



## 2009 Annual Report

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



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



David R. Garr, MD  
Executive Director  
South Carolina AHEC

The 2009 academic year has been a busy one for the South Carolina AHEC. Several of the programs we coordinate relate to needs that are being discussed with greater frequency at both the state and national levels.

Healthcare reform has certainly received a lot of attention during this past year. Much discussion has occurred about the need to improve access to care, but an inadequate amount of attention has been given to assuring that we shall have the correct number and type of healthcare professionals to provide that care.

The South Carolina AHEC was established to address the healthcare workforce needs in our state, and that continues to be our primary mission. It is important to have the right professionals with the right skills in the right places to provide care to the people of South Carolina. Those of us in the South Carolina AHEC system continue to provide programs and services to encourage future healthcare professionals to plan career paths that will help address the healthcare needs of rural and underserved populations. The AHEC system is dedicated to addressing this high priority challenge by devoting time and resources to healthcare workforce development and support through our health careers, health professions, and continuing education programs.

The new Office of Healthcare Workforce Analysis and Planning, with funding from The Duke Endowment, will provide information about the present supply of healthcare professionals and what the anticipated demand will be in the coming years. The first two studies to be conducted by this new office will examine whether we have the correct number, types, and distribution of nurses and physicians in South Carolina. The next study will focus on the primary care workforce.

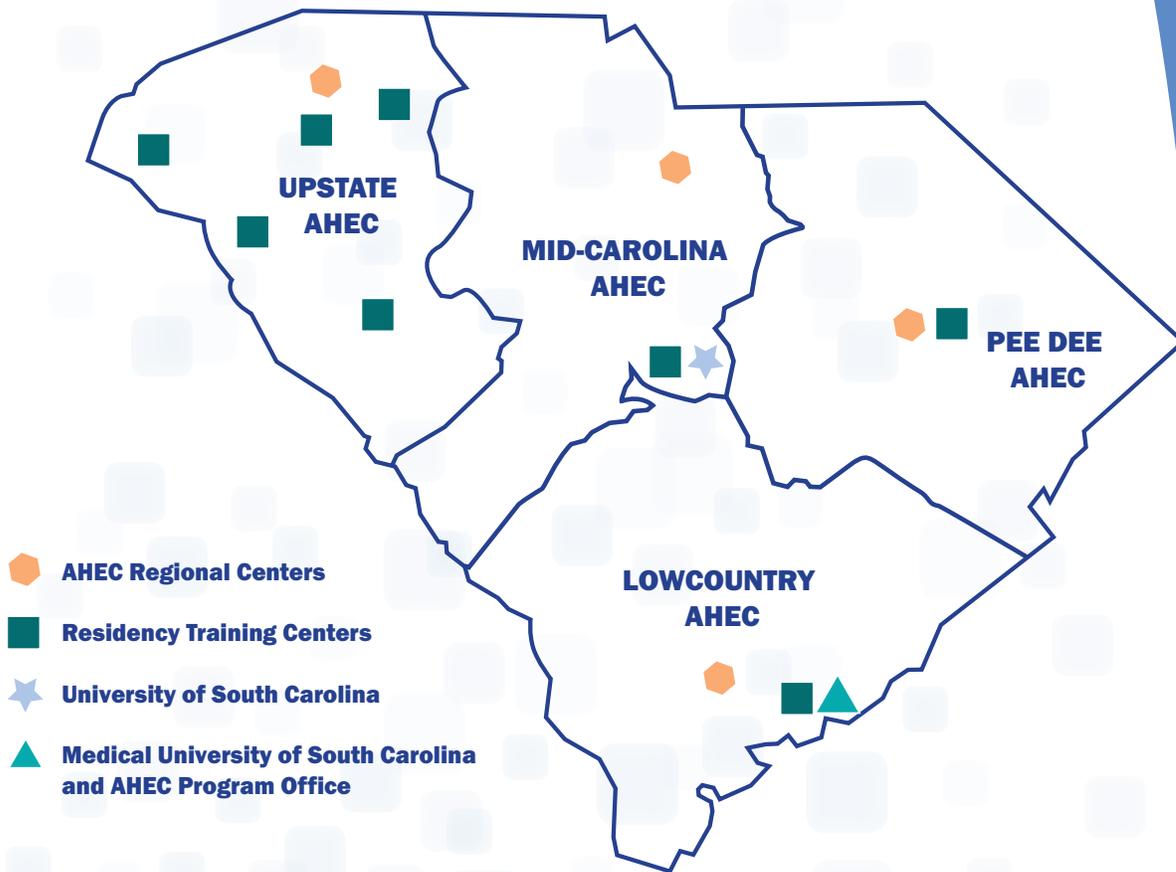
As the country embarks on significant changes to our healthcare system, prevention and population health will be receiving increasing emphasis. Our AHEC system is working with our partners across the state to develop models for training future healthcare professionals in teams so they can better address the wide range of health issues that exist in communities. As a nation, we need to do a better job with health promotion and disease prevention to reduce the number of people who experience health problems that could have been prevented. The delivery system of the future needs to incorporate a true team approach to prevention of disease as well as to its treatment. The partnerships and programs we have formed are designed to prepare graduates with the attitudes and skills to be outstanding team members.

In summary, a lot has happened during this past year and many more interesting developments are anticipated in the coming years as healthcare reform takes shape. Our AHEC system is ideally positioned to contribute to preparing for that future, and we look forward to continuing to build upon the excellent relationships we have with our partner educational institutions and organizations across the state.

*David R. Garr MD*

# SOUTH CAROLINA AHEC SYSTEM

**CONNECTING**  
Students to Careers,  
Professionals to  
Communities and  
Communities to  
Better Health



## THE SOUTH CAROLINA AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

The 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.

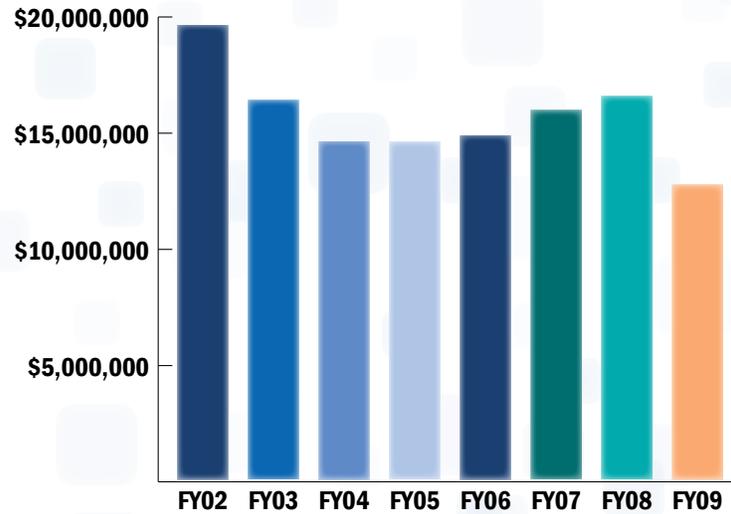
The essential role of AHEC programs in the United States is to recruit, train, sustain and inspire a broad range of health professionals to practice in underserved communities in order to secure the healthcare safety net. South Carolina is a state which is disproportionately poor, rural and underserved 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 the cohort of family medicine residents who graduated in 2009, every \$1 invested in their training generates a return of \$165 of economic impact for the South Carolina economy over the 30 year career of that graduate.**

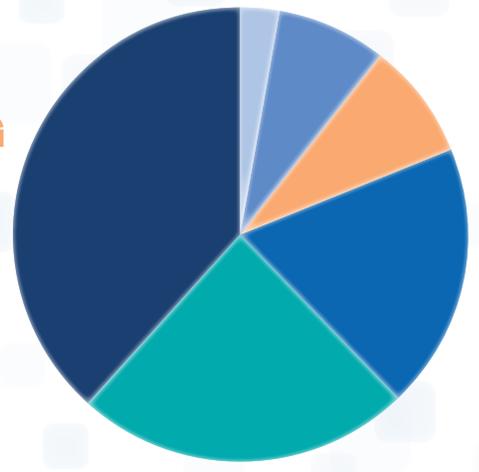
*- Based on model from the Robert Graham Center for Policy Studies*

# 2009 STATE FUNDING

Funding appropriated by the state of South Carolina totaled **\$12,813,466** in FY09. In addition to state and federal support, the South Carolina AHEC affiliated institutions expended in excess of **\$65,546,200** in local funds in FY09 to support the organizations' mission and goals.



# 2009 GRANT FUNDING



- \$528,346** OFFICE OF HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE ANALYSIS & PLANNING (THE DUKE ENDOWMENT)
- \$328,442** MODEL AHEC (DHHS, HRSA)
- \$260,587** BUILDING COALITIONS TO INCREASE THE DIVERSITY OF THE SC HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE (THE DUKE ENDOWMENT)
- \$117,265** JUNIOR DOCTORS OF HEALTH (THE DUKE ENDOWMENT)
- \$106,000** HOSPITAL PREPAREDNESS TRAINING & MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS (SC DHEC)
- \$41,000** GERIATRIC EDUCATION CENTER - UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA (DHHS, HRSA)

DHHS = Department of Health and Human Services  
 HRSA = Health Resources and Services Administration  
 SC DHEC = South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

"I depend on AHEC for continuing education. They have offered classes that I could not otherwise take, either due to travel time or cost. With budget constraints, AHEC has made it possible for me to have continuing education locally and affordably."

- Janie Benckert, RN CDE  
 Cardiac Rehab/Wellness,  
 Diabetic Educator  
 Newberry County Memorial Hospital

# HEALTH CAREERS PROGRAM

Preparing the next generation of health professionals is a key component of South Carolina AHEC's workforce development initiative. The goal of the South Carolina AHEC Health Careers Program is 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.

Health Careers Programs offered include:

- Health Careers Academy
- Summer Institute
- Nursing, Dental & Medicine Careers Academy
- Regional Summer Enrichment Activities
- Teach-the-Teacher Academy

## IN THE KNOW

- Since its inception in 2004, 60% of Nursing Academy Fellows are either practicing nurses or enrolled in a nurse training or pre-nursing undergraduate program.
- More than 6,185 hours of health professions observations were facilitated for HCP participants during this past year.
- Scholarship awards totaling \$12,500 were provided by the South Carolina AHEC to HCP participants enrolled in pre-nursing training programs within the state.
- Almost 1,700 hours of service learning were completed by high school juniors in the Health Careers Academy.

## 2009 HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 220 students participated in Health Career Academy (HCA) academic programming
- A total of 679 hours of academic advising were provided for HCA participants.
- Thirty-one undergraduate students were accepted as Fellows of the South Carolina AHEC 2009 Nursing, Dental and Medicine Careers Academy. This year marked the inaugural medicine track.
- The 2009 South Carolina AHEC Teach-the-Teacher Academy provided 18 hours of health career advocacy training for 43 middle and high school educators.
- Ninety-six high school and undergraduate students from across the state participated in health career exploration and academic preparation training during the four-day South Carolina AHEC 2009 Health Careers Summer Institute.
- The Pee Dee AHEC had 28 interns, the largest group in the region's history, participate in the 2009 Summer Enrichment Programs.



"The collaboration with our Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) program and Mid-Carolina AHEC's Youth Health Service Corps project was a great experience and opportunity for the students. The service learning project proved to be a wonderful experience for the students and the community."

- Susie Burgess  
HOSA Instructor  
Lancaster High School



"My experience with AHEC during the last three years has greatly influenced me to become a healthcare professional. Being a part of this program has allowed me to experience hands-on activities, such as patient simulations, casting, forensics, and CPR trainings. If you have an interest in healthcare, I would recommend this program."

- Ryan Davis-Wright  
Junior in the Pee Dee AHEC  
Health Careers Academy

“Participating in SCRIPT was one of the best aspects of being in school. The opportunity to become an integral part of a community by practicing medicine in its true form for the people who need it the most has been a blessing that I would do again given the chance. What you give to these communities by spending the time to learn about them and what their needs are, and what they in turn give back to you in the way of experience and acceptance is invaluable.”

- Chia-Yuan Mao, PA-SII  
Physician Assistant Program  
MUSC Class of 2009



- David Jacobs  
USC School of Medicine

“SCRIPT has impacted my perception of practicing in a rural area because I was able to see that family practice can be more than just seeing patients in a clinic. I enjoyed my work in the hospital in the areas of pediatrics, OB/GYN, and endoscopy.”

## HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENT PROGRAM

The South Carolina AHEC Health Professions Student (HPS) 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 primary care sites. Students learn firsthand about economic and cultural barriers to care and the specific needs of underserved and ethnically diverse populations.

### IN THE KNOW

- Over 200 clinical facilities served as training sites for 660 health professions student placements.
- The teaching provided by 370 preceptors led to more than 119,000 patient contacts for the health professions students.

### 2009 HIGHLIGHTS

- The Interprofessional Service Learning Project (ISLP), which began in 2008 in the Lowcountry AHEC, expanded throughout the state in 2009. ISLP is an initiative developed at the Medical University of South Carolina that brings students from different health professions disciplines together to address critical health needs in communities. While on clinical rotations, students use the Junior Doctors of Health curriculum to address childhood obesity with students, parents, teachers and administrators in elementary schools. A total of 64 students from four disciplines took part in 302 weeks of training.
- The South Carolina Rural Interdisciplinary Program of Training (SCRIPT) program provides an opportunity for students from various healthcare disciplines to be immersed in a rural health care setting as part of an interdisciplinary team for five weeks during the summer. This special experience not only acquaints students with a rural lifestyle unique to each AHEC region, but also helps the students convey knowledge and appreciation for a variety of health professions disciplines to each other and the patients they encounter. This year, 42 students participated from medicine, nursing, pharmacy, health administration, nutrition services, dentistry, physician assistants, rehabilitation sciences and social work.
- The South Carolina AHEC developed a stronger relationship with the South Carolina College of Pharmacy by placing 4<sup>th</sup> year pharmacy students in rural areas for experiential rotations as well as developing new rotation sites. The HPS Coordinators continue to have very effective relationships with the Physician's Assistant Program at MUSC allowing students to gain exceptional clinical experience working one-on-one with preceptors in rural and underserved areas. This year, 216 medical students received AHEC assistance with 243 rotations. In addition, 36 students from medical schools outside of the state took part in South Carolina AHEC rotations.

# 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 15,207 health professionals across the state.
- Over 749 programs were held in South Carolina's 46 counties.
- A total of 3654 hours of programming were provided to assist professionals in maintaining their licenses and certifications.

## 2009 HIGHLIGHTS

- With alarming frequency, returning veterans from the Middle East conflicts are coming home with mental health problems stemming directly from their experience. Rather than seek a VA facility, they often are visiting local emergency departments, mental health departments, and clinics. In 2009, the South Carolina AHEC began offering continuing education for healthcare providers to help identify, diagnose and treat conflict-related issues manifesting in returning veterans and their families. This year, Citizen Soldier programs were held in all four regions. Programs were also conducted for staff of the Department of Mental Health, in collaboration with the SC Returning Veterans Policy Academy Team, the South Carolina Department of Mental Health, and the William Jennings Bryan Dorm VA Medical Center.
- The South Carolina Cross Cultural Healthcare Project is designed to increase the cultural competency of nurses, with a primary focus on delivery of quality healthcare to the state's growing Hispanic population. In collaboration with the Cross Cultural Project, the Upstate AHEC began sponsoring a four-day Cross Cultural Institute three years ago. In 2009, a total of seven conferences were coordinated by the four AHEC Centers.
- Mid-Carolina AHEC continues to excel in stroke education through continuing education classes and their American Heart Association (AHA) Training Center where instructors offered the University of Miami's Advanced Stroke Life Support (ASLS) course several times during the year.
- In 2007, the Upstate AHEC received a three-year grant from the Nursing Education, Practice and Retention Program. To date, over 1000 nurses have received training through the Upstate Lateral Violence in Nursing Project.
- As the internet becomes a readily available and popular means for communication and social networking, the South Carolina AHEC has become more involved in providing Distance Education. The Regional Centers are developing podcasts, online learning tools, webinars, and other modes of instruction to provide on-line and asynchronous continuing educational opportunities for healthcare professionals.



"One of the most important things I've learned to do is listen---that is true and effective for veterans of World War II, Vietnam and Iraq...It is good to have true Veterans present the topics because they can relate to the topic from experience and stories heard over time from past soldiers".

- James White  
Veterans Affairs Officer in  
Colleton County



"I thoroughly enjoyed the Nurse Manager workshop provided by Upstate AHEC. It helped me remember why I've loved the nursing profession for over 25 years!! I wish I had been provided the management tools learned in this workshop many years ago when I was a new nurse manager."

- Sherri Stroud  
Director of Nursing  
Spartanburg Regional  
Healthcare

# GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

**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 point 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:** In addition to Family Medicine, the South Carolina AHEC also provides funding and works closely with graduate doctor residency training programs that emphasize primary care (internal medicine, pediatrics, and medicine/pediatrics) and training in other specialties with demonstrated shortages. Graduate Doctor Residency Training Programs are located in three cities in our state and include training in several specialty areas.

**LOCATIONS OF THE AHEC RESIDENCY TRAINING PROGRAMS:** South Carolina AHEC Residency Training Programs are located in Anderson, Charleston, Columbia, Florence, Greenville, Greenwood, Spartanburg and Seneca.

## 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 (717) of the family physicians practicing in South Carolina were trained in South Carolina AHEC Family Medicine Residency Training Programs.
- In addition, twenty-three percent (132) of the pediatricians, twenty-three percent (95) of the obstetricians, twenty-one percent (61) of the general surgeons, and eighteen percent (162) 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.

## 2009 HIGHLIGHTS

- Three-hundred and twenty-seven residents were trained in the primary care specialties of family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics.
- An additional 209 residents were trained in graduate doctor specialties.
- Of the 2009 family medicine graduates, 32 (58%) remained in South Carolina to practice.

"AHEC coordinates an instructive rural health experience for MUSC medical students. My rotation in Union, SC, affirmed my decision to choose family medicine as a career. In my first practice, we also worked closely with the local AHEC and supervised medical students and other health professions students in our office - another richly rewarding experience. I felt I had come full circle in the educational process by giving back to other students."

- Emily Ellis, MD  
Spartanburg Family Medicine  
Graduate

## SELF REGIONAL FAMILY MEDICINE RESIDENT NAMED 1 OF TOP 10 IN COUNTRY



A physician in Self Regional Healthcare's Family Medicine Residency Program at Montgomery Center for Family Medicine has been selected one of the nation's top 10 residents by the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Dr. Christy Cavanagh, currently entering her third year in the program and co-chief resident for the coming year, received the AAFP/Bristol-Myers Squibb Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education. Not only is she one of just ten nationwide to earn the honor, but she is also the only resident from the AAFP's southern region to receive the honor.

Dr. Gary A. Goforth, Director of Medical Education at Self Regional, described the award-winning physician as "remarkable." She consistently provides exemplary patient care, he explained, and has received numerous written and verbal commendations from her patients concerning her interpersonal and academic skills.

"Our faculty members have recognized Dr. Cavanagh's strong interpersonal skills, diagnostic skills and skilled care of patients on our very busy inpatient medicine, pediatric and obstetrics services," Dr. Goforth noted. "When patients are admitted, she develops a superb plan and always follows through."

Consulting physicians regularly cite Dr. Cavanagh for her excellent medical care and utilization of specialty consultations, he added. She was also cited for giving back to her community, serving frequently at the Greater Greenwood United Ministry Free Medical Clinic as well as a volunteer physician on a medical mission trip to Peru this past spring.

Dr. Cavanagh and the other nine winners of the award were selected based on their leadership, community involvement, exemplary patient care and interpersonal relationships, according to AAFP officials.

A member of the local residency program since 2007, Dr. Cavanagh earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Florida and later graduated from the University of Florida Medical School.

"I chose to complete my family medicine training at Self Regional Healthcare because it is one of the top residencies in the country," Dr. Cavanagh said. "This award is a reflection on the strength of the program and the support of the Greenwood community. I am honored to represent our residency program and hospital in this way."

Dr. Cavanagh becomes the seventh resident in the history of the Montgomery Center for Family Medicine program to receive the Excellence in Graduate Medical Education Award.

"This award is a reflection on the strength of the program and the support of the Greenwood community. I am honored to represent our residency program and hospital in this way."

- Christy Cavanagh, MD  
Self Regional Family  
Medicine Residency  
Program

# RECRUITMENT & RETENTION PROGRAM

The 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 clinicians 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 a full-time faculty member 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 and pediatricians in rural South Carolina by providing them with 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.

## IN THE KNOW

- In FY 2009, 77 physicians, 4 nurse practitioners, 4 physician assistants and 1 certified nurse midwife received funds from the Rural Physician Program.
- Sixteen rural dentists and five faculty members at MUSC's College of Dental Medicine received funds from the Rural Dentist Loan Repayment Program.
- Two hundred and twenty days of locum tenens services were provided to physicians in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina in 2009.

## 2009 HIGHLIGHTS

- Sixty-eight medical students from the Medical University of South Carolina the University of South Carolina, and 16 from other medical schools in the southeast, attended the 2009 Family Medicine Interest Day. 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-four 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 Residents' conference was also presented at this meeting that was designed to instruct the residents how to be effective chief residents and effective clinical teachers.

"Thanks to the Rural Physician Incentive Grant awarded to me by the South Carolina AHEC, I was able to locate my practice in rural lower Florence County and Williamsburg County. Without the Incentive Grant, it would have been virtually impossible to have developed a practice here. There must be financial options available to entice newly trained residents to consider practice in rural South Carolina.

The incentive grants are a small investment by the state to ensure quality medical services are available to the rural areas of our State."

- Wade Lamb, MD  
Rural Physician Program  
Incentive Grant Recipient

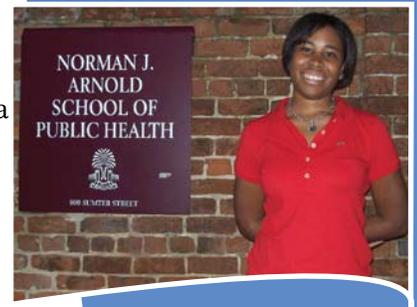


# COALITIONS FOR HEALTH CAREERS

The regionally-based Coalitions for Health Careers, convened by the South Carolina AHEC and funded by The Duke Endowment, successfully expands the reach of the Health Careers Program to increase the advocacy for health careers through collaborative initiatives and activities.

## 2009 HIGHLIGHTS

- The Lowcountry Coalition developed a guide for the implementation of the Lowcountry Lunch Buddy Program and 61 students successfully completed school-based programs in Beaufort, Colleton and Dorchester counties.
- The Mid-Carolina Coalition facilitated the 2009 community-based Mid-Carolina Parent/Student Forum to promote and support the active engagement of parents in their childrens' health career exploration.
- The Pee Dee Coalition implemented the Faith-Based Health Careers Initiative to promote health career advocacy within churches. The program provides resources for health career and college exploration.
- The Upstate Coalition has provided 75 "Health Careers Resource Tool-kits" to middle school Career Development Facilitators and Guidance Counselors in the region. As a result, the Coalition has received a number of requests to participate in Lunch and Learn activities, Career Days and Career Fairs.



"The South Carolina AHEC has given me the opportunity to preview health training programs. Now that I have been accepted into a nursing program, I am able to use everything I learned during the Nursing Careers Academy - from the information panels to the long nights spent working on projects. My AHEC experiences have been GREAT, and have helped to prepare me mentally, physically and socially for future endeavors.

## OFFICE OF HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE ANALYSIS & PLANNING

Like many states, South Carolina has a shortage of critical healthcare personnel in rural areas of our state, as well as in our hospitals and inner-city neighborhoods. A new Office of Healthcare Workforce Analysis and Planning (OHWAP) has been established to help the state create effective long-range strategies to ensure an adequate healthcare workforce. Founded with a four-year, \$2.1 million start-up grant from The Duke Endowment, the OHWAP is currently housed in the South Carolina AHEC. The winning grant proposal was a collaborative effort between the South Carolina AHEC, the Center for Nursing Leadership at the USC College of Nursing, and the South Carolina Budget and Control Board's Office of Research and Statistics.

The grant supports the new Office of Healthcare Workforce Research for Nursing within the USC College of Nursing which focuses on nursing workforce issues. The work of all partners draws heavily on healthcare information compiled over the years by the SC Office of Research and Statistics to improve our understanding of the dynamics in the healthcare workforce in South Carolina.

An Advisory Council has been established to provide oversight and help decide which issues to address first. Three projects have been identified: the development of nurse workforce supply and demand measures and projections; a profile of the current supply of physicians and how well it meets the needs of the state's population; and an analysis of how the demand for primary care services is likely to change in the future, and what will be needed to make certain that the state has enough providers with the right skills.

The reports and publications generated by the OHWAP will provide detailed and current information needed to make informed policy and planning decisions regarding healthcare workforce issues.

I highly recommend South Carolina AHEC programs."

- Jessica Cook  
Junior, USC School of  
Nursing



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