

# 2008 SOUTH CAROLINA AHEC ANNUAL REPORT



**SOUTH  
CAROLINA AHEC**  
Excellence In Health Care Through Education

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## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The South Carolina AHEC continued to provide a wide range of services across South Carolina during the 2008 academic year. This annual report provides a summary of several of the programs that are addressing the present and future healthcare needs in our state.

An area of focus that needs particular attention in South Carolina is the access to primary care services. The combination of an aging primary care workforce and less interest on the part of new graduates in primary care disciplines may increase the difficulty of people obtaining healthcare services when they need them. Our AHEC system is working vigorously with the goal of increasing the primary care workforce in South Carolina. Our Health Careers and Health Professions Student programs are both seeking to provide high quality learning experiences designed to increase the interest of the next generation of healthcare professionals in primary care and in addressing the needs of the underserved in our state.

The state of South Carolina encountered significant economic challenges during this year. As a result, the South Carolina AHEC has incurred reductions in its funding, and we have had to make some difficult decisions about how to deal with this unanticipated development. The AHEC Program is the only organization in the state that addresses healthcare workforce issues starting with school age children and extending to college and health professions students as well as frontline healthcare professionals. Facing a reduced budget, we have tried to preserve those programs that are most critical to the mission the AHEC system was established to address.

The South Carolina AHEC has encountered previous economic challenges. On each occasion, the outstanding professionals who work in the AHEC program and in our partner organizations have been able to adapt to these economic challenges. I am confident, with the spirit of collaboration that has been the hallmark of our AHEC program, we shall be successful yet again as we strive to continue our important work of assisting with the provision of the best possible healthcare for the people in South Carolina.

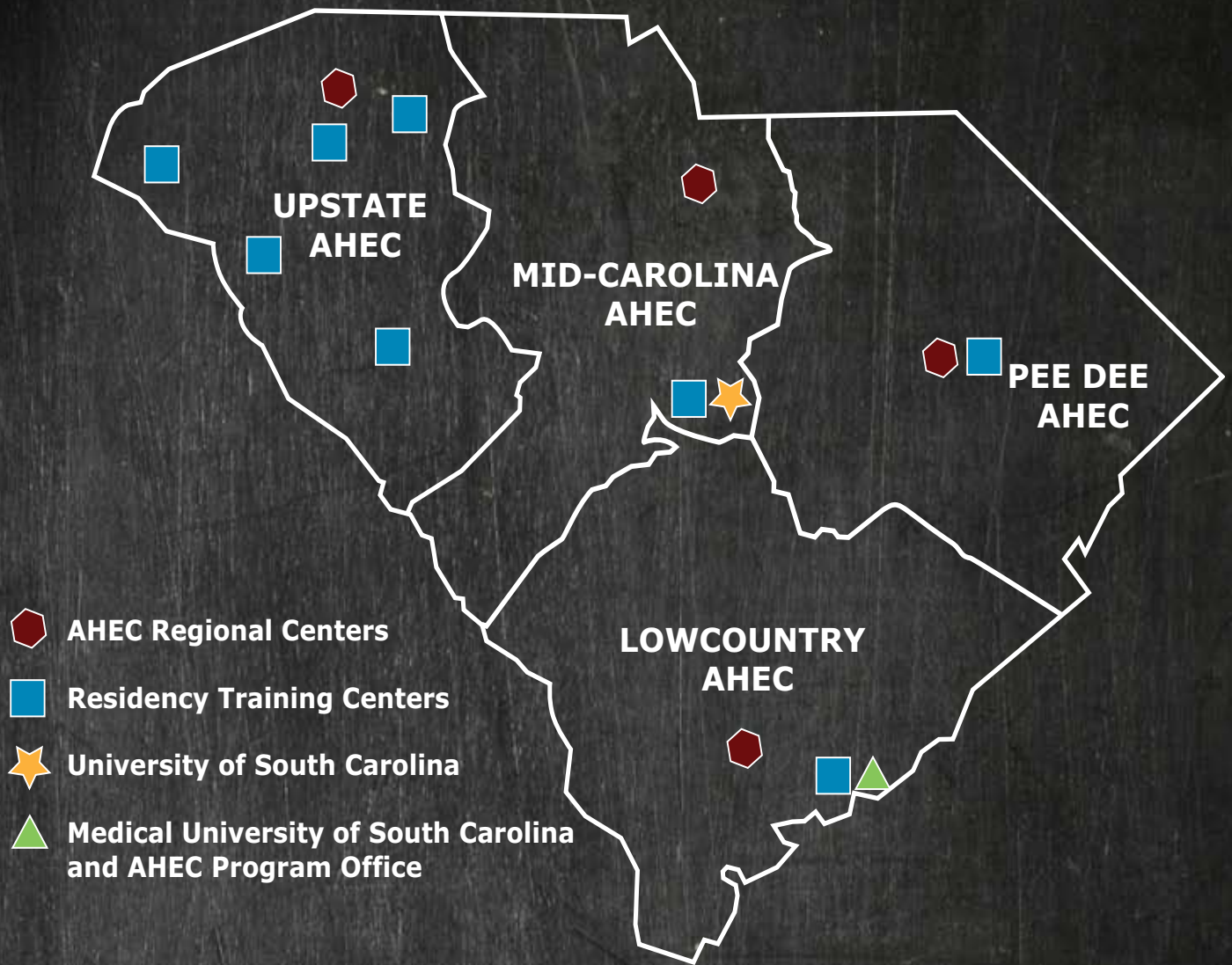


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Garr MD". The signature is fluid and cursive.

*- David R. Garr, MD*

*South Carolina AHEC Executive Director*

# SOUTH CAROLINA AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CONSORTIUM (SOUTH CAROLINA AHEC) SYSTEM



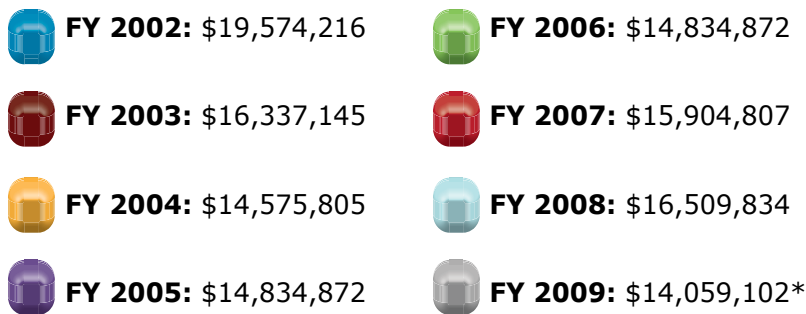
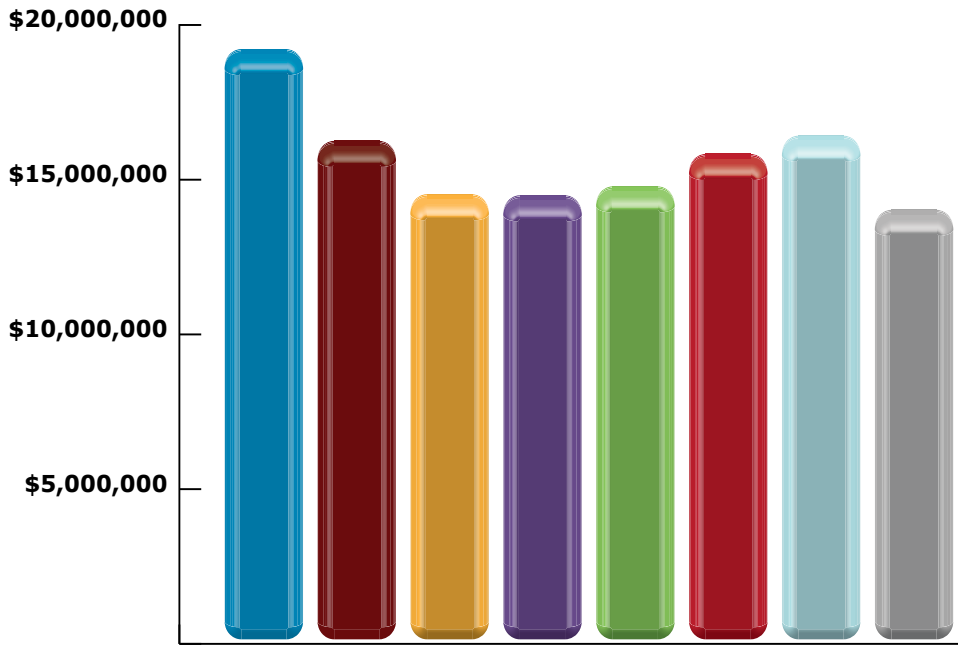
**T**he South Carolina AHEC is committed to be a leader in building a collaborative educational system designed to optimize the health of South Carolinians by achieving excellence in healthcare through recruitment, retention and education of healthcare professionals.

The essential role of AHEC programs in the United States is to recruit, train, sustain and inspire a broad range of health professionals to practice in underserved communities in order to secure the healthcare safety net. South Carolina is a state which is disproportionately poor, rural and underserved relative to the rest of the United States. Therefore, the role of the South Carolina AHEC is crucial for training and retaining the next generation of healthcare professionals.

**For every dollar spent on physician training, at least \$5 is generated for the South Carolina economy.**

**\$ = \$ \$ \$ \$ \$**

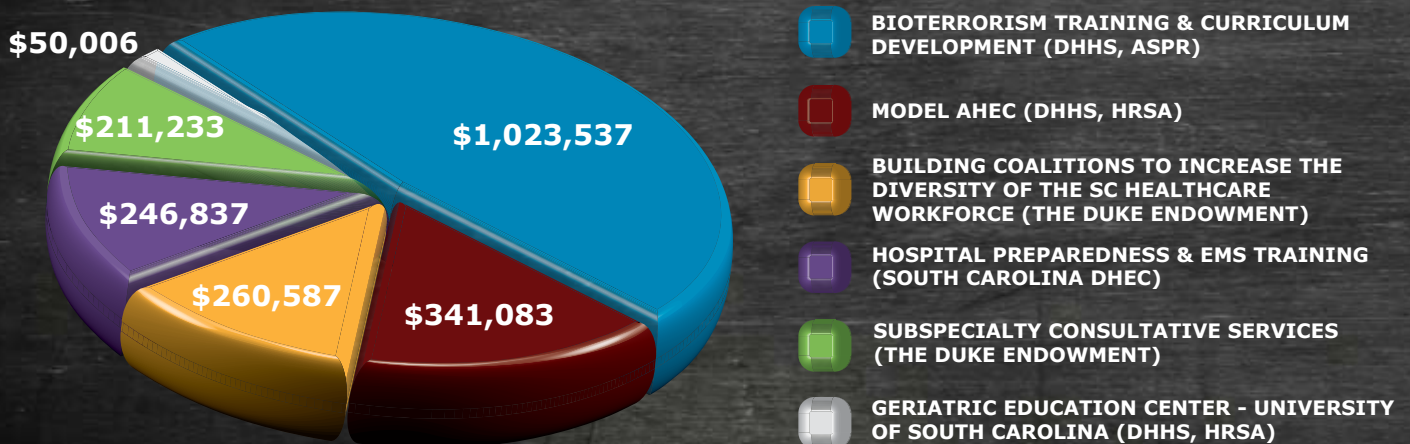
## 2008 STATE FUNDING



\*FY 2009 Projected - Additional Reductions Anticipated



## 2008 GRANT FUNDING



**DHHS = Department of Health and Human Services**  
**ASPR = Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness & Response**  
**HRSA = Health Resources and Services Administration**

# HEALTH CAREERS PROGRAM

**P**reparing the next generation of health professionals is a key component of South Carolina AHEC's workforce development initiative. The South Carolina AHEC Health Careers Program works to increase the number of students entering the health professions in South Carolina. These programs introduce students to a wide assortment of health career possibilities, guide them in goal setting and educational planning, and offer a math and science curriculum that strengthens critical thinking skills.

## IN THE KNOW:

- \$15,250 in scholarships were provided by the South Carolina AHEC to 22 students enrolled in two and four-year nursing programs.
- 1,500 high school and college students participated in over 12,000 hours of health career preparation programming.



*"I believe South Carolina AHEC serves as a vital instrument for any student who is interested in healthcare. For me, AHEC has come to be a family of people who have helped me become who I am today, and will definitely be an influence in my future." - Tiffany Fishburne, Colleton County High School, Class of 2008 & Freshman at Furman University*

## 2008 HIGHLIGHTS:

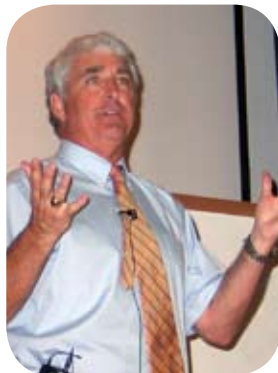
- Sixteen college students from across South Carolina participated as Fellows in the South Carolina AHEC 2008 Nursing and Dental Careers Academy. The Nursing and Dental Careers Academy is designed to increase the acceptance, retention, and graduation rates of under-represented minority and disadvantaged students in nursing and dental medicine training programs.
- Ninety high school and college students attended the 9<sup>th</sup> annual South Carolina AHEC Health Careers Summer Institute on the campus of Lander University. The four-day event included activities and interactive sessions focusing on academic and career planning, resource development and basic health skills training.
- The South Carolina AHEC Teach-the-Teacher Academy provided over 60 middle and high school teachers, counselors, and career development facilitators with 18-hours of instructional programming designed to promote health career advocacy.
- The Health Careers Program Council secured a three-year grant from the Northwest Connecticut AHEC to support the introduction of the Youth Health Service Corps as a component of the South Carolina AHEC Health Careers Academy. The Academy is a longitudinal health career exploration program for high school students. The curriculum emphasizes math, science and the use of communication skills to lay the educational foundation necessary to become a future health professions student in South Carolina.

# HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENT PROGRAM

The South Carolina AHEC Health Professions Student Program collaborates with health professions education programs in our state to provide community-based learning experiences for undergraduate and graduate students. This education is designed to expose students to the realities of clinical practice in rural and underserved areas and provide them with opportunities to help address specific health needs in those communities. South Carolina AHEC placements give students the opportunity to experience healthcare in a real world setting away from their health science centers. Students are able to interact one-on-one with patient populations in community health centers, county health departments, homeless clinics, local practitioners' offices and other community primary care sites. Students learn firsthand about economic and cultural barriers to care and the specific needs of underserved and ethnically diverse populations. Current research has shown that healthcare professions students who participated in these experiences have a better understanding of the complex needs of underserved communities. Many are also motivated to provide additional community services and establish practices in rural and underserved areas after graduation.



*"I am originally from Detroit. When I graduated as a Physician Assistant, I wanted to work someplace I could make a difference like Lowrys Family Practice." - Marlon Shelby was the only African-American student in his Physician Assistant class of 1999 and currently serves as an AHEC preceptor*



*"Chester is a small rural town and it can be tough to recruit providers to the area. Working with AHEC to provide student rotations gives us the unique opportunity to expose students to practice in the rural arena." - Dr. Sam Stone, lead physician for the Lowrys Family Practice and Past President of the South Carolina Academy of Family Physicians*

## IN THE KNOW:

- This year, 529 students from allied health, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, rehabilitation sciences, physician assistants and social work were trained in 724 community-based clinical placements.
- These health professions students worked with 23,331 patients.

## 2008 HIGHLIGHTS:

- The South Carolina Rural Interdisciplinary Program of Training (SCRIPT) provided learning experiences for 46 students from five universities representing medicine, nursing, dental, pharmacy, speech and language disorders, health administration, social work and nutrition. During this five-week summer program, students live in rural communities, are placed with rural providers, and, as an interdisciplinary team, contribute to community health improvement projects.
- SCRIPT students teamed with the Palmetto Geriatric Training Center (GEC) from the University of South Carolina and were introduced to geriatric care in rural communities across South Carolina. SCRIPT students participated in a geriatric case study and made home visits to perform health assessments of the elderly. Students had over 4,872 encounters with geriatric patients in office and community settings.
- The Interprofessional Serving Learning Project (ISLP) is a new initiative that brings students from health professions disciplines together to address critical health needs in communities. A curriculum designed at the Medical University of South Carolina to address childhood obesity, known as Junior Doctors of Health, was used for ISLP sessions in the Lowcountry AHEC region. A total of 29 students took part in 145 weeks of training. Parents, teachers, and administrators participated in the program which provides community-based health literacy training for the next generation of health professionals.

# CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM

The South Carolina AHEC supports healthcare excellence throughout the state by offering Continuing Education programs to the state's 150,000 healthcare professionals each year. Programs provide healthcare professionals in all disciplines with knowledge that allows them to utilize the most current information when they provide care to their patients.

## IN THE KNOW:

- Continuing Education was provided to 19,067 practicing professionals.
- Over 600 programs were held in South Carolina's 46 counties.
- A total of 2,991 hours of programming were provided to assist professionals in maintaining their licenses and certifications.

## 2008 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Lowcountry and Mid-Carolina AHECs also served as American Heart Association Training Centers. Together they provided 10,725 certifications in basic, advanced and pediatric life support. They also recertified 367 independent instructors.
- Upstate AHEC has received two continuing education grant awards - one for Cross Cultural Training and another for Lateral Violence in the Healthcare Workplace. This year the cross cultural training was offered in all four South Carolina AHEC regions.
- In collaboration with the Palmetto Geriatric Training Center, the South Carolina AHEC system provided programs for 856 participants that addressed important issues relating to healthcare for the elderly.
- Over 150 nursing leaders participated in the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual South Carolina Magnet Conference. This year's conference explored criteria for excellence and models of leadership and governance. The attendees also learned about the new American Nurses Credentialing Center program for small and rural hospitals known as "Pathway to Excellence" which can help South Carolina's hospitals improve patient care through nursing excellence.

*"I've been attending trainings for 28 years, and I never experienced a better ethics training than this one presented by Pee Dee AHEC today." - Alcohol and Drug Counselor*



*"AHEC has coordinated and provided funding for nationally renowned instructors to provide excellent educational courses that we would have otherwise not had the opportunity to access. I used what I learned the next day when I treated a patient." - Margaret Wehle, PT, Director of Physical & Occupational Therapy, South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind*

*"Growing up in South Carolina, I always knew I wanted to practice close to home. With medicine changing so much every day, I feel fortunate that I could be part of a training program where not only would I learn what to do today, but also learn how I could continue to improve every year so I can give my patients the best care and keep them healthy. I feel I got that training in the Trident/MUSC Family Medicine Residency Training program." - Lee Allison, MD*



## GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

**S** **TATEWIDE FAMILY MEDICINE RESIDENCY TRAINING PROGRAM:** In order to address the shortage and maldistribution of physicians in our state, the South Carolina AHEC provides funding for and works closely with the Statewide Family Medicine Residency Training Programs. Family Medicine is the medical specialty which provides continuing and comprehensive healthcare for individuals and families. The family physician typically functions as the patient's means of entry into the healthcare system. The family physician is the physician of first contact in most situations and, as the initial provider, evaluates the patient's total healthcare needs, provides personal care and guides the patient's use of the healthcare system.

**GRADUATE DOCTOR RESIDENCY TRAINING PROGRAM:** South Carolina AHEC also provides funding and works closely with graduate doctor residency training programs that emphasize primary care (family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, and medicine/pediatrics) and training in other specialties with demonstrated shortages. A primary care practice serves as the patient's first point of entry into the healthcare system and the continuing focal point for all needed healthcare services. Graduate Doctor Residency Training Programs are located in three cities in our state and include training in several specialty areas.

### IN THE KNOW:

- According to the most recent data from the South Carolina Budget and Control Board Office of Research and Statistics, fifty-five percent (1,219) of the family physicians practicing in South Carolina were trained in South Carolina AHEC Family Medicine Residency Training Programs.
- In addition, twenty-five percent (502) of the pediatricians, twenty-two percent (425) of the obstetricians, twenty-one percent (286) of the surgeons, and eighteen percent (864) of the internal medicine physicians practicing in South Carolina trained in South Carolina AHEC Graduate Doctor Residency Training Programs.
- Studies by the SC Budget and Control Board Office of Research and Statistics continue to project a need for additional physicians as the South Carolina population increases and ages.

*"The South Carolina AHEC is a wonderful program that has been instrumental to my development as a physician in countless ways. I was first introduced to AHEC the summer of my sophomore year of high school. This early experience gave me one of my first glimpses into what medicine had to offer. By the time I completed my freshman year in college at Furman University, I felt confident about becoming a physician. Through AHEC, I arranged a shadowing experience in Ware Shoals, SC. Even during my medical school years, AHEC continued to be very visible. I participated in the SC AHEC Family Medicine Interest Day in Columbia in 2003 where I was able to get a sneak peek at the excellent family medicine residency training programs our state offers. I knew that I would stay in South Carolina to train. Now as a third year family medicine resident in Anderson, I can say that AHEC has played a tremendous role in my successes. I believe that AHEC fulfills its mission of getting young people interested in medicine as it did for me. It goes even further to ensure quality training and retention of South Carolina residents including myself."*



*Antoinette D. Rhynes, MD*



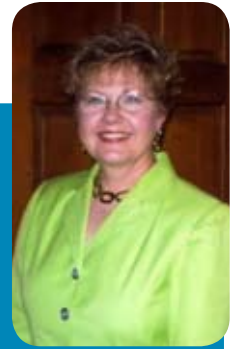
# RECRUITMENT & RETENTION PROGRAM

**T**he South Carolina AHEC has been committed to the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals in the state through initiatives that have been ongoing and evolving for 35 years.

**RURAL PHYSICIAN PROGRAM INCENTIVE GRANTS:** The Rural Physician Program was initiated by the SC Legislature in 1989 to address the undersupply of physicians in rural and underserved South Carolina communities. The program provides incentive grants for primary care physicians and advanced practice professionals who commit to practice in medically underserved communities for at least four years. Once a practice becomes established, healthcare providers are much more likely to remain in areas of need. The retention rate for Incentive Grant recipients is 85%.

**RURAL DENTIST PROGRAM INCENTIVE GRANTS:** The Rural Dentist Program was established by the South Carolina Legislature in July of 2005. The program assists with the repayment of educational loans for dentists who agree to practice in a Health Professional Shortage Area or serve as full-time faculty at the MUSC College of Dental Medicine.

**LOCUM TENENS:** The Locum Tenens Program is designed to support the practices and increase the retention of family practitioners in rural South Carolina by providing them an opportunity to take a break for vacation and family time, continuing medical education, or any variety of reasons that would require a provider to be absent from their practice.



*"I had always dreamed of practicing in a small town, similar to where I grew up. Having the incentive grant allowed me to do that, without an excessive financial burden. I truly hope that South Carolina can continue the incentive grants to meet the healthcare needs of folks in small towns." - Dr. Kimberly Bridges was one of the original Incentive Grant recipients in 1989*

## IN THE KNOW:

- In FY 2008, 55 physicians, 4 nurse practitioners, 2 physician assistants and 1 certified nurse midwife received funds from the Rural Physician Program.
- Three rural dentists and three faculty members at MUSC's College of Dental Medicine received funds from the Rural Dentist Loan Repayment Program in FY 2008.
- One hundred and seventy four days of locum tenens services were provided to physicians in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina in 2007.

## 2008 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Fifty-three medical students from the Medical University of South Carolina the University of South Carolina, and fifteen other medical schools in the southeast attended the 2008 Family Medicine Interest Day (FMID). Students participated in hands-on workshops provided by the Family Medicine Residency Program Directors and their staff as well as in a recruitment fair hosted by the residency training programs.
- Fifty-nine residents attended the South Carolina AHEC Family Medicine Residents Annual Meeting in May. This meeting provides a unique opportunity for residents from all specialties in the state to submit proposals to present research papers on basic research or quality improvement projects. A Chief Resident's conference was also presented at this meeting that was designed to instruct the residents how to be effective chief residents and effective clinical teachers.

## BUILDING COALITIONS TO INCREASE WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

**S**outh Carolina Diversity Coalitions were established in 2006 with grant assistance from The Duke

Endowment. Each regional coalition is establishing goals, objectives, implementation strategies and outcome measures for collaborative programs designed to increase the number of minority students who choose to enter careers in healthcare. Coalition members include representatives from healthcare, educational programs, faith-based organizations, businesses and others.

### IN THE KNOW:

- The South Carolina Coalitions for Health Careers have been successful in promoting health careers for approximately 18,870 students, parents, school personnel and community members. The Coalitions have provided resources to support health career exploration to middle school career specialists in 34 of South Carolina's counties.

### 2008 HIGHLIGHTS:

#### **LOWCOUNTRY COALITION**

- Distributed the *Health Careers in a Box* resource that supports student health career exploration through group and individual activities. Resources include motivational books, health career magazines, posters and videos, including a DVD produced by local high school students in collaboration with Beaufort Memorial Hospital.
- Facilitated Lunch Buddies in Beaufort and Colleton counties for 27 students. Lunch Buddies is a 10-week health career exploration program which supports at risk 5th and 6th grade students through role modeling. Practicing healthcare professionals facilitate small group discussions to promote academic performance and goal setting.
- Awarded \$500 academic scholarships to five health professions students who reside and are enrolled in health career programs in the region.

#### **MID-CAROLINA COALITION**

- Facilitated a live, radio talkshow each month to promote health career exploration, parental involvement, and increase community awareness about healthcare careers.
- Facilitated health career information booths and presentations where information was provided to 1,837 students, parents and educators.

#### **PEE DEE COALITION**

- Collaborated with McLeod Health to sponsor a health career fair where 400 participants received information.
- Produced a radio spot which aired on four stations to promote health career shadowing during National Ground Hog Shadowing Month in February.
- Produced full-color billboards targeting students and parents in seven counties.

#### **UPSTATE COALITION**

- Enhanced the Coalition's website with the addition of an E-Club for students and parents interested in health career exploration and resource information. The website includes an electronic calendar that displays regional activities that support student development.
- Provided a Health Careers Toolkit to middle schools in five Upstate counties.
- Cosponsored the annual Career Quest in Spartanburg County which supplied health career information to students.

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE TRAINING NETWORK

The nation's Area Health Education Centers are leaders in the field of health education and training for healthcare providers and are uniquely positioned to help the United States prepare for natural and man-made disasters. This project, a collaboration of many partners in South Carolina, is addressing the training needs of practicing healthcare professionals for public health emergency event recognition and response. Originally funded in 2003, the South Carolina AHEC Disaster Preparedness and Response Training Network was refunded in 2005 through a three-year grant from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (grant #T01HP01418).

Emergency preparedness and response training addresses all forms of terrorism, natural disasters and tragic accidents. The goal of this program is to equip the healthcare workforce with the knowledge, skills, abilities and core competencies to recognize indications of a terrorist event; meet the acute care needs of patients; participate in a coordinated, multidisciplinary response to emergencies; and rapidly and effectively alert the public health system in such an event.

## IN THE KNOW:

- After five highly successful years, the Disaster Preparedness and Response Training (DPRT) grant is coming to an end. Since the inception of the program, almost 30,000 health professionals have received training to recognize, report, and respond to disasters.
- During FY 2008, 7,964 health professionals received training through this program.

## 2008 HIGHLIGHTS:

- In 2008, the South Carolina AHEC adapted the national decontamination standards developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Center on Domestic Preparedness to better fit the needs of small rural hospitals. This year, over 280 participants were trained in decontamination procedures in 17 hospitals.
- The South Carolina AHEC sponsored an interoperability disaster response demonstration program involving the Southern Baptist Medical Response Team and the South Carolina Disaster Medical Assistance Team (SC DMAT). This was a first in the nation program and consisted of several weekends of training followed by a final exercise. Sixty Southern Baptist Medical Response Team members and 35 SC DMAT members participated. As a result of this exercise, trainees gained expertise needed to be deployed anywhere on the globe.
- The South Carolina AHEC designed and developed an on-line Resource Center for grantees that provides a searchable database for disaster preparedness training materials created by grantees across the country. Over 200 products can be searched using National Library of Medicine Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and disaster preparedness target capabilities established by the Department of Homeland Security. The Resource Center will remain as a public resource after the grant period ends at <http://library.scahec.net>.



*"The recent training certainly aided our response as we assisted those in need," said Yvonne Johnstone, Director of Security at Kiawah Island Golf Resort following an explosion in a resort building. "It is important that our staff is fully prepared to deal with any incident."*

## INFORMATION SERVICES

**W**hether you are a practicing health professional located right down the street from an academic health center or hundreds of miles away, your need for access to the most current medical literature and information is the same. The South Carolina AHEC Information Services provides web-based library information access to South Carolina AHEC faculty, residents, students, and preceptors throughout the state. The service provides online retrieval of medical literature, document delivery, and conducts on-site training to inform users how to access medical information electronically. The South Carolina AHEC Information Services increases the availability of medical information for AHEC-affiliated healthcare providers and health professions students in South Carolina, particularly those who serve in rural and underserved communities.



### IN THE KNOW:

- Most frequently used sections of the South Carolina AHEC Information Services:
  - Online Journals
  - PubMed
  - MD Consult
  - Medline Plus
  - National Guidelines Clearinghouse

*"Since November 2003, I have had an Information Services account provided by the South Carolina AHEC, and I have been thoroughly impressed with the services they provide. As the Educator in our Gibbs Cancer Center library, I am often asked by our medical and radiation oncologists to conduct literature searches or to get particular articles which—almost always—directly affect patient care. The Information Services provided by South Carolina AHEC have allowed me to access a large number of journals that I would never have access to otherwise. Healthcare is a fast-paced work environment where doctors and nurses need answers in a timely manner, and the services provided by South Carolina AHEC have allowed me to get these answers quickly. Everyone benefits in this situation—especially our cancer patients!" - Perry Patterson, Cancer Learning Center, Gibbs Regional Cancer Center, Spartanburg*

### 2008 HIGHLIGHTS:

**197,465** ....Total Annual Website Visits

**6,600** ....Documents Provided (in Less Than 24 Hours)

**830** ....Registered Users with Access to Databases and Journals

**114** ....Healthcare Professionals Trained

**13** ....Regional Training Sessions Conducted

*"I frequently teach/lecture to groups in South Carolina and across the nation for the American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians. The information you have provided has been used countless times in my teaching, both for physicians and for federal law enforcement. Thank you again for this excellent service." - Art Jordan, M.D., President, South Carolina Society of Interventional Pain Physicians & Board of Directors, American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians*