



2020 SOUTH CAROLINA AHEC

# ANNUAL REPORT

[www.scahec.net](http://www.scahec.net)



# Introduction

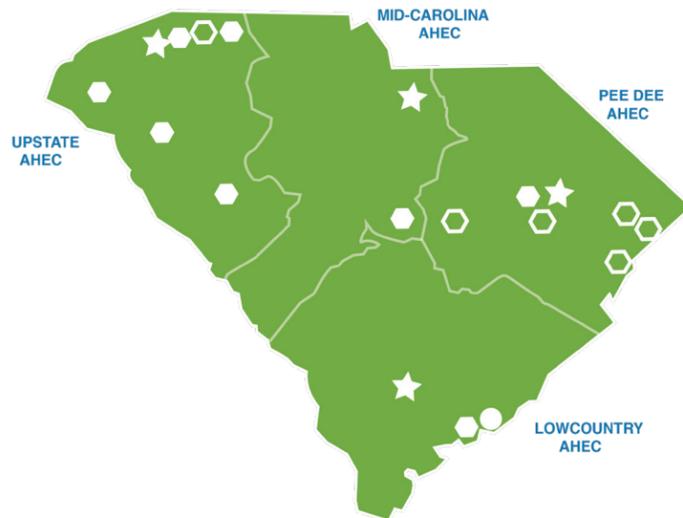


Ann Lefebvre, MSW, CPHQ  
SC AHEC Executive Director

While the 2020 fiscal year was filled with many great accomplishments, it is overshadowed by the onset of COVID-19 and the tremendous stress that it has placed on our healthcare systems, our educational systems and our communities at large. South Carolina AHEC's commitment to building and supporting the healthcare workforce in the state remains steadfast and is needed now more than ever. As we look back, and also plan for the future, I humbly share our annual report representing our work for the past fiscal year. In this report, we have included information on all of our program areas as well as special attention to the work that we have done to support our state in addressing the impact of the virus. I am proud of the work that we have done, but I am even more proud of how our team has stepped up across the state to meet the many challenges that face our students and healthcare workforce today.



## South Carolina AHEC System



- 1** Program Office ●
- 4** Regional AHEC Centers ★
- 8** AHEC-Funded Family Medicine Residency Programs ◆
- 6** Affiliated Family Medicine Residency Programs ⬡

## Our 4 Regional Centers Support the Entire State



Walterboro  
www.lcahec.com



Lancaster  
www.midcarolinaahec.org



Florence  
www.peedeeahec.net



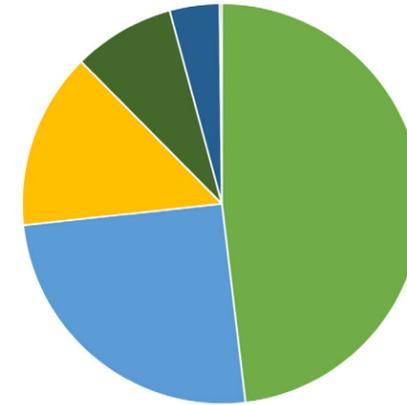
Greenville  
www.upstateahec.org

# Fiscal Year 2020 Funding

South Carolina AHEC follows the state fiscal calendar: FY20 includes July 2019 through June 2020.

## State Funding

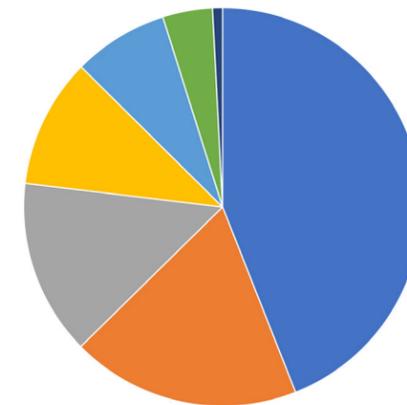
Funding appropriated by the state for South Carolina AHEC totaled \$11,152,584.



- \$5,365,649 ● Family Medicine Residency Programs
- \$2,807,458 ● Regional AHEC Offices
- \$1,592,190 ● Program Office
- \$917,287 ● Rural Physician Program
- \$450,000 ● South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce
- \$20,000 ● Nursing Recruitment

## External Funding

Extramural funding for South Carolina AHEC totaled \$1,235,316. Funding reported here spans periods across calendar and fiscal years.



- \$543,760 ● AHEC Point of Service Maintenance & Enhancement Award & Supplemental Funding (DHHS\*, HRSA†)
- \$230,000 ● Bench to Bedside 2.0 (The Duke Endowment)
- \$176,101 ● Rural Dentist Loan Repayment Program (MUSC)
- \$130,000 ● Office for Telehealth Education (MUSC Center for Telehealth)
- \$95,455 ● CARES Act Grant (DHHS\*, HRSA†)
- \$50,000 ● Delta Dental of South Carolina
- \$10,000 ● Office of Primary Care Projects (DHEC\*\*)

## Contractual Funds

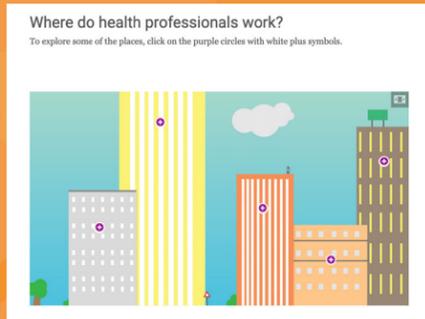
- \$597,218 ● Rural Physician Program/Rural Dentist Program

\*DHHS = Department of Health & Human Services  
†HRSA = Health Resources & Services Administration  
\*\*DHEC = Department of Health & Environmental Control

# Navigating a Path Forward

The COVID-19 pandemic touched every aspect of our lives in 2020 and South Carolina AHEC's work was no exception. At South Carolina AHEC, it is our mission to serve the state and ensure that each and every community has the healthcare workforce and access it needs. In times like these, it is even more important to support our healthcare professionals and the healthcare workforce pipeline, and as the pandemic evolved, so did our strategies for carrying out our work.

## Reaching High School and College Students Virtually



Health Careers Module Activity

The Health Careers Program team at South Carolina AHEC had originally planned to release a set of online health career exploration and preparation modules in the fall of 2020. When students quickly shifted to virtual learning in the spring, South Carolina AHEC worked hard to release more than twenty modules early so that students could continue preparing for their future as health professionals. The curriculum was also provided to the South Carolina Department of Education to assist any high schools in need of supplemental virtual resources for their students. Other AHEC Health Careers programming for high school and college students, such as the Summer Careers Academy, pivoted online so that students were still able to explore and prepare for future health careers.



Virtual Summer Careers Academy

 **501** Course registrations across 23 modules focused on health career exploration and preparation

## Supporting Health Professions Student Education & Training

When all health professions student education quickly transitioned online in the spring, South Carolina AHEC assisted several universities in meeting requirements of their interprofessional education (IPE) curricula by providing access to AHEC Scholars online content and Interprofessional Team Case Conferences. Sharing these resources enabled these programs to quickly offer IPE content to their students online to complete curriculum requirements for graduation.

The regional AHEC centers also pivoted quickly to adjust occupancy in their rural student housing locations, implement new safety and sanitation protocols and assist training programs with relocating clinical placements in response to clinic closures and surge response. These adjustments enabled AHEC to support student training, required by accreditors as part of graduation requirements, while ensuring student safety.

## Providing Data to Inform Policy Decisions



In times of uncertainty, it is best to rely on the data we have to plan for the unknown. To that end, South Carolina AHEC's Office of Healthcare Workforce compiled and released *A Snapshot of the Healthcare Workforce Addressing COVID-19 in South Carolina*. This brief provides a snapshot of the healthcare workforce that was currently available in our state and key points to be considered in addressing the demands of treating COVID-19. View the brief at [www.scohw.org](http://www.scohw.org).

## Helping DHEC Train a Contact Monitoring Workforce



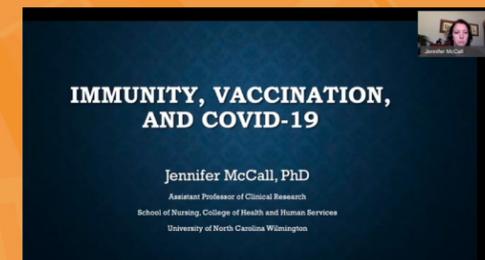
When the state needed to build a workforce of contact monitors, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) needed to effectively and quickly train a large number of people to step into these roles. South Carolina AHEC stepped forward to offer our training infrastructure and expertise to support the task. We worked collaboratively with DHEC as the content experts to quickly develop online trainings housed on our learning management platform to allow us to monitor course completions and assess competency for a large number of

individuals. Additional training opportunities were created and provided in our partnership with DHEC during the beginning of FY21 in July and onward.



**763** Individuals enrolled in training in June 2020, 583 of which successfully completed the curriculum in FY20 to become eligible for employment by DHEC as a contact monitor

## Supporting Quality Healthcare through Continued Education & Training



Even during a pandemic, health professionals throughout the state need continuing professional development to maintain licensure and certifications. To continue to offer education to healthcare professionals, the regional South Carolina AHEC centers quickly transitioned scheduled educational programs from in-person events to live webinars. These webinars helped meet ongoing training needs as well as developing additional skill sets during the pandemic.

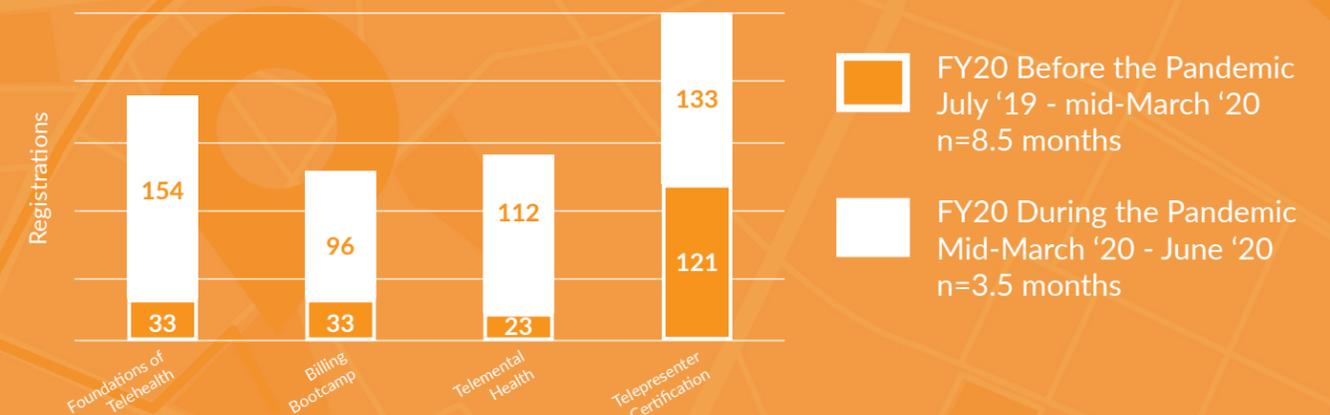


**1,884** Course registrations across more than 46 webinars totaling more than 4,500 contact hours of continued education

## Building Telehealth Expertise in South Carolina

The COVID-19 pandemic provided an unprecedented need for and utilization of telehealth technology. South Carolina AHEC updated four modules developed with partners across the state to include newly released billing and COVID-19 information. We saw a major uptick in course registration as health professionals across the state prepared for rapidly increased telehealth usage.

Telehealth Module Enrollment Before and During Pandemic



# Supporting the Pathway to a Strong Health Workforce

South Carolina AHEC connects students and professionals with the tools, training and resources necessary to increase access to healthcare, with a focus on rural and underserved communities. Since 1972, South Carolina AHEC has provided education, recruitment and retention programs to build and support the healthcare workforce South Carolina needs.

**Office for Healthcare Workforce**  
The Office for Healthcare Workforce studies the issues that affect the balance of supply and demand for healthcare professionals in South Carolina, providing unbiased information that can provide direction in decision making and public policy.



## Health Careers Programs

Build a more diverse and representative future workforce by supporting underrepresented minority and disadvantaged students on their paths to becoming health professionals.

**23,934** Contact hours of programming delivered to high school & college students throughout the state



## Graduate Medical Education

South Carolina AHEC works collaboratively with all of the family medicine residency programs in the state to facilitate recruitment for high-quality training in family medicine for South Carolina.

**252** Residents trained by the South Carolina Family Medicine Residency Programs this year



## Continuing Professional Development

South Carolina AHEC CPD programs enhance clinical skills, address ongoing and emerging health trends in the state and help health professionals maintain their licensure and/or certifications.

**61,649** Total contact hours of continuing professional development programming accrued statewide



## Health Professions Student Programs

Provide community-based training experiences, exposing students to the opportunities of working in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina.

**893** Student training placements—50% of which were in medically underserved communities



## Recruitment & Retention Programs

Build an effective healthcare workforce and address the maldistribution of clinicians in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina.

**32** New Rural Incentive Grant Recipients funded in FY20 to practice in rural and underserved areas

15 nurse practitioners, 16 physicians, 1 physician assistant; 77 total providers active in the program in FY20

### Destination: Better Healthcare

AHEC programs build and support the state's healthcare workforce: connecting students to health careers, health professionals to communities and communities to better healthcare.

# Destination: Better Healthcare

Building and Supporting the Healthcare Workforce South Carolina Needs



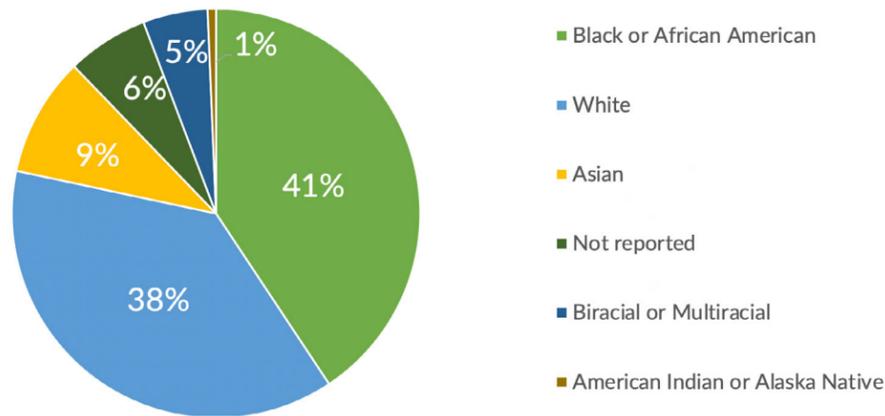
## Connecting Students to Health Careers



South Carolina AHEC Health Careers Programs (HCP) provide support to diverse groups of students on their paths to becoming healthcare professionals, building a future healthcare workforce that will reflect the diverse range of communities it serves in South Carolina.

*Health Careers students pose after participating in simulation activities in fall 2019.*

### Diverse Future Health Professionals: HCP Students in FY20



**8%**

Of Health Careers Program students reported Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Heritage



**605**

Students participated in HCP programming in FY20



**45%**

Of HCP students were from a rural area



**18,935**

Hours of job shadowing were accrued prior to COVID-19



## Connecting Students to Rural Communities

When health professions students are exposed to training experiences in rural/underserved areas during their education, they are more likely to ultimately practice in a rural/underserved area.



**448**

Student placements in medically-underserved communities



**308**

Student placements in rural communities



**251**

Health professions preceptors

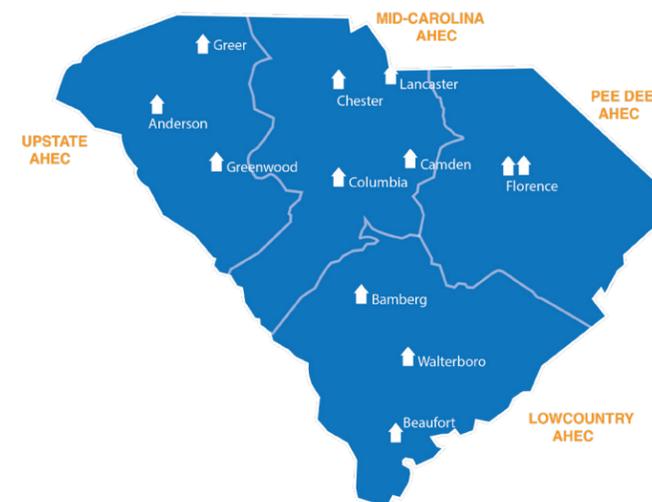


**229**

Community-based training sites

South Carolina AHEC centers support students on rural rotations, supplying a critical link between students and these communities. This link includes housing for students on rural rotations and interprofessional training experiences with students from other disciplines and academic institutions.

### AHEC Housing Supports Rural Rotations Statewide



**734**

Weeks of housing provided to students on rotation in rural communities

**37%**

Of placements were in a primary care setting

**37,723**

Patient contacts during training placements



## South Carolina AHEC Scholars: Tomorrow's Leaders in Rural Care



Sonam Kuber, shown at left giving a skills demo to college students in the Bench to Bedside 2.0 Program in fall 2019, completed the AHEC Scholars Program this year.

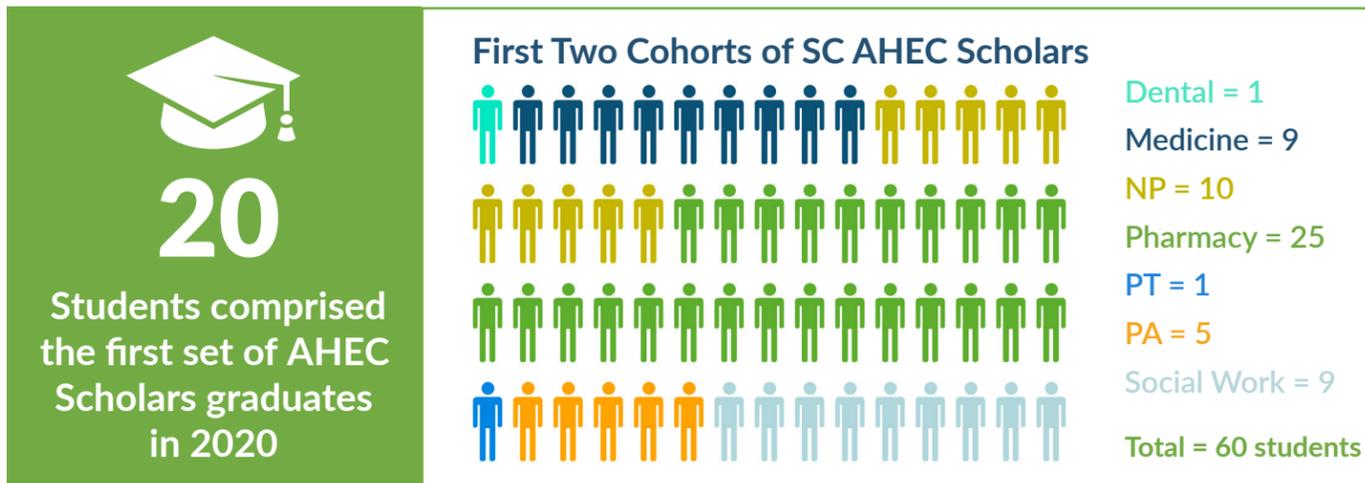
After graduating from MUSC in the summer of 2020, she will be working as a physician assistant at a rural federally qualified health center (FQHC) in South Carolina.



### Sonam's AHEC Scholars Story

"Growing up in a rural SC community, I always knew that regardless of where I went to pursue my education or how far I would travel to grow as an individual, coming back to my roots to give back to the community that gave me so much was my number one goal. Knowing that I wanted to work in rural health, finding the AHEC Scholars program was like striking gold. Having the opportunity to take online courses, attend interprofessional meetings, and gain extra knowledge that will help me become the best primary care clinician for my patients are just some of the amazing aspects of the program. AHEC Scholars allowed me to make connections with others who have a passion for rural health and primary care – networking in the medical world is crucial, and this program made it so easy. Rural communities in SC need primary care clinicians who can ensure that they receive the best care possible, regardless of what resources are available to them. **After completing the AHEC Scholars program, I have never felt more ready to enter the world of primary care here in rural SC.**"

The SC AHEC Scholars Program, which accepted its second cohort of health professions students in the fall of 2019, is a longitudinal program providing training opportunities and support for students interested in interprofessional primary care and service to rural and underserved populations.



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



## Connecting Health Professionals to Communities



# 90

### Rural Incentive Grant Recipients funded FY17-20

47 Physicians and 43 Advanced Practice Providers



Approximately 21% of the state's population lives in rural areas, but only 12% of the state's dentists, 13% of nurse practitioners, 9% of physicians, and 11% of physician assistants practice in these areas. Research shows that incentive programs like these improve recruitment and retention in rural areas, helping address the maldistribution of healthcare providers.



# 4,091

Continuing professional development registrations from professionals in medically-underserved communities



# 3,864

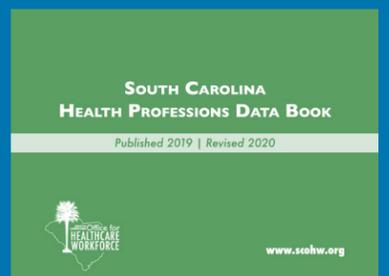
Continuing professional development registrations from professionals in rural communities

AHEC continuing education programs provide a local and low-cost approach to the education needed for health professionals to maintain their licensure and certifications.



## Analyzing the Healthcare Workforce

The Office for Healthcare Workforce released an update to the SC Health Professions Data Book this year. The Data Book is a repository of information about the health status of the population in South Carolina and the number and distribution of healthcare providers actively practicing within the state. Find this and other recent reports and briefs at [www.scohw.org](http://www.scohw.org).



# South Carolina AHEC

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*We are grateful for all of the healthcare workers on the front lines of caring for our communities! Thank you!*

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