



South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium

2021 Annual Report

Building and Supporting the Healthcare Workforce South Carolina Needs



Executive Summary | A Blueprint for Better Health



Ann Lefebvre, MSW, CPHQ
SC AHEC Executive Director

Though the 2021 fiscal year did not bring the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, the South Carolina AHEC System was able to continue our commitment to building and supporting the healthcare workforce in South Carolina. We have adapted to an ever-changing environment in order to meet the needs of students and health professionals statewide. By providing a range of remote, in-person, and hybrid programming, we have ensured that high school and college students are supported in pursuit of health careers, health professions students are able to fulfill their training requirements, and health professionals are connected both with the communities that need them and the training they need to ensure their continued licensure and certifications. We are proud to continue serving with the state's institutions of higher education, healthcare providers, community partners and others to improve the diversity, distribution and training of South Carolina's healthcare workforce.

Building and Supporting the Healthcare Workforce South Carolina Needs



775

High school and college students supported on their career journeys by AHEC Health Careers Programs



930

Student training placements with 353 preceptors at 214 community-based training sites facilitated by AHEC Health Professions Student Programs



280

Residents training in South Carolina family medicine residency programs



104

Physicians and advanced practice providers funded in FY18-21 to practice in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina



79,394

Contact hours of continuing professional development delivered to health professionals across the state



100,047

Licensed health professionals included in the data analyzed by the SC Office for Healthcare Workforce for the upcoming 2021 South Carolina Health Professions Data Book

**In Fiscal
Year
2021:**

9,183

Total individuals served throughout the state across all AHEC programs

267,332

Total contact hours of programming delivered statewide

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, diversity and distribution of health professionals to build and support the healthcare workforce South Carolina needs to connect all communities to better health.



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

SC AHEC Programs Support the Health Professions Pipeline



Health Careers Pipeline Program
Supports diverse high school and college students on their paths to becoming healthcare professionals, building a future healthcare workforce that is representative of the communities it serves.



Recruitment & Retention Program
Provides financial incentives to healthcare professionals who practice in rural and underserved areas to improve the distribution of providers statewide.



Health Professions Student Program
Provides community-based training experiences, exposing students to the opportunities of working in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina.



Continuing Professional Development
Enhances clinical skills, addresses ongoing and emerging health trends and helps professionals maintain their licensure and certifications.



Graduate Medical Education
Works collaboratively with all of the family medicine residency programs in the state to facilitate recruitment for high-quality training in family medicine in South Carolina.



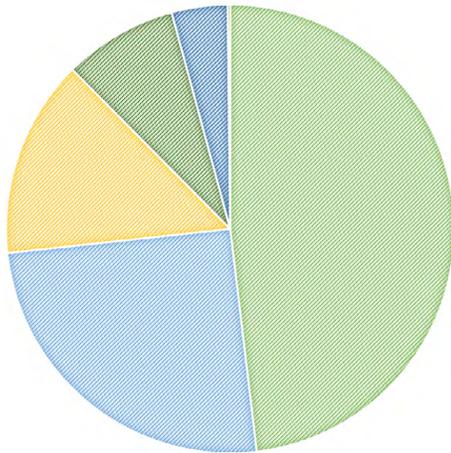
SC Office for Healthcare Workforce
Analyzes data and provides policy-relevant information about the healthcare workforce in South Carolina.

Fiscal Year 2021 Funding

South Carolina AHEC follows the state fiscal calendar: FY21 includes July 2020 through June 2021.

State Funding

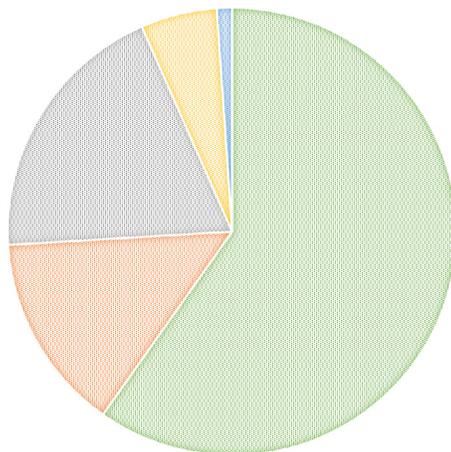
Funding appropriated by the state for South Carolina AHEC totaled \$11,152,584.



- \$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 \$959,041. Funding reported here spans periods across calendar and fiscal years.



- \$592,940 AHEC Point of Service Maintenance & Enhancement Award & Supplemental Funding (HHS*, HRSA†)
- \$176,101 Rural Dentist Loan Repayment Program (MUSC)
- \$130,000 Office for Telehealth Education (MUSC Center for Telehealth)
- \$50,000 Delta Dental of South Carolina
- \$10,000 Office of Primary Care Projects (DHEC**)

Contractual Funds

- \$668,372 Rural Physician Program/Rural Dentist Program

*HHS = U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

†HRSA = Health Resources & Services Administration

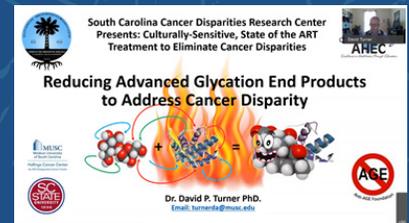
**DHEC = SC Department of Health & Environmental Control

Regional Highlights

Each of South Carolina AHEC's four regional centers serves an 11- or 12-county region of the state where they connect students to health careers, health professionals to communities and communities to better health. The centers do this through collaboration with healthcare entities, high schools and colleges, graduate health professions programs and other community partners. Together, the four centers serve all 46 counties in South Carolina.

Lowcountry AHEC | Walterboro | lcahec.com

In order to meet the needs of healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic, Lowcountry AHEC focused on developing and providing web-based continuing professional development programming. This strategy continued and expanded upon efforts from 2020 to pivot programs online and Lowcountry AHEC was successfully able to provide 55 webinar CPD programs to health professionals across the state, supporting their continued training and licensure requirements.



Mid-Carolina AHEC | Lancaster | midcarolinaahec.org

Mid-Carolina AHEC supported front-line healthcare professionals and health professions student education by facilitating student clinical experiences at regional COVID-19 vaccination clinics and free clinics. The partnerships provide needed additional staffing capacity at these sites while also helping students gain important clinical experience. In these capacities, students gained a better understanding of the diversity of the community's population and the health issues patients regularly face. These training placements supported the community while providing invaluable clinical experience to students.

Pee Dee AHEC | Florence | peedeeahec.net

Pee Dee AHEC developed its Pathways to Medicine program to support undergraduate students who may need guidance, resources, and support in their pursuit of health careers. The program provides guidance for admissions requirements, resources for test preparation and opportunities for job shadowing and observation, mentorship, and more. Last fiscal year, two students in the program were accepted into medical school and a third has obtained employment as a certified nursing assistant while completing undergraduate courses and preparing for the MCAT.



Upstate AHEC | Greenville | upstateahec.org

Upstate AHEC partnered with the Urban League of the Upstate's Project Ready talent search program and UofSC School of Medicine Greenville's Minority Student Outreach to establish a Health Careers Club. The club matches high school students with medical students for mentorship and provides opportunities for the high school students to prepare for college entry, go on campus tours, prepare for ACT/SAT testing, build soft skills and more. Participating medical students also receive training to prepare them for mentorship. The project, which kicked off with a virtual recruitment mixer in the fall, provides these high school students with valuable support on their paths to health careers.

Health Careers Program

South Carolina AHEC Health Careers Programs provide support to diverse high school and early college 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.



Shekinah W.
High School Student
Orangeburg

*The Health Careers Program offered by SC AHEC has been an awesome experience for me this year. As a first-year participant with an interest in a career in the field of healthcare, I have gained an abundance of information that has been very beneficial in preparing me to reach my career goals. The Health Careers Program has provided me with a closer look into the various areas of healthcare through presentations, panel discussions, and activities. **I am confident that the skills and knowledge gained through the Health Careers Program will allow me to excel academically and professionally as I embark upon my journey towards my career in healthcare. I highly recommend anyone interested in a career in healthcare to join and actively participate in the Health Careers Program.***



46%
of HCP students were
from a rural area



52%
of HCP students in FY21
identified as Black, Indigenous
and People of Color*

*Percent of total students for whom race/ethnicity data was available



Connecting Students to Health Careers

A more representative health workforce provides more career opportunities for more individuals and also improves access to care, reduces health disparities, and improves patient outcomes through more productive patient/clinician relationships.

Health Professions Student Program

“From actively participating in the care of a diverse patient population, to helping with weekly COVID vaccination outreach, the AHEC Rural Family Medicine Rotation was an immersive educational experience for me. In the rural setting, students are able to appreciate the broad scope of practice afforded to family medicine physicians, who serve as urgent and longitudinal care providers, diagnosticians, counselors, coordinators, community leaders, and educators. **The value of learning from a rural primary care provider cannot be overstated, nor can their importance to their communities.**”



Layne W., Medical Student, MUSC

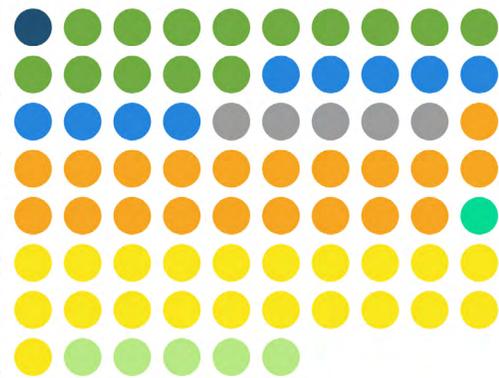
South Carolina AHEC Scholars Program

The AHEC Scholars Program prepares students for interprofessional primary care practice and service to rural and underserved populations. Overall, **125 students** have enrolled in the program from **8 different disciplines** and **6 educational institutions**.

2,919 hours of didactic training completed

6,885 hours of experiential training completed

Third Cohort of AHEC Scholars



- Dental (1)
- Medicine (14)
- Nurse Practitioner (9)
- Occupational Therapy (5)
- Pharmacy (20)
- Physical Therapy (1)
- Physician Assistant (21)
- Social Work (5)

88%

of SC AHEC Scholars say they are likely to practice in a rural area

95%

of SC AHEC Scholars say they are likely to practice in an underserved area

South Carolina AHEC Health Professions Student Programs provide community-based training experiences, exposing students to the opportunities of working in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina.



Student training placements last year:

59% in rural communities

43% in medically underserved communities

52% in a primary care setting



968 Weeks of housing provided to students on rotations

Connecting Students and Communities

Evidence shows that 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.

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.



Virtual Family Medicine Interest Day



64

Students from 13 medical schools registered for the first virtual format of South Carolina Family Medicine Interest Day

Connecting Physicians to Family Medicine Training

Family medicine physicians provide lifelong care for the entire family, making them an important asset for the health of communities, especially in rural areas where they can practice comprehensive, full-scope medicine.



2019 Family Medicine Interest Day

South Carolina AHEC has been instrumental in helping the Family Medicine residency programs of South Carolina in recruiting excellent medical students to their programs over the last year. During the time of COVID-19 surges and the changes that this has created, all of the residency programs rapidly switched to virtual interviews and virtual recruiting fairs during the summer and fall of 2021. With the help of those at the SC AHEC, we recruited as a state group at the AAFP's national medical student meeting- usually held in Kansas City but now held virtually in 2020 and 2021. Also, the SC AHEC funded and provided technical expertise to convert our statewide Family Medicine Interest Day in August of 2020 and 2021 to a virtual recruiting fair. These opportunities, even when converted to a virtual platform, provide our state's Family Medicine residencies the opportunity to recruit both within SC and throughout the entire United States, and they clearly wouldn't have occurred without AHEC's support. These recruiting activities pay dividends not only to the programs for the next three years (in terms of recruiting exceptional medical students to train in SC), but also for the state's population as graduates of our residencies have a high likelihood of practicing in South Carolina and benefiting our citizens. **Working together as a team with the SC AHEC is a "win-win-win" for our residency programs, medical students throughout the country, and in providing for future medical care for the people of our state.**

Matthew Cline, MD; AnMed Health Family Medicine Residency Program Director

Recruitment & Retention Programs



27 New providers funded by the Rural Incentive Grant Program to practice in rural and underserved areas of SC

- 11 Physicians
- 13 Nurse Practitioners
- 2 Physician Assistants
- 1 Certified Nurse Midwife



91 Providers active in the program during FY21, practicing in 36 counties:



South Carolina AHEC Recruitment and Retention Programs utilize financial incentives to build an effective healthcare workforce to address the maldistribution of clinicians in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina.



*I consider myself very lucky to have been selected to participate in the South Carolina Rural Dentist Program. **Receiving funding has allowed me to practice in an area where there is more of a need for dental services, and I have been able to give back to many individuals who could not find an in-network provider for their dental work.** We have been able to complete many procedures including extractions, root canals, restorative work, dentures, and more, to many people who did not have access to care, and that has been incredibly rewarding. Had I not been given the opportunity to participate in the program my educational debt may have hindered my ability to practice in a rural community, and I am very thankful for the support of the program which has allowed me to treat patients in these areas.*

Lauren Callison, DMD; Rural Dentist Loan Repayment Recipient
Loan repayment program funding supported by a grant from Delta Dental of South Carolina

Connecting Professionals to Communities
Research shows that financial incentives are effective at encouraging and supporting practitioners to live and work in rural and/or underserved areas. Increasing the availability of healthcare providers in these communities provides more access to care and better health for South Carolina.



6 Rural Dentist Loan Repayment Program recipients
5 Rural Dentists + 1 Dental Faculty



Continuing Professional Development

South Carolina AHEC Continuing Professional Development Programs enhance clinical skills, address ongoing and emerging health trends and help professionals maintain their licensure and certifications.



4,894

Registrations by health professionals in primary care settings



10,093

Registrations by health professionals in medically-underserved communities



4,967

Registrations by health professionals in rural communities



*As a hospital educator the partnership with AHEC is priceless. Not only were courses offered in various delivery methods during the challenging time of COVID to support the continuing education of the hospital staff, but there have also been courses to support the staff's emotional health during this difficult journey. By providing a partnership for BLS, ACLS, & PALS, the availability to offer hands-on courses to our staff remains a possibility which is greatly appreciated. **Our providers enjoy teaching and having students with them throughout the year which AHEC helps to make possible.***

Jamie L. Hinson, BSN RN, RACR

Connecting Professionals to Training and Education

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

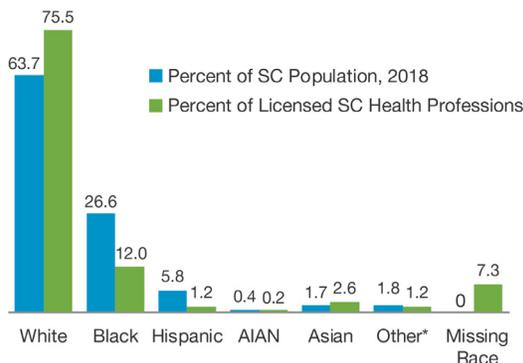


SC Office for Healthcare Workforce

A Snapshot of Health Workforce Diversity in South Carolina



Figure 1. Comparison of Racial Diversity of South Carolina's Population and Health Professions, 2017-2019



36%
of South Carolina's Population is BIPOC*

17%
of South Carolina's Health Professionals* are BIPOC*

*Black, Indigenous and People of Color
*Of 20 licensed health professions for which OHW has data - see report for details

SCOHW, a division of South Carolina AHEC, studies issues that affect the balance of supply and demand for different types of healthcare professionals across South Carolina. SCOHW develops accurate, reliable information about the healthcare workforce in South Carolina and makes that information widely available to support planning and policy decisions.



The SC Office for Health Workforce (SCOHW) has been an invaluable resource for me in my work as the Director of the DHEC Office of Primary Care . . . The information assembled and curated by the SC Office for Health Workforce in their SC Data Book gives me current and credible data, aside from shortage designations, to determine unmet need.

Aside from the SC Data Book, the **SCOHW performs timely, in-depth analysis of the various clinical disciplines and specialties within the state. These analyses provide a framework for conversations and plans to address specific clinical shortages.**

The SCOHW has directly assisted me in developing a comprehensive Primary Care Needs Assessment for medical care, dental and mental health as required by HRSA through my cooperative agreement. The product exceeded HRSA's expectations and may be used within the state to guide discussion and planning.

Mark Jordan, Director
SC DHEC Office of Primary Care



Connecting Data to Decision Making

Policymakers and other stakeholders need objective, timely and reliable information with which to make data-driven decisions about the healthcare workforce that impact healthcare for all South Carolinians.

South Carolina AHEC

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*Connecting
Students to
Health Careers*



*Connecting
Health Professionals
to Communities*



*Connecting
Communities to
Better Health*



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CAROLINA AHEC**
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