. This program includes an online orientation module and a self-reflection module. (7 didactic hours)


Rotations, Fieldwork and Clinical Experiences

Clinical/Fieldwork Placements/Rotations/Externships that are part of your academic program can be counted towards the 40 experiential hours for the Scholars program if the experience is in 1) a team-based learning environment and 2) serves rural and/or underserved populations.

How Can I Count Experiences and Activities Not Listed Here?

Log in to your account on the AHEC Learning Portal (<http://www.scahec.net/Learn>) and submit additional experiences from your AHEC Scholars page. Your AHEC Scholars Advisor will review and approve other activities you submit to count toward your AHEC Scholar hours and determine the number of eligible didactic and experiential contact hours.

AHEC Scholars Online Module Descriptions

There are more than 80 contact hours of educational material to choose from on our online learning system: AHEC Learning Portal (ALP). Some modules are required for all AHEC Scholars and the rest are available to complete for credit toward your annual 40 didactic contact hours. Modules with a  icon are part of the Health Humanities series.

Name and Description	Didactic Hours
AHEC Scholars Introduction (Required) This course provides an overview of the AHEC Scholars program and requirements.	2
Introduction to SC AHEC Core Topics (Required) This course introduces the SC AHEC Core Topics, which are: Interprofessional Education, Behavioral Health Integration, Connecting Communities and Supporting Health Professionals, Virtual Learning and Telehealth, Social Determinants of Health, Cultural Competency, and Practice Transformation.	1
Telehealth Presenter Certification (Required) Participants will learn about the responsibilities of provider and patient sites during telehealth encounters and how to "present" the patient during a telehealth examination.	2

TeamSTEPPS® for Office-Based Care (Required) Participants will become familiar with the principles, tools and strategies of TeamSTEPPS® to assist in developing and optimizing team knowledge and performance in an office-based care setting. Adapted from the TeamSTEPPS® for Office-Based Care curriculum (founded by Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality) this course is intended to assist clinical and nonclinical staff in improving the quality of care and patient safety at their organization.	10
Quality Improvement Fundamentals & Methodology (Required) Participants will learn the fundamentals of healthcare improvement and basic improvement methodology.	6
Practice Transformation (Required) Participants will be introduced to the roles and responsibilities of a practice transformation consultant in quality improvement initiatives in SC. The module provides an overview of Practice Transformation concepts and apply these principles to a case-based discussion activity.	1.5
AHEC Scholars Capstone (Required) Participants will complete a capstone project to apply the skills and competencies gained during the longitudinal AHEC Scholars Program to the clinical setting. <i>(Scholars may complete the High-Fidelity Simulation and Reflection in place of the Capstone project.)</i>	7
Elective Modules	
Book Club Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know During this course, participants will read the book "Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know" by Adam Grant and explore practical strategies we can use to promote individual, interpersonal and collective rethinking.	8
Book Club Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic During this course, participants will read the book "Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic" by Sam Quinones and analyze the complex factors which contributed to the rise of opiate addiction in the United States. In addition, participants will discuss how to address addiction with patients, family members, and the community.	16
Addressing Common Challenges in Practice Operations Application of Practice Transformation and Quality Improvement Strategies Developed by South Carolina Office of Rural Health (SCORH) Practice Transformation Consultants and SC AHEC, this course provides students with interprofessional case studies focusing on patient-centered practice transformation and quality improvement initiatives.	4.5
Combating Maternal Mortality Participants will examine the health disparities involved with the increasing maternal mortality rates in the U.S. and learn about national and statewide efforts to combat maternal mortality.	5
End-of-Life Care Conversations Participants will learn skills for having conversations with patients and their families about end-of-life care wishes then apply their learning through review and discussion of four distinct patient cases.	3.5
Interprofessional Team Case Simulation Opioid Use Disorder in the Pregnant Patient This course provides students with an opportunity to contemplate care of a pregnant patient with OUD in a collaborative way, with each student bringing knowledge of their respective field to the table.	5
Interprofessional Team Case Simulation Sickle Cell Disease This course provides students with an opportunity to contemplate care of a patient with SCD in a collaborative way, with each student bringing knowledge of their respective field to the table.	4
Interactive Case Study for Interprofessional Practice This course includes four interactive online modules and discussion questions which review	4

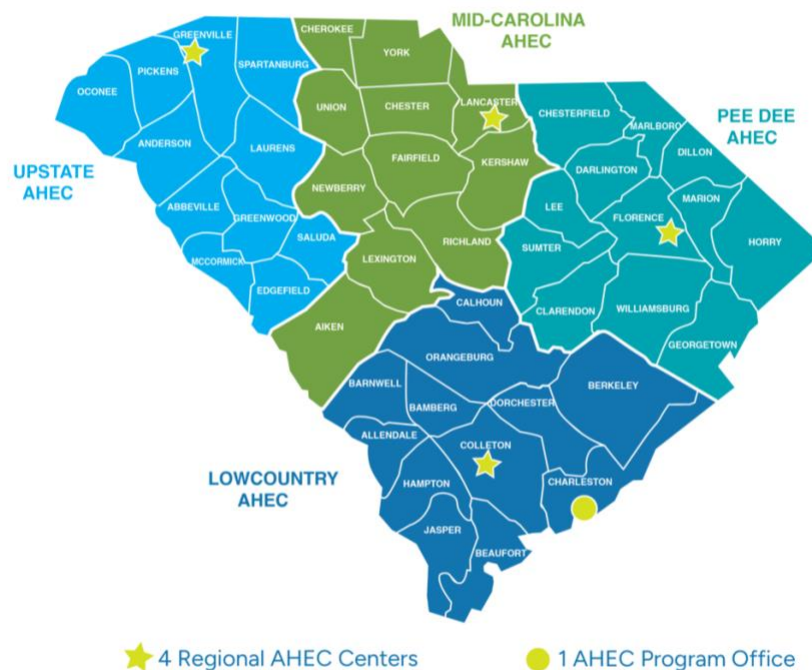
the core concepts relating to communicating with patients, families, communities, and other health professionals in a responsive and responsible manner that supports a patient-centered, team-based approach to the maintenance of health and the treatment of disease.	
Multiple Sclerosis: A Clinical Perspective for Health Care Students The course covers an overview of MS, what it's like to live with the disease from a patient perspective, and interprofessional panel of MS experts discussing their roles in improving health outcomes.	3
Rural Perspectives: Reducing Maternal Health Disparities in SC In this course, you will learn about the unique health care needs of women and families living in rural South Carolina, with a focus on African American pregnant women. You will hear from both subject matter experts and people with lived experiences regarding diabetes, hypertension, maternal mortality and infant mortality in our state.	1
The Ripple Effect of Suicide Participants will learn about the significant impact of suicide and the provider's role in suicide prevention and postvention.	3
🔗 Social Determinants of Health In this module you will complete two sections: What Are the Social Determinants of Health and Winter's Bone. In the first section, participants will view a presentation on Social Determinants of Health and how they are woven throughout Health People 2030. In the second section, participants view a clip from the film, <i>Winter's Bone</i> , about a teenage girl living in a rural area of the Ozarks.	2
🔗 Interprofessional Practice and Education In this module, you will complete two sections: Health Humanities - "How Do We Heal Medicine?" and The Nexus. "How Do We Heal Medicine?" is a Ted Talk by surgeon and writer Atul Gawande in which he reflects on the need for "pit crews" or strong teams in health care. In the Nexus, individuals see the potential of the Nexus to align health care redesign and interprofessional education to achieve the Triple Aim of improving the patient experience of care, improving the health of populations and reducing the per capita cost of health care.	2
Poverty and Health In this module, participants will apply new concepts through the interactive poverty simulation that emphasizes foundational concepts decision making behaviors, comprehend individual and structural level factors that are relevant to understanding the complexities of poverty's role and health, describe the history of clinical and evidence-based research that presents significant implications of social disadvantages among America's vulnerable populations, and recognize local and national strategies to address the poverty and health paradox in the US.	3
Safer Opioid Use Pathways to Safer Opioid Use is an interactive training that promotes the appropriate, safe, and effective use of opioids to manage chronic pain. It's based on the opioid-related recommendations in the National Action Plan for Adverse Drug Event Prevention (ADE Action Plan).	3
Telehealth Modules	
Telehealth Implementation Participants will learn about the process of implementing and sustaining telehealth services in their organization. The course has a special focus on implementing telehealth services with rural and underserved populations.	2
Telemental Health Participants will receive an overview of telemental health services, including history, benefits, current models, and resources for implementation.	3

Foundations of Telehealth Participants will receive a brief overview of Telehealth in South Carolina, including history, terminology, and future directions.	2
Telehealth Billing Participants will learn about federal, state, and private payer changes in reimbursement of telehealth services.	0.75

AHEC Scholars Advisors & Faculty

Regional AHEC Coordinators

South Carolina AHEC is comprised of one Program Office and four regional centers across the state. The regional AHEC Centers provide services to healthcare providers and students in all counties of South Carolina.



Each Regional Center has a Health Professions Student (HPS) Coordinator who will serve as your AHEC Scholars Advisor. In this role, they will advise you on activities to meet the AHEC Scholars requirements as well as assist with housing, rotation/fieldwork placements, and quality improvement projects. Your regional HPS coordinators will serve as your primary guide throughout your time in the AHEC Scholars program.

Regional HPS Coordinators will:

- Monitor your progress of didactic and experiential hours to ensure you are on track for successful completion
- Review and approve self-reported activities to count toward your AHEC Scholars hours and determine the number of eligible hours
- Provide assistance with the South Carolina AHEC Learning Portal (ALP)
- Mentor student teams participating in quality improvement projects
- Work with program faculty to coordinate clinical rotation/fieldwork placements
 - *Note: You should work with your program to schedule your clinical rotations.*
- Provide housing for rural clinical rotations as needed and as available
- Facilitate Interprofessional Team Case Conferences (ITCC) and High-Fidelity Simulations

Lowcountry AHEC

Kimbley Stephens | (843) 782-5052, ext. 106 | stephensk@lcahec.com

Kimbley Stephens is a Health Professions Student Coordinator for Lowcountry Area Health Education Center. She received a BSHS in Community Health from Georgia Southern University in 1998 and a MEd in Health and Physical Education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 2005. She coordinates the clinical rotations of health professions students in rural or underserved areas of the Lowcountry. Kim is a National Health Service Corps Ambassador.

Emily Warren | (843) 782-5052, ext. 105 | warrene@lcahec.com

Emily Warren has been a Health Professions Student Coordinator at Lowcountry AHEC for 18 years. Emily received a BS in psychology from the College of Charleston and a MSW from The University of South Carolina. She has been employed with Lowcountry AHEC since July 2000. Prior to AHEC, she worked as a medical social worker at Colleton Medical Center. Currently, she interfaces with South Carolina academic institutions to assist with identification of preceptors and clinical rotation sites. Emily facilitates various interprofessional activities including the Interprofessional Team Case Conference (ITCC) and the Pipeline Activity. She has presented with colleagues at several conferences recently on *Utilizing Telehealth Technology to Provide Community-Based, Interprofessional Clinical Practice Experience for Diverse Learners*. Emily is a National Health Service Corp Ambassador.

Mid-Carolina AHEC

Casey Cato | (803) 286-4121 | ccato@midcarolinaahec.org

Casey joined Mid-Carolina AHEC in March 2019 as a Health Professions Student (HPS) Coordinator. Since 2021, she has also served as the Site Coordinator for the VCOM – Carolinas campus in Spartanburg. She holds a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (BAIS) degree with a concentration in Early Childhood Education from the University of South Carolina. Prior to joining the AHEC team, Casey dedicated 30 years to teaching, with experience spanning grades 4K through 3rd grade. She is passionate about working with health professions students and is committed to supporting their development and enhancing their educational experiences, particularly in rural communities.

Sara Newton | (803) 286-4121 | snewton@midcarolinaahec.org

Sara Newton joined Mid-Carolina AHEC in Fall 2021 as a Health Professions Student Coordinator. Sara attended the University of South Carolina Lancaster and earned a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies in 2014 through USC's Palmetto College, with focused coursework in psychology, anthropology, and history. She went on to receive a Master of Education in Counseling and Development with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Winthrop University in 2016. Her professional background includes work in behavioral health, where she served as a counselor in an inpatient setting, as well as roles in utilization management and risk management. These experiences have strengthened her compassion for others and her dedication to providing student support.

Pee Dee AHEC

Melissa Brock | (843) 845-5257 | melissa.brock@mcleodhealth.org

Melissa previously worked at Pee Dee AHEC as a Continuing Professional Development Coordinator before her family relocated to the coast in 2023. She rejoined Pee Dee AHEC in November of 2024 to serve as an Education Coordinator. Melissa has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Georgia Southern University and was trained as a physical therapist assistant at the Medical College of Georgia. She worked as a physical therapist assistant for 32 years in various areas of patient care and was a college-level educator for PTA students. She looks forward to working with students and professionals in all service areas with Pee Dee AHEC.

Haley Hill | (843) 777-5341 | hhill@mcleodhealth.org

Haley joined Pee Dee AHEC in December 2024 as a Health Professions Student Coordinator. Prior to joining Pee Dee AHEC she worked at McLeod Family Medicine Residency Programs for 9 years, where she excelled in various roles, most recently as Assistant Director. At Pee Dee AHEC, Haley aims to enhance student engagement and continue to build upon the existing initiatives. She looks forward to collaborating with health professions programs and student learners across the Pee Dee region.

Kirstie Hogges | (843) 777-5345 | kirstie.hogges@mcleodhealth.org

Kirstie joined Pee Dee AHEC in August 2022 as a Health Professions Student (HPS) Coordinator. She received her Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Psychology from the College of Charleston and a Master of

Education (M.Ed.) in Counselor Education from The Citadel. Prior to joining the AHEC team, she worked 7 years at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia as an Academic Advisor for undergraduate STEM students. While in Atlanta, Kirstie volunteered with SCLC/W.O.M.E.N., INC. mainly serving as one of the mentors for their Bridging the Gap program. She has also previously worked in TRIO Programs and Residence Life and Housing at the College of Charleston.

Upstate AHEC

Tina Fulton | (864) 349-1168 | tfulton@upstateahec.org

Tina joined Upstate AHEC in 2005 as a Program Assistant/Marketing Coordinator and transitioned to a Health Professions Student Coordinator in 2010. As HPS coordinator, she collaborates with other staff to anticipate and meet the needs of health professions' schools, students, and preceptors. Tina has a multitude of experience from several different areas including administrative, information technology, and media relations. She received her Bachelor's degree from Furman University in Business Administration and is currently working towards obtaining her MBA.

Ways to stay connected

In addition to ongoing communication with your AHEC Scholars Advisor, we encourage you to stay active and engaged in the AHEC Scholars Community by reading the newsletter of learning opportunities (emailed monthly) and connecting with us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#)

South Carolina AHEC Scholars Faculty

AHEC Scholars faculty serve as your mentors. They will be source of information and guidance, as well as help you navigate the AHEC Scholars program and your academic program requirements. The faculty are available to help you determine how your program-specific courses, experiences and training opportunities fit into the AHEC Scholars curriculum.

Jennifer Bailey, MEd | baileyje@musc.edu

Jennifer Bailey is the Senior Director of Operations and Programs at SC AHEC. She is a Master Trainer for TeamSTEPPS® and has advanced training in quality improvement and change leadership from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. Bailey has over 15 years of experience developing, facilitating, and evaluating health professions clinical and didactic education programs, interprofessional education and practice, teamwork training initiatives and professional development curricula for a variety of health care providers. Her research interests include participatory research, social determinants of health, interprofessional collaborative practice and education, patient safety and quality. Prior to her role with SC AHEC, she served in leadership positions at Wake Forest School of Medicine, facilitated the interprofessional core course at the University of South Carolina, directed the required interprofessional core course for MUSC Students, and worked with the MUSC Health clinical enterprise to develop teamwork and interprofessional collaboration training for all clinical staff.

Ann Lefebvre, DSW, CPHQ

Ann Lefebvre is the Executive Director for the South Carolina AHEC Program where she provides oversight and guidance for activities and services within the statewide SC AHEC system. As Executive Director, Ann represents SC AHEC at the local, state, regional and national levels, serving as an advocate and champion for health professions education, training, recruitment and retention for South Carolina. In this role Ann is also the Associate Dean for Community Medicine at the Medical University of South Carolina. She has more than 25 years of experience in the healthcare industry and has worked to improve the quality of care delivered in various healthcare settings since 1999. She received her Doctor of Social Work degree from the University of Southern California and her Master of Social Work degree from East Carolina University in Greenville, NC. She is a certified professional of healthcare quality and a black belt in Lean Six Sigma.

Kristen Hood Watson, MD | watsonkh@musc.edu

Dr. Kristen Hood Watson is a Family Medicine physician at Medical University of South Carolina with a clinical interest in preventive health. Originally from Maryland, Dr. Hood Watson received her medical degree from the University of Maryland School of Medicine. She completed her Family Medicine residency at Trident/MUSC where she served as chief resident from 2013 to 2014.

Since graduation, she has focused on her interest in medical student education locally and nationally through involvement with the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM). She has served as the Family Medicine clerkship director since 2014 and is the Associate Dean for Clinical Education.

Betsy Blake, PharmD | blake@cop.sc.edu

Betsy Blake, Pharm.D., is the director of interprofessional education and an associate professor in the Department of Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences at the University of South Carolina College of Pharmacy. She practices in a patient-centered medical home primary care clinic affiliated with Palmetto Health Richland, collaborating with providers to improve care for patients with diabetes. Blake received her doctor of pharmacy degree from the Medical University of South Carolina's College of Pharmacy in 2000. She then completed a pharmacy practice residency (2000-2001) and a primary care residency (2001-2002) at the Medical University of South Carolina. Since joining the faculty at the University of South Carolina College of Pharmacy in 2006, Blake has earned many teaching awards, including Teacher of the Year in 2010 and then the USC Clinical Practice Teaching Award in 2011. She was also named the Midlands Region Mentor of the Year in 2013. In 2016, she received the South Carolina Pharmacy Association Ken Couch Distinguished Mentor Award.

Blake has been involved with interprofessional education at the College of Pharmacy since 2009 as a charter faculty advisor for the IHI Open School for the Health Professions chapter. She now serves as the co-director for the university's committee for interprofessional education for the health sciences, which includes faculty members and students from all five of the university's health science programs.

Frequently Asked Questions

When will I finish the program?

- Upon graduation of your academic degree program

How can I meet the hours required?

- See page 6 for a listing of available opportunities

How does this relate to other training programs I am involved in?

- AHEC Scholars may be complementary to a program in which you are already involved. While we cannot guarantee all work will be eligible, we will make all efforts to ensure all relevant work will be counted for both programs. Please see your faculty for more information.

How will this program benefit me, given all the other demands of training? How will being an AHEC Scholar help me to find a job upon graduation?

- See page 4 for listing of program benefits

What's the difference between experiential and didactic credit hours?

- Didactic education consists of online learning modules and elective classes in which material is presented through lectures and readings. Experiential training gives students the opportunity to apply/practice what has been learned in didactic settings through direct patient care experiences.

How can I check to see if my field placement/clinical rotations or volunteer activities will count toward my experiential hours?

- For experiential credit, these activities must involve direct patient care and be focused on rural or underserved populations and need to be in team-based settings. To determine eligibility, reach out to your AHEC Health Professions Student Coordinator.

How will my progress be monitored? Who should I contact if I have any questions?

- AHEC Health Professions Student Coordinators monitor each Scholar's progress by reviewing individual transcripts within the AHEC Learning Portal and providing one-on-one advising.

How can I find more experiential opportunities? And how do I schedule these?

- At least monthly, you will receive an AHEC Scholars newsletter which highlights both experiential and didactic programs coming up and how to register. In addition, you can always contact your AHEC Health Professions Student Coordinator for guidance on additional opportunities.

Is it possible to complete the required hours in the given time frame?

- Yes, the program is designed to be self-paced and adaptable to fit your unique schedule.

Do courses taken prior to admission to the AHEC Scholars program count toward credit hours?

- No, credit hours prior to admission are not eligible to be counted towards your requirements.

Are there any meetings where we have to travel and/or be physically present?

- At this time, the program can be completed virtually. Travel is not required, but there are opportunities to attend in-person activities when available, such as High-Fidelity Simulations.

When do our field placement activities take place?

- This varies based on the Scholar's academic program. Please contact your AHEC Health Professions Student Coordinator for more information.

Will we have the opportunity to get experience working with a provider that utilizes telehealth in their practice?

- There may be opportunities depending on your geographic location, and there are several online modules available which provide telehealth training, such as the Telehealth Presenter Certification course.

Are there experiential hours able to be completed Friday-Sunday to allow for normal academic schedules?

- Many programs are offered in the evenings and the self-paced online modules can be completed whenever is most convenient for you.

AHEC Scholars Checklist

Year 1

- ☐ Attend orientation
- ☐ Complete baseline evaluation measures
- ☐ Complete semester required online modules and:
 - *AHEC Scholars Introduction*
 - *Introduction to SC AHEC Core Topics*
- ☐ Participate in at least one *Interprofessional Team Case Conference* (live or self-paced)
- ☐ Complete a total of 40 contact hours of didactic activities
- ☐ Complete a total of 40 contact hours of experiential activities

Year 2

- ☐ Complete a total of 40 contact hours of didactic activities
- ☐ Complete a total of 40 contact hours of experiential activities
- ☐ Complete semester required online modules and:
 - *AHEC Scholars Capstone or High-Fidelity Simulation*
- ☐ Participate in at least one *Interprofessional Team Case Conference* with standardized patient (ITCC+)
- ☐ Complete end-of-program evaluation

Required Modules each semester

- ☐ Summer 2025: Practice Transformation
- ☐ Fall 2025: Telehealth Presenter Certification, plus one elective telehealth module
- ☐ Spring 2026: TeamSTEPPS® for Office-Based Care
- ☐ Summer 2026: Quality Improvement Fundamentals & Methodology

One Year Follow Up

- ☐ Complete the post-graduation AHEC Scholars Follow Up Evaluation one year after program completion/graduation

Activity Tracking Sheet – Year 1

Activity Tracking Sheet – Year 2



www.scahec.net