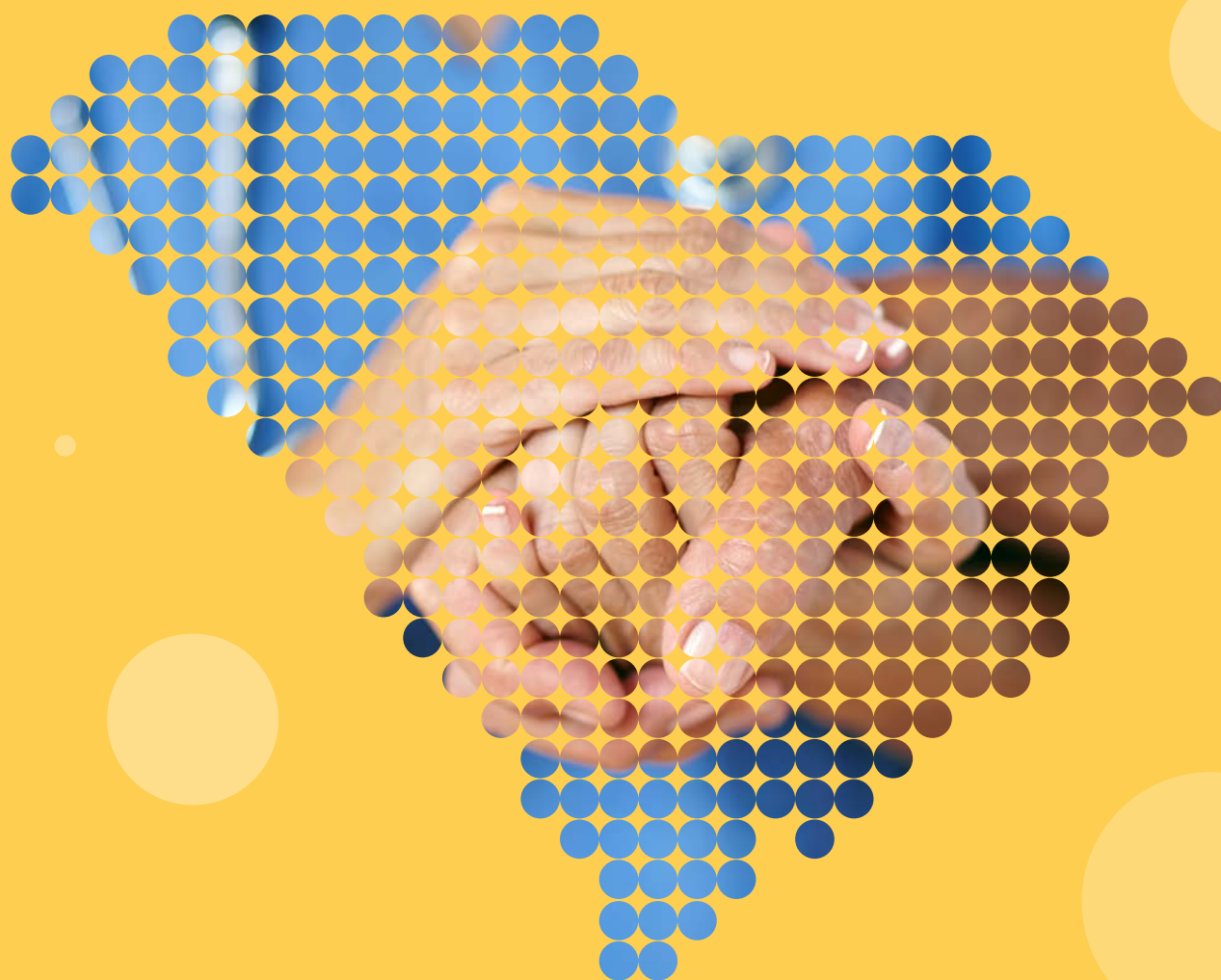


South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



Connecting Students to Careers,
Professionals to Communities &
South Carolina **to Better Health**

Connecting the Dots



Dear Fellow South Carolinians:

I am pleased to provide this introduction to the 2016 South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC) Annual Report. The South Carolina AHEC has been serving the state since 1972 with the mission of building and supporting the healthcare workforce South Carolina needs. I anticipate that you will agree that this past year has been a productive and meaningful one as we continue on this important path.

The beautiful landscapes and friendly people in our state make it an attractive place to live. Unfortunately, South Carolina faces significant challenges when it comes to the provision of healthcare services, especially to those who reside in rural and underserved communities. Our AHEC program works to improve the health of South Carolinians by helping to ensure there is an adequate supply and distribution of healthcare professionals. Whether this is through the recruitment of students to health professions careers or incentives that help clinicians establish practice in shortage areas, the South Carolina AHEC is committed to connecting people with resources that can help them achieve the best health possible for themselves and their families.

We work to fill gaps that exist, among which are providing data about the health workforce supply and demand that can guide decisions about how to best meet South Carolina's healthcare needs. In addition, we are working with others to use state-of-the-art technology to increase access to healthcare services and to provide education and training for the state's health professions workforce.

Our programs continue to achieve positive outcomes for the state—whether it's the more than 100,000 patient contacts by health professions students training with AHEC preceptors, the more than 150,000 contact hours of health professionals in our education programs, or the hundreds of providers who have been funded to practice in rural or underserved areas.

This year our annual report features some of those whose stories continue to make our work important and gratifying: students achieving their health profession dream as they progress on the path our AHEC helped pave and providers following their passion for serving those who need it the most.

The South Carolina AHEC is working to improve health-related statistics, but we also recognize that behind the numbers are the people and lives that make this state great. We invite you to join us as we connect the dots between health professions recruitment and retention and better health for all South Carolinians.

Yours truly,

David R. Garr, MD
Executive Director
South Carolina AHEC

The South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium achieves excellence in healthcare through recruitment, retention and education of healthcare professionals.

“

The path to medical school is filled with bad advice, disadvantages, and financial hardship. Thanks to AHEC, none of that was an issue. I was granted access to admissions representatives from my top choice and eventual medical school, given shadowing opportunities and exposure some people never get, and networking opportunities that did nothing but help, all for free. I credit much of my application's experiences to AHEC and am forever in debt to this wonderful organization.



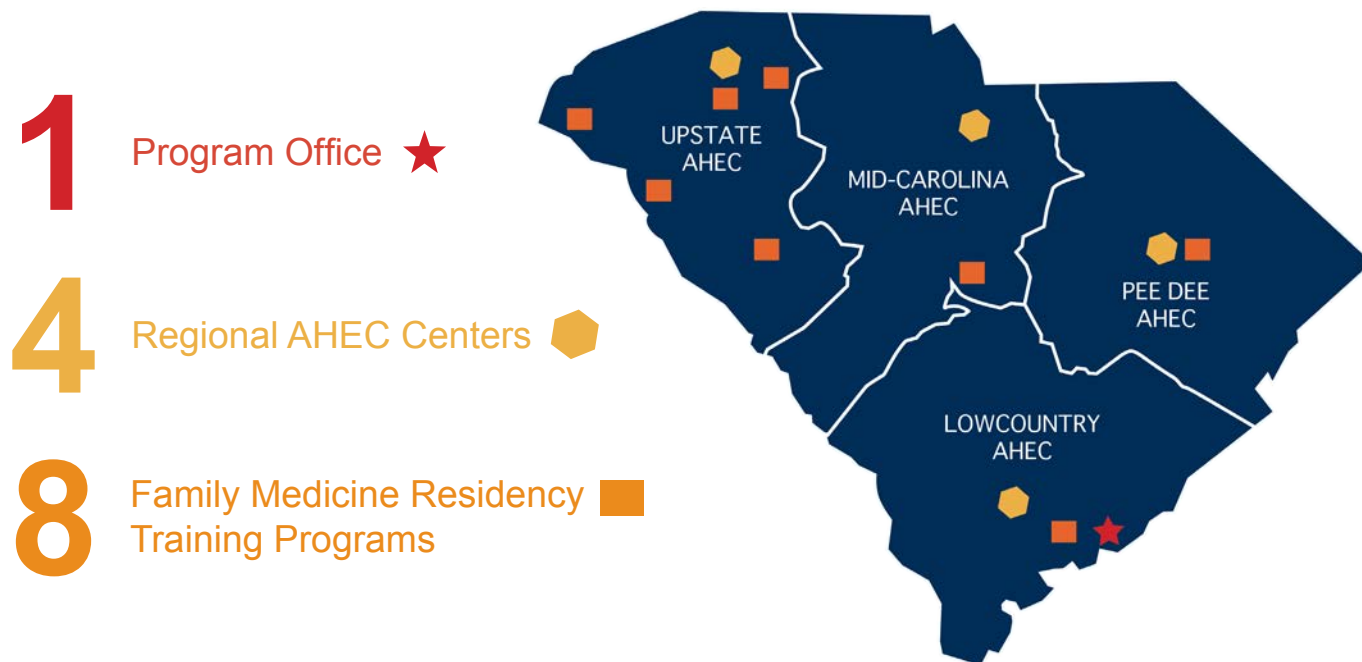
Lance Braye
MD/MPH Student at MUSC

Connecting Students to Resources

Lance Braye is a prime example of the impact of South Carolina AHEC's health professions pipeline. Before graduating from The Citadel and enrolling in MUSC as an MD/MPH student, Mr. Braye participated in the Lowcountry AHEC Health Careers Program (HCP) and summer internship program. He was a 2012 South Carolina AHEC Summer Careers Academy Fellow and completed his MUSC family medicine clerkship in his hometown of Walterboro, a placement facilitated by the Lowcountry AHEC Health Professions Student Program (HPS). Furthermore, Mr. Braye participated in Lowcountry AHEC HPS interprofessional activities and volunteered to serve as a mentor to Lowcountry AHEC HCP students. Mr. Braye is currently pursuing an MD/MPH at MUSC while continuing to serve as a mentor and example to future healthcare professionals.

The South Carolina AHEC System

The essential role of the South Carolina AHEC is to recruit, train, sustain and inspire a broad range of health professionals to practice in underserved communities to maintain a high-quality healthcare safety net. South Carolina is a state that 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 future generations of healthcare professionals to serve the needs of all South Carolinians.



Connecting South Carolina to Education



The South Carolina Health Occupations Outreach Learning System (SCHOOLS) is a videoconferencing system that provides access to educational programs, health professions student rotation support and research project guidance. Programs, trainings and meetings are delivered via videoconferencing technology and are often recorded for availability as on-demand videos on SCHOOLS and AHEC U (see page 17). The network of SCHOOLS locations and programming continues to grow with more locations coming online.

SCHOOLS Sites

Allendale County Hospital
AnMed Health
Beaufort Memorial Hospital
Cannon Memorial Hospital
Carolina Pines Reg. Medical Center
Claflin University
Clemson University
Coastal Carolina University
Edgefield County Hospital
Fairfield Memorial Hospital
Greenville Health System
Greenwood County EMS

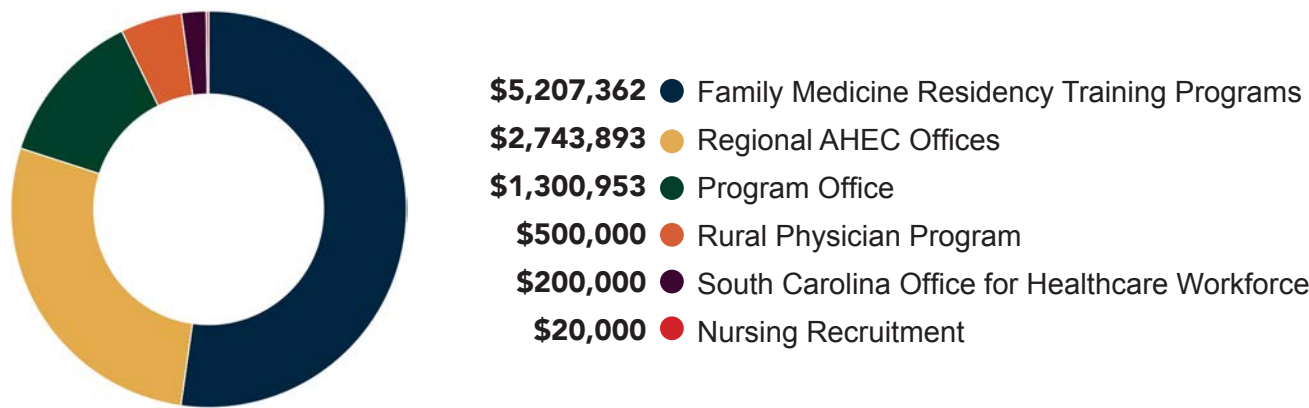
KershawHealth
Laurens County Memorial Hospital
Lowcountry AHEC (Walterboro)
Mary Black Health System-Gaffney
McLeod Cheraw
McLeod Clarendon
McLeod Loris
McLeod Seacoast
McLeod Medical Center Darlington
Mid-Carolina AHEC (Lancaster)
Midlands EMS
Newberry County Memorial Hospital

North Greenville Hospital
Pee Dee AHEC (McLeod Florence)
Pee Dee Regional EMS
South Carolina AHEC (MUSC)
The Regional Medical Center
Tidelands Health Georgetown
Tidelands Health Waccamaw
Union Memorial Hospital
Upstate AHEC (Greenville)
Upstate EMS Council
Volunteers in Medicine Clinic
Winthrop University

FY 2016 Funding

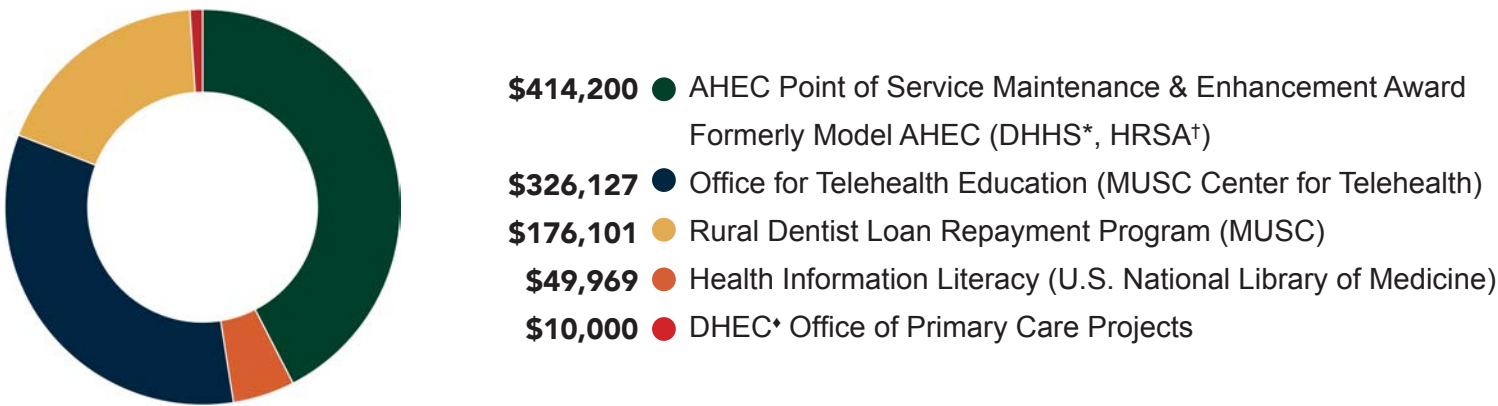
State Funding

Funding appropriated by the state for the South Carolina AHEC totaled \$9,972,208.



External Funding

Extramural funding for the South Carolina AHEC totaled \$976,397. Funding reported here spans periods across calendar and fiscal years.



Contractual Funds

Contracts with the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services totaled \$1,074,621.

- \$556,601 Locum Tenens (SC DHHS*)
- \$518,020 Rural Physician Program/Rural Dentist Program (SC DHHS*)

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

South Carolina AHEC PROGRAM AREAS

The South Carolina AHEC builds and supports the healthcare workforce South Carolina needs through a focus on recruiting, retaining and educating healthcare professionals. This is done through a variety of programs, starting with students in high school and progressing through college, health professions training programs and graduate medical education. Then, once providers are practicing professionals, programs support the recruitment and retention of providers, as well as continuing professional development and access to education and other services via telehealth. Finally, the Office for Healthcare Workforce studies the healthcare workforce needs and trends to inform decision-making statewide.



Health Careers Programs

address the need to increase the number of young people, especially those from underserved populations, who aspire to become healthcare professionals by promoting academic preparation and motivation for high school and college students through year-long and summer programs.



Health Professions Student Programs

provide opportunities for students to work and learn in rural and underserved communities in South Carolina by gaining real-world experience in patient care settings. These experiences increase the likelihood they will choose to practice in communities in need of healthcare services.

Graduate Medical Education

provides support for Family Medicine residency training programs in eight South Carolina communities. More than 50% of all family physicians in South Carolina were trained in AHEC-affiliated residencies.





Recruitment and Retention Programs

provide financial incentives to physicians, dentists and advanced practice providers to practice in rural and underserved communities. The Locum Tenens Program provides coverage for physicians in rural areas, allowing them time away from their practices.

Professional Education Programs

identify the educational needs of healthcare professionals and provide education programs designed to enhance clinical skills and maintain professional certifications. Programs are delivered through traditional methods and innovative technologies.



Telehealth Education

provides new access to educational and training resources for students, providers, patients and communities through telehealth technology. Telehealth extends AHEC's statewide reach and partnerships to address rural healthcare delivery and healthcare workforce development needs.

Office for Healthcare Workforce

provides timely information that individuals, communities, educational systems, state agencies, health systems and others can use for planning and decision-making about South Carolina's healthcare workforce.





Health Careers Programs

20,328 Hours of health professional shadowing time at healthcare facilities statewide provided to 968 HCP high school participants.

11,147 Hours of HCP service-learning activities completed by high school students across the state.

Health Professions Student Programs

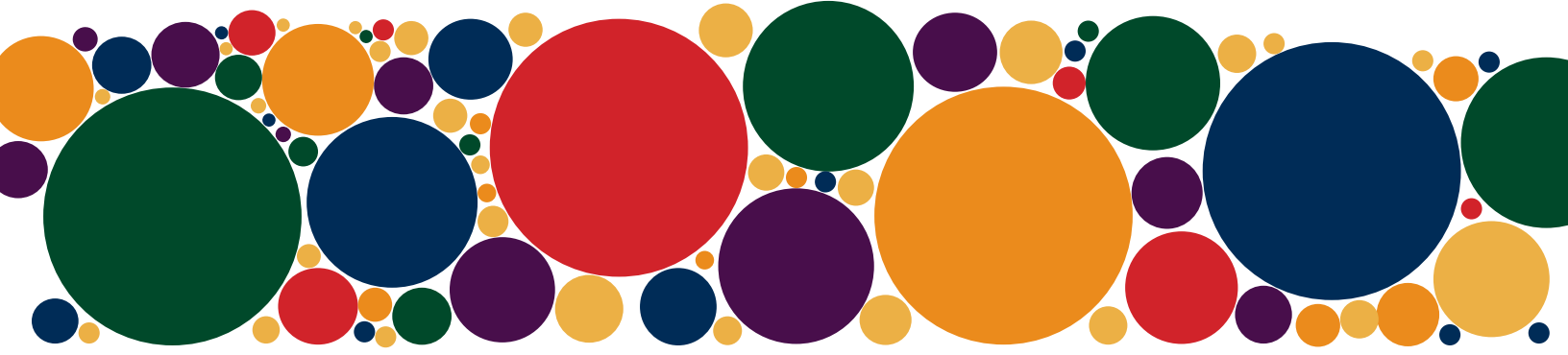
292 Clinical facilities served as training sites for 960 health professions student placements.

101,626 Patient contacts for health professions students provided through the teaching and supervision of 381 preceptors.

Graduate Medical Education

2,085 Residents who have completed a South Carolina Family Medicine Residency Training Program since 1971.

68 Approximate percentage of family physicians who have a primary practice in a rural county (of graduates from South Carolina Family Medicine Residency Training Programs since 1992 who are actively practicing in the state).



Recruitment & Retention

- 104** Medical students from 14 medical schools attended the 2016 South Carolina Family Medicine Interest Day.
- 394** Physicians and 54 advanced practice providers have received funds from the Rural Physician Program since its inception in 1989.

Professional Education

- 155,139** Contact hours of continuing professional education provided to assist professionals in maintaining their licenses and certifications.
- 39,287** Registrations by health professionals who took advantage of AHEC educational programs.

Telehealth Education

- 10** Average number of pounds per person lost by completers of the Wellness Connect telehealth weight management program.
- 58** Contact hours of telehealth simulation module training provided to EMS crews across South Carolina in 2016.

Health Careers Program

The South Carolina AHEC Health Careers Program (HCP) provides a variety of extended learning opportunities for students to support their matriculation into health professions training programs. HCP initiatives promote the development of academically-proficient and self-confident future healthcare professionals. The Health Careers Academy (HCA) serves students in grades 9-12 in the four AHEC regions. HCP coordinators organize educational programs and activities during the academic school year for these students. Service-learning, mentoring and academic advising are components of the curriculum, which aligns with the South Carolina Department of Education Academic Standards. Additionally, the Bench to Bedside (B2B) program exists to increase the matriculation of undergraduate students into health professions education programs through seminars, college courses and student-led organizations.

**Bench to
Bedside
Program
(B2B)**

400

*participant hours
during the 2015-
2016 academic year*

6

*college and
university partners*



AHEC has opened a lot of doors, exposing me to many health careers through the Health Careers Program at Lowcountry AHEC and continuing with the SC AHEC B2B (Bench to Bedside) program . . . Because of AHEC, I am 100% positive that I will be a physical therapist. The programs have helped to define my goals and I am thankful to everyone in the SC AHEC Health Careers Program!

Timarah Chisolm joined the Lowcountry AHEC Health Careers Academy during her freshman year of high school. Now a Winthrop University sophomore and a B2B participant, she is preparing to become a physical therapist.

I had the great opportunity to participate in the Pee Dee AHEC Health Careers Program 2016 Summer Internship. I strongly recommend others to apply for this program to explore their options within the medical field, network, and improve your resumé . . . The program has made me realize that becoming a pharmacist is my true passion. The Pee Dee AHEC Health Careers Program Summer Internship experience will always be with me to encourage me through school or when I am in doubt.

Synobia Miller was a Pee Dee AHEC HCP Summer Internship Program participant and is currently a licensed pharmacy technician and student at USC Sumter.





SC AHEC is a fantastic networking tool and I find that I have made connections with numerous physicians years after my participation through our mutual participation in AHEC programs . . . It helped to solidify my desire to be in medicine . . . I feel like the experience has made me a well-rounded student . . . I am currently in medical school in South Carolina and if I didn't learn the information about the application process or the amount of schooling becoming a physician would take, I wouldn't be in the blessed position I am now. Seeing African-American faces in positions that I could have only dreamed of helped to give me the motivation to work hard and stick with my aspirations.

Kelsey Williams was an Upstate AHEC HCP, Summer Academy and Summer Institute participant. She was recognized as the South Carolina AHEC Student of the Year and is currently pursuing an MD degree at the USC School of Medicine Greenville.

Connecting Students to a Bright Future

Participating in the SC AHEC Summer Careers Academy was instrumental in my path to becoming a physician. It is one thing to have the desire to do something, but it is another to actually have the tools to get it accomplished. The Academy helped provide valuable information and mentorship that assisted me along the journey . . . As a current family medicine resident, I am grateful for the tools provided through the program and the support from faculty members who were willing to give their time and experience. That played a large role in helping me through one of the first steps, getting into medical school. As for the future, I hope to have a career centered on servant leadership, which everyone in this program embodies . . . This program is really awesome. Thanks for providing me tools that helped me transform my dream into a reality.

Brittany Watson was a Summer Careers Academy participant. She graduated from the MUSC College of Medicine in 2016 and was awarded the 2015 Physician of Tomorrow award by the American Medical Association.



**2016
Health
Careers
Program**

62

**HCP
Achievers
(110+ Hours)**

65

**HCP
Scholars
(60+ Hours)**

86

**HCP Jr.
Scholars
(20-59 Hours)**



Lowcountry AHEC

The Lowcountry Area Health Education Center is a not-for-profit AHEC center, serving 12 southeastern counties in South Carolina. The counties of the service area are a continuum of rural to urban and the socioeconomic profile of the population is diverse, from very poor to very affluent, with education levels trending with socioeconomic status. With a large area at or near the I-95 corridor, population health issues are typical of this area, including diabetes, heart disease and stroke. To combat these issues, Lowcountry AHEC staff have worked diligently during the past fiscal year, providing programs to increase and diversify the healthcare workforce, bringing health professions students into rural and underserved areas and designing continuing education programs delivered live, via videoconference and online.

This past year, Lowcountry AHEC partnered with the Carolina Center for Medical Excellence and Palmetto Care Connections on a new telehealth collaboration. Previously, the five-week Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) program had taken place in individual rural communities, with very few participants. The telehealth DSME pilot project was developed to increase the number of participants and decrease the distance participants and instructors had to travel for diabetes education. Lowcountry AHEC acts as the originating site in Walterboro, with community health center offices in Fairfax and Barnwell connecting remotely for diabetes education. To date, 26 participants have graduated from the program.

Post-tests for the program indicate that 100 percent of participants were satisfied with learning via telehealth and also demonstrated an increase in knowledge about diabetes. One participant stated, “When I left, I was feeling pretty good about it, a bunch of people were educated at one time. I think that’s pretty cool! I’ve cut back on my sugar and I’m working on it, trying to eat right and get my sugar down.”

The experience has been very positive for me as the instructor. All participants stated they would recommend this format to others with diabetes or prediabetes. This has saved me hours of driving time going to distance sites and travel expenses.

Sara Smith, MAT, RD, LD, CDE

To address the stroke prevalence in the region, Lowcountry AHEC has continued as an Advanced Stroke Life Support (ASLS) center through The University of Miami Gordon Center for Research in Medical Education. ASLS courses are held quarterly for pre-hospital and hospital staff, with over 90 participants certified in ASLS since the center’s inception in 2015.

Health Professions Student Program



Working with Pee Dee AHEC during my clinical year as an MUSC physician assistant (PA) student was extremely beneficial. I grew up in the Pee Dee region and knew I wanted to eventually get a job here and give back to my community, so of course I asked to have the majority of my rotations in the area. Traci Coward and Kam Richardson did everything in their power to get me located in the Pee Dee. They also made sure each site was expecting me and checked in on me during each rotation to ensure it was going okay. I decided to do my last and elective rotation in Florence, SC with a spine surgeon. Without the help of Traci talking one-on-one with the surgeon, I would have never been allowed to start on time. She made sure everything was in order—I can now say I have been hired as this spine surgeon's PA! Thank you so much to Pee Dee AHEC for all of their help and guidance through clinical year.



Laura Timmons
Physician Assistant,
MUSC Graduate

4,298

health professions student rotation placement weeks—just like Laura's—facilitated by South Carolina Regional AHEC Centers

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. These educational partnerships are 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. The South Carolina AHEC placements give students the opportunity to experience healthcare in a real world clinical setting away from their academic health science centers. Students are able to interact one-on-one with patients in community health centers, county health departments, homeless clinics, local practitioners' offices and other primary care sites. Students learn firsthand how economic, cultural and geographic barriers affect the provision of healthcare services and the specific needs of underserved and ethnically diverse populations.

Additionally, now with its fifth cohort accepted, the AHEC-sponsored Institute for Primary Care continues to encourage and support students in the pursuit of a career in primary care. This year the Institute boasts 101 students and 39 preceptors (MUSC: 28 medicine, 16 nursing, 15 pharmacy, 27 PA; USC: 8 medicine, 7 nursing).

Connecting Students to Communities



Mid-Carolina AHEC

Mid-Carolina AHEC's service area includes 11 counties in the center of the state extending from the North Carolina to the Georgia borders. As a predominately rural region, the center serves as an education pipeline for healthcare professionals and routinely works with regional partners to navigate the changing healthcare landscape associated with education, recruitment and retention. Mid-Carolina AHEC continues to develop and implement processes and programs that support improved healthcare delivery, especially for rural and underserved areas.

Mid-Carolina AHEC also convened partners to support off-campus interprofessional education (IPE) via interprofessional team case conferences and case-based simulations for students. The case conferences were conducted in partnership with academic centers including MUSC, USC, USC Lancaster campus, North Greenville University and VCOM, as well as regional hospitals, clinical practices and community preceptors/faculty. These IPE opportunities support the transition of health professions education to patient-centered, collaborative care.

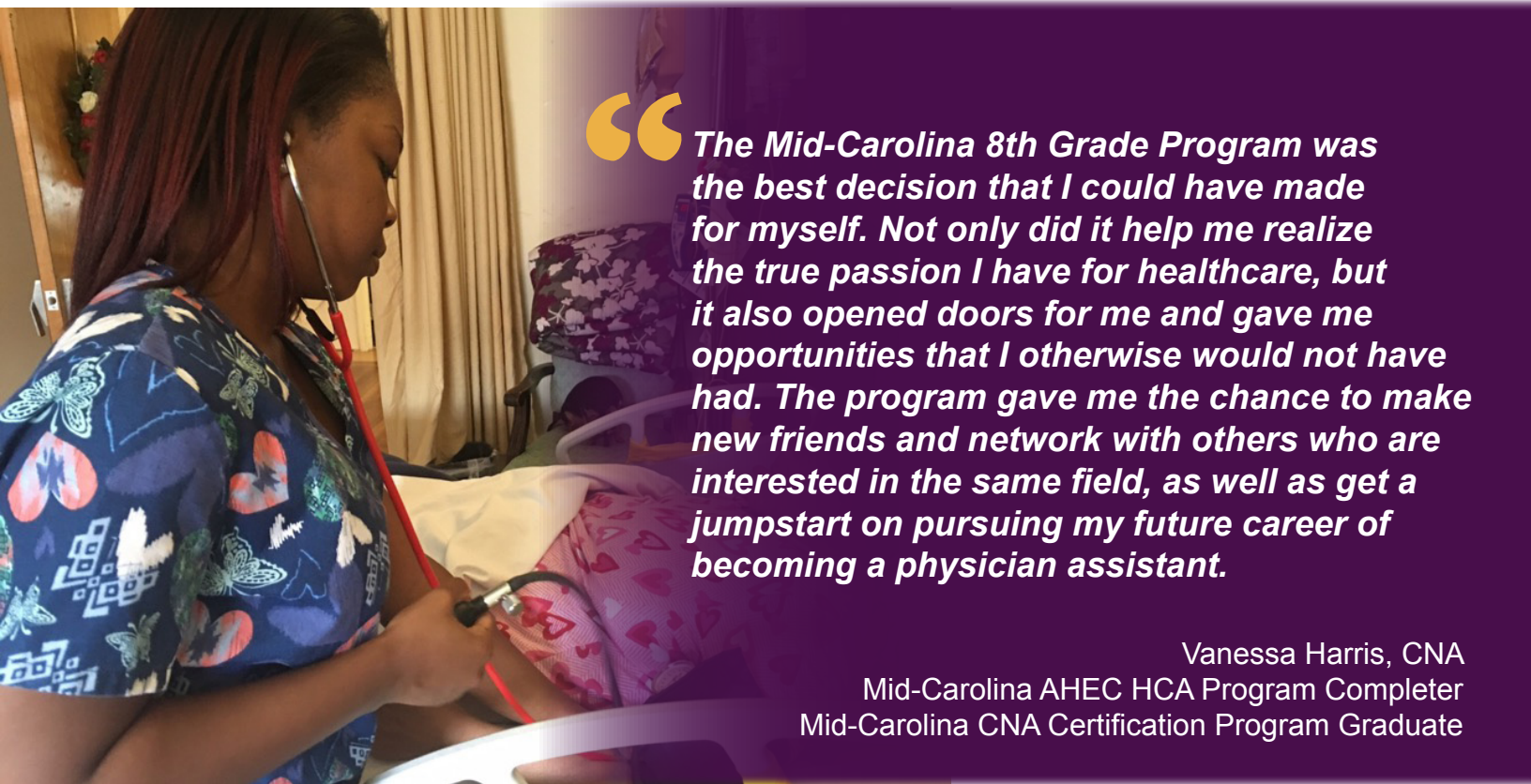
In an effort to support off-campus interprofessional education activities and practice, Mid-Carolina AHEC has partnered with Dr. Keith Shealy of Mackey Family Practice in Lancaster, the first privately owned practice in the state to receive patient-centered medical home (PCMH) certification. Local students and preceptors attend quarterly sessions with Dr. Shealy to learn how implementing a PCMH model can increase patient and staff satisfaction, improve health outcomes and optimize practice operations. After attending, 100% of participants agree that they intend to look further into the PCMH approach and incorporate it into the care they provide.

Mid-Carolina AHEC has implemented an eighth-grade feeder program for its HCP program, which was been successful in identifying and engaging students in HCA activities throughout the academic year. The program has demonstrated excellent outcomes, with 100% of the students who completed both the program in 2010 and subsequently the four-year HCA program matriculating into a two- or four-year college or university.

This year Governor Nikki Haley established a domestic violence (DV) task force. The Board of Nursing supported these efforts by sending a link to available DV trainings to South Carolina Nurses. Mid-Carolina AHEC partnered with the South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to host a three-part educational series that defined DV, examined reporting protocols and provided resources. The programs will be available on AHEC U and will also be available through the South Carolina Board of Nursing website. Mid-Carolina AHEC's programs on DV are a component of a statewide initiative supported by the South Carolina AHEC.

Mid-Carolina AHEC partnered with the USC School of Medicine this year in supporting the *South Carolina Hepatitis C and HIV Symposium: Best Practices and Emerging Trends in 2016*. In partnership with Upper Midlands Rural Health Network, Catawba Mental Health, Old English School District and Chester Healthcare Foundation, Mid-Carolina AHEC also hosted an annual school nurse workshop titled *Sugar, Spots and all the Nots: Diabetes, Physical Assessment and Documentation*. The workshop was attended by 89 participants, 97.6% of whom reported an increase in knowledge and 98.8% who plan to implement at least one practice improvement related to glucose management and diet support.

Connecting Students to Careers



“The Mid-Carolina 8th Grade Program was the best decision that I could have made for myself. Not only did it help me realize the true passion I have for healthcare, but it also opened doors for me and gave me opportunities that I otherwise would not have had. The program gave me the chance to make new friends and network with others who are interested in the same field, as well as get a jumpstart on pursuing my future career of becoming a physician assistant.”

Vanessa Harris, CNA
Mid-Carolina AHEC HCA Program Completer
Mid-Carolina CNA Certification Program Graduate

From student to nursing assistant with Mid-Carolina AHEC

“AHEC has had a profound effect on my child’s future. Vanessa began the program in 8th grade and through that, her interest was sparked regarding healthcare. She was able to learn very viable skills at a young age that have only kept growing as she progressed. I am very thankful to Erica Davis and AHEC for influencing my child’s future.”

-Alicia Harris, Vanessa’s Parent

“Vanessa is very dedicated to the care of her patients. She is always willing to do extra for her patients. Her compassion for healthcare shows in her work. She has a calming effect to ease her patients’ minds. She is bright and friendly to all. She is a great asset to the Geriatric Unit.”

-Sharon Shealy, RN
Nurse Manager, Geriatric Unit,
Three Rivers Behavioral Health



Pee Dee AHEC

Pee Dee AHEC, located in Florence, serves as an educational pipeline for healthcare professionals, students and facilities located in the northeastern section of South Carolina. Much of Pee Dee AHEC's 12-county service area is rural and underserved with a significant portion of the population being uninsured or under-insured. Many residents face disparities such as low income, high unemployment and low levels of education. Hypertension, diabetes, stroke and coronary heart disease are prevalent in the region, especially along the I-95 corridor.

The rural counties of the Pee Dee region offer many beautiful historic, cultural and recreational opportunities to residents and visitors alike. Unfortunately, the rural setting also means access to educational programming and healthcare services is more challenging. Providing distance education through videoconferencing and on-demand video modules has allowed Pee Dee AHEC to address the accessibility challenges.

Pee Dee AHEC provided a series of live programs addressing elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation that have been recorded and made available as on-demand videos on the SCHOOLS network. Monthly continuing professional development videoconferencing programs are also offered to advanced practice registered nurses, echocardiography sonographers, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. These programs are offered in the evening to accommodate the daily work schedules of the healthcare professionals and student learners.

In September 2014, the National AHEC Organization (NAO) received funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for a five-year project to increase the awareness of HPV infections, associated cancers and the CDC recommendations to administer HPV vaccinations to 11- and 12-year-old males and females, as well as "catch-up" vaccinations for adolescents and young adults. As an NAO subcontractor, Pee Dee AHEC was selected to provide the HPV outreach and education activities for health professionals throughout South Carolina.

According to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), the state's vaccination rates have historically been lower than the national average. It is Pee Dee AHEC's goal, along with the NAO HPV Immunization Project, to increase vaccination rates for the HPV vaccine in South Carolina. During year two of the project, Pee Dee AHEC provided educational programming and resources for the South Carolina School Nurse Association 2016 Annual Conference, 2016 McLeod Pediatric Symposium, SCHOOLS videoconference programs, local health departments, McLeod Family Medicine Residency Program and to over 1,600 healthcare professionals and students statewide. In addition, information on NAO's free HPV continuing medical education course, "You are the Key to HPV Cancer Prevention," has also been distributed to pediatricians and OB/GYN physician practices in the region.

Graduate Medical Education

The South Carolina AHEC works collaboratively with South Carolina's medical schools to educate and retain medical students in South Carolina for their graduate medical education. In addition, AHEC helps provide quality faculty development and networking opportunities for residency program faculty members.

In order to address the shortage and maldistribution of primary care physicians in our state, the South Carolina AHEC provides funding for and works closely with the statewide family medicine residency training programs located in Anderson, Charleston, Columbia, Florence, Greenville, Greenwood, Seneca and Spartanburg.

Family medicine is the medical specialty that 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 and guides the patient's use of the healthcare system.

210

*family medicine
residents received
training in 8
residency programs
across the state
last year*



I am so thankful for Seneca Lakes. The attendings went out of their way to provide me not only with an excellent education but enough independence and support to build my confidence as a rural family physician.

David Newton, MD, Rural Family Physician
Seneca Lakes Family Medicine Residency Program Graduate



Connecting Residents to Training and Education



Upstate AHEC

Located in the Golden Corner of South Carolina, Upstate AHEC serves 11 counties in the western corner of the state. From the smallest 25-bed member hospital, to the largest with more than 1,200 patient beds, Upstate AHEC is committed to offering quality services to its partners throughout the region. Upstate AHEC's service area is home to a mix of urban and rural communities and a constituency that varies from high school students learning about future careers to seasoned healthcare professionals who require a comprehensive offering of quality programs and services.

Upstate AHEC partners with local technical colleges to connect Health Careers Academy students to recruiting representatives and college students to learn about certification programs that can assist them with gaining credentials that add value to their resumé and health professions program applications. One student who took advantage of these opportunities is Madison DeMars. Ms. DeMars participated in the Upstate AHEC HCP program and decided to customize her internship experience by enrolling in an EMT class at Greenville Technical College. She started attending sessions during high school in 2014. Ms. DeMars is now a freshman at Charleston Southern University.

My involvement in AHEC and the summer internship program has been an incredible experience for me. It has shown me that I definitely want to pursue a career in healthcare, and it has been a great opportunity . . . I feel more prepared for my college nursing experience because of AHEC and I am so grateful for that!

Madison DeMars



In 2010, AHEC U, a web-based distance learning program for healthcare professionals statewide, had an offering of 29 online courses. In 2016, AHEC U boasts a catalog of over 200 web-based courses in 16 different categories. The categories target a wide variety of healthcare professionals and include topics from obstetrics and pediatrics to geriatric education and end of life/palliative care. Courses are created by Upstate AHEC and the other regional AHEC centers, some from recordings generated by statewide SCHOOLS programs and include courses for a partnership with the South Carolina Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (SC LEND) program with MUSC.

Additionally, in response to Governor Nikki Haley's domestic violence task force, Upstate AHEC created an AHEC U category series covering all aspects of domestic violence and intimate partner violence. All four regional AHEC centers hosted courses through SCHOOLS and then placed the recordings on AHEC U as enduring education. In total, AHEC U has issued more than 8,000 course certificates to professionals statewide during the past year and provided more than 10,000 participant hours of education.

Recruitment & Retention

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 more than 40 years.

Rural Physician Program

The South Carolina AHEC Rural Physician Program was initiated by the South Carolina Legislature in 1989 to address the under-supply of clinicians in rural and underserved South Carolina communities. The program provides incentive grants for primary care physicians and advanced practice providers (physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses) who commit to practice in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) for four years.

394
physicians

54
advanced
practice
providers

funded by the Rural Physician Program since its inception in 1989

Rural Dentist Program

The Rural Dentist Program was established by the South Carolina Legislature in July 2005. The program assists with the repayment of educational loans for dentists who agree to practice in a HPSA or serve as a full-time faculty member in the MUSC College of Dental Medicine. Four rural dentists and three MUSC dental faculty members were funded by the Rural Dentist Program in FY 2016.

Locum Tenens

The Locum Tenens Program is a collaborative effort between the South Carolina AHEC, USC School of Medicine and the South Carolina DHHS designed to support practices and increase the retention of family practitioners and pediatricians in rural South Carolina. Faculty from the South Carolina AHEC Family Medicine Residency Training Programs and a pediatrician from the USC School of Medicine provide Locum Tenens coverage for rural providers to have needed time away from their practices.

Connecting Providers to Communities



“Practicing in rural South Carolina exposes me to some very ill patients with limited financial resources. These are people in need. With few specialists available, this community allows me to practice family medicine in the fullest sense . . . When I was looking around for a job, I had several practices in mind. I happened to really like everything about this one rural practice. With the Incentive Grant program, it made it that much easier to choose my current employer.”

Kyle Gehres, DO
McLeod Family Medicine Residency Program Graduate
Rural Physician Incentive Grant Recipient

Continuing Professional Development

The South Carolina AHEC supports healthcare excellence throughout the state by offering educational programs to the state’s many healthcare professionals. Programs provide knowledge and updated information to healthcare professionals across multiple disciplines so they can provide the best possible care to patients.

Connecting Providers to Education

Having Pee Dee AHEC videoconferencing allows our staff the opportunity to attend (continuing professional development) events locally. That means a lot when you and your staff have to work 12-hour shifts and still have an hour’s drive to attend the nearest (program). We are very thankful to have AHEC available to us here in our own local community.

Shelley Morgan, Director of Pharmacy, McLeod Health-Cheraw
Participant of Pee Dee AHEC’s educational programming with the
Pee Dee Pharmacy Association via videoconference



Videoconferencing has allowed fellow peers to work collaboratively, offering their knowledge and expertise to provide a convenient experience for multiple parties across this state.

Jarrold Tippins, PharmD, President of the Pee Dee Pharmacy Association

I was able to complete all 30 CEUs for RN licensure for FREE through AHEC—thank you, thank you! It was a major blessing to be able to do most of the courses at home on my tablet. AHEC is VERY valuable to me!

Jane Rogers, Quality Department RN and AHEC U participant



CareSouth Carolina participates in Pee Dee AHEC’s IV therapy training, increasing the nursing staff knowledge base company-wide, according to Chief Nursing Officer Naomi Holley, RN, BSN, MBA-HC



AHEC U
participant hours



traditional CE
education program
participant hours



SCHOOLS
participant hours

Office for Telehealth Education

Established in 2015 through a partnership with the MUSC Center for Telehealth and South Carolina AHEC, the Office for Telehealth Education (OFTE) was designed to educate healthcare providers about the usage and implementation of telehealth. In its inaugural year, the office added a full team of education and technology experts to fulfill its mission of delivering telehealth education and continuing professional development opportunities to South Carolina's healthcare providers and trainees.

Ongoing initiatives such as the Wellness Connect telehealth weight management program continued to see results, with program completers losing an average of 10 pounds. The EMS Simulation Module Program launched as a prime example of ways that telehealth can enable distance learning to providers across the state. The work of the office continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of South Carolinians – regardless of location.

64

percent of EMS telehealth simulation module participants (of participants who completed their coursework) who demonstrated an increase in knowledge.



“

[Telehealth simulation] is not a traditional method used in EMS currently and it has provided another tool to be able to learn and grow as a paramedic. ...This simulation has prepared me for the future by improving my leadership skills, reasoning skills, communication skills both as a participant and facilitator, and constantly pushes me to improve as a medic. In healthcare we often separate ourselves by specialty or title. With this simulation we are able to close the gap between providers by communicating, learning and improving healthcare by promoting a seamless delivery of care. My goal is to be a productive member of the team by promoting an alternative style of learning to my fellow EMS providers.



Liz Rowell, Charleston County EMS
EMS Telehealth Simulation Module Facilitator

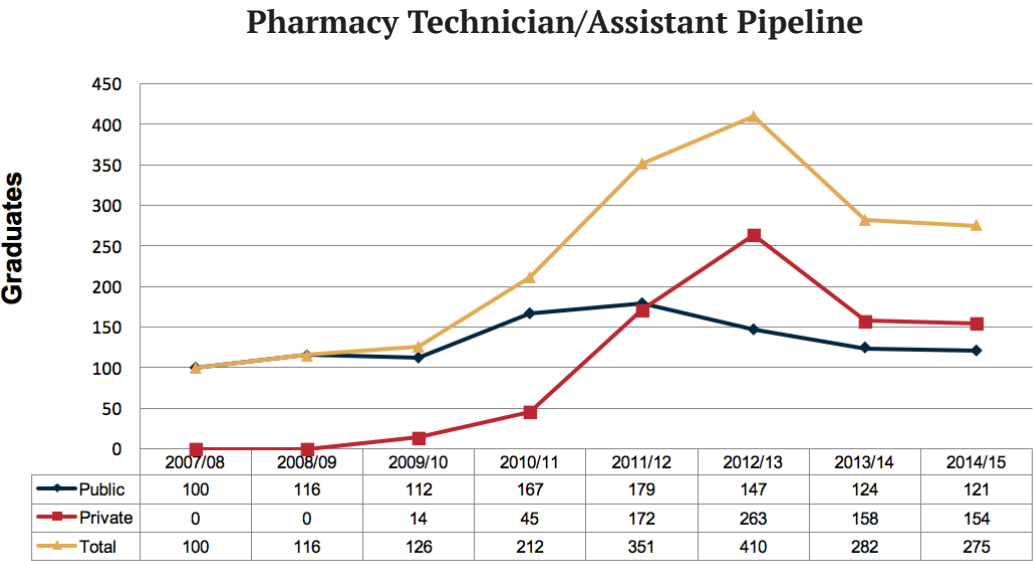


69%

82%

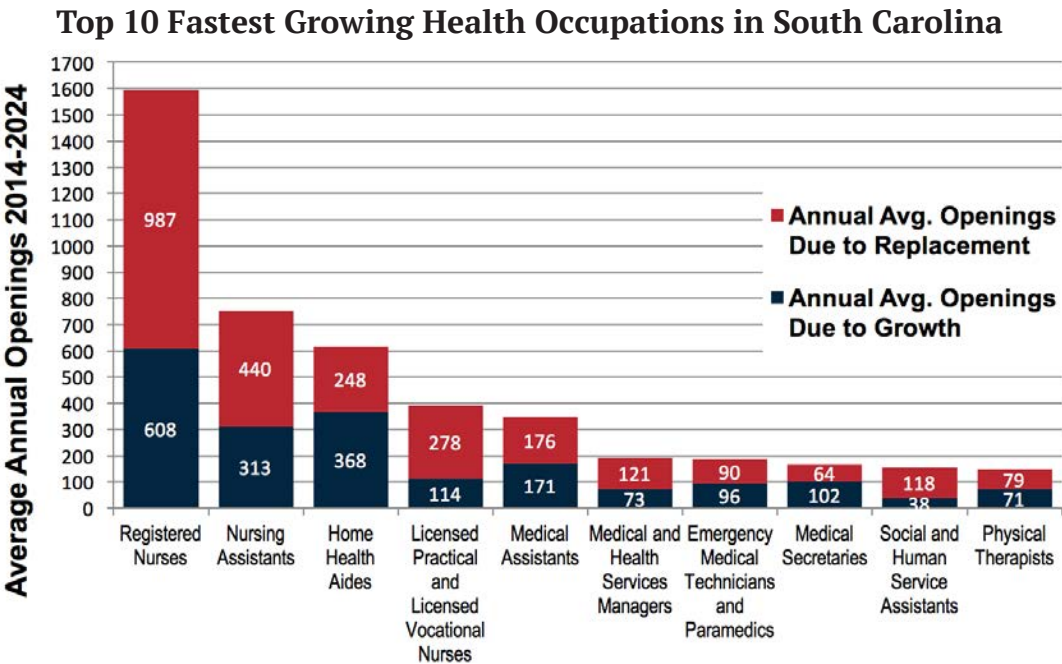
63%

The OHW is using information published by the National Center for Educational Statistics to monitor changes in the educational pipeline in South Carolina for different types of healthcare-related occupations. The chart below illustrates the history of the education pipeline for pharmacy technicians/assistants in the state.



Data source: National Center for Educational Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for all schools in South Carolina reporting degree completers under CIP code 51.0805. This chart distinguishes between public and private schools.

The OHW monitors how the demand for different types of healthcare professionals is expected to grow in South Carolina using information made available by the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce. Multiple fact sheets are published showing the average number of annual job openings expected over the next ten years and how those jobs are the result of new job growth or the need to replace those who are expected to leave the workforce.



Source: Unpublished tables from SC Department of Employment and Workforce and the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics

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South Carolina AHEC System members joined AHECs from across the country this summer at the National AHEC Organization biennial meeting in Washington, D.C.



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