

1972-2017



years



## 2017 Annual Report

### South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium

*Forty-five years of building and supporting South Carolina's health care workforce*



# Welcome to the Annual Report



Dear Colleagues,

This year the South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium marked its 45<sup>th</sup> year of building and supporting the health care workforce South Carolina needs. I anticipate you will agree the information contained in this annual report confirms that this has been another productive year for our AHEC system.

It is bittersweet that this is my final introduction to the South Carolina AHEC annual report. I shall be retiring at the end of June 2018 after 15 years as the South Carolina AHEC's executive director. A national search for my replacement is underway. The goal is to have that individual in place prior to my departure to ensure a smooth leadership transition.

As I reflect on my tenure with the South Carolina AHEC, I am proud of the work our organization continues to do to help ensure that South Carolinians have access to quality health care services regardless of where they reside. Some of our noteworthy accomplishments during these past 15 years include: new health careers programs for high school and college students; expanded interprofessional learning opportunities for health professions students with a focus on primary care; a statewide education and videoconferencing infrastructure and an AHEC Office for Telehealth Education to support health professions education and continuing professional development for the state's health care workforce; the establishment of the South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce; and four thriving, excellent AHEC Centers.

In addition, the South Carolina AHEC continues to provide encouragement and support for health care professionals to practice in rural and underserved communities. We were successful in acquiring additional funds from the South Carolina legislature to expand the Rural Physician Program, which helps place physicians and advanced practice professionals in rural communities across the state. We are actively working with students and faculty from 10 health professions disciplines at 11 South Carolina academic institutions to provide community-based training experiences with the goal of increasing students' interest in and preparation for providing care to populations in rural and underserved communities.

Our AHEC is adapting to the changing health care environment and to the training needs in our state. We have put a team in place that focuses on educational technology and innovation, ensuring that health education programming is of the highest quality and delivered via state-of-the-art systems. In collaboration with MUSC, USC and other partners, we are creating a new marquee initiative, the AHEC Scholars Program, to provide health professions students across the state with interprofessional practice experiences designed to prepare them to be leaders in service to the underserved. Next year's annual report will include details about this exciting, timely project that will begin enrolling students in Fall 2018.

I have indeed been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve as the executive director of the South Carolina AHEC. The accomplishments I have cited are the result of contributions from the many dedicated, talented people who comprise our AHEC team. The partnerships we have with the family medicine residency training programs, with colleagues in the state's academic institutions and with the members of the many organizations and communities with whom we work have been critical to the success of our AHEC system. I look forward to seeing the South Carolina AHEC continue to serve for many more years as a dynamic leader in supporting health professions education and addressing the state's health workforce needs.

Yours truly,

David R. Garr, MD  
Executive Director  
South Carolina AHEC



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



*I would not be where I am today without the opportunities that are offered through AHEC programs. As a high school student growing up in small town South Carolina, I participated in the Health Careers Program and it opened my eyes to the vast array of career options within the health professions and sparked a passion within me to pursue a career in health care. During my undergraduate time at Clemson University, I did a summer internship with Upstate AHEC and developed relationships and skills that allowed me to gain valuable experience in preparation for applying to PA School. While a student at MUSC, I remained in contact with AHEC and had the opportunity to mentor undergraduate students who were enrolled in the Summer Careers Academy and interested in applying to the physician assistant program. During my clinical year of PA school, I benefited from the services AHEC provides for clinical placement and housing assistance.*

*After graduating from PA school and moving back to the Upstate I was honored to be asked to be a member of the Board of Directors for Upstate AHEC where I served a brief tenure prior to moving back to the Charleston area.*

*Since moving back to Charleston, I have continued to stay connected with AHEC and have spoken to undergraduate students enrolled in the Bench to Bedside program as well as been a featured speaker for the professional students at MUSC and USC who are taking part in the Institute for Primary Care Fellowship. I also personally take advantage of the CME opportunities that are offered through AHEC for my own professional development.*

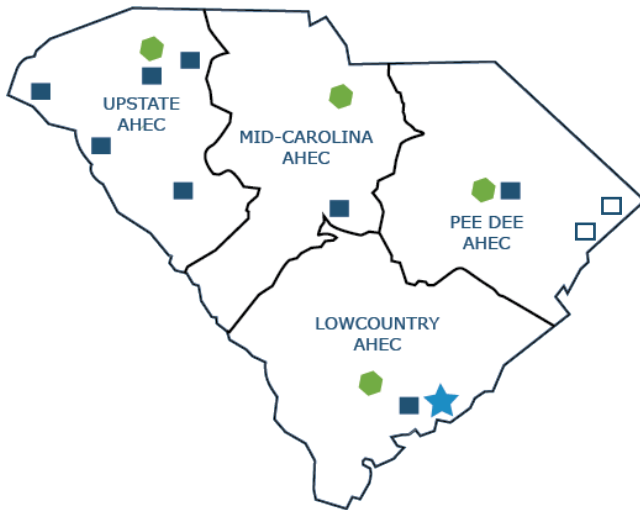
*I am currently practicing as a Physician Assistant and also a member of the Executive Management Team at Fetter Health Care Network in Charleston where I oversee all aspects of our Quality Program. I am forever grateful to AHEC for the investment they have made into my professional development!*

**Anthony Poole, PA-C; Chief Clinical Officer, Fetter Health Care Network;**  
former Upstate AHEC HCP and HPS program participant and Upstate AHEC Board of Directors member



# The South Carolina AHEC System

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



1

Program Office ★

4

Regional AHEC Centers



8

AHEC-Funded Family Medicine Residency Training Programs



2

New Affiliated Family Medicine Residency Training Programs



## Program Areas



### Health Careers Pipeline Programs

Prepare underrepresented students for academic success and entry into health professions programs



### Continuing Professional Development

Provides education for health care professionals to enhance their clinical skills and maintain licensure



### Health Professions Student Programs

Facilitate health professions student training placements in rural and underserved communities



### Telehealth Education

Educates students and health care professionals about emerging trends in telehealth and technology



### Graduate Medical Education

Supports high-quality family medicine residency training in South Carolina



### SC Office for Healthcare Workforce

Analyzes and provides information about the health care workforce in South Carolina. Learn more at [www.scohw.org](http://www.scohw.org)



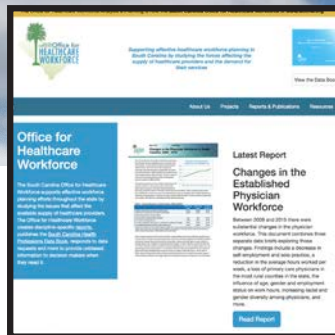
### Recruitment & Retention Programs

Offer financial incentives to clinicians who want to practice in rural and underserved communities



# 2017 Highlights

**January**



The South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce launched its new website at [www.scohw.org](http://www.scohw.org) with a new and improved report database.

**March**



Recipients of the 2017 South Carolina AHEC Excellence Awards were recognized at the South Carolina AHEC annual meeting:

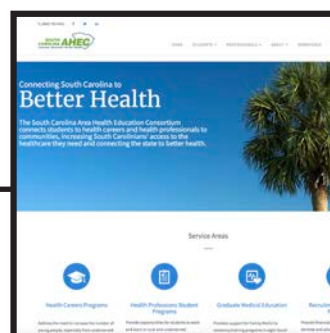
- Site of the Year: Morphis Pediatrics
- Preceptor of the Year: Benjamin W. Lamb, MD
- Educator of the Year: Macie Smith, Ed.D.
- Gateway Award: ZaQuavia Tyler
- Ambassador Award: Ali McMenamin, MA

**September**



South Carolina AHEC learned it will receive another five years of funding from HRSA. The major focus for the next five years will be the interprofessional AHEC Scholars Program. Stay tuned next year for the initial outcomes from the new program.

**October**



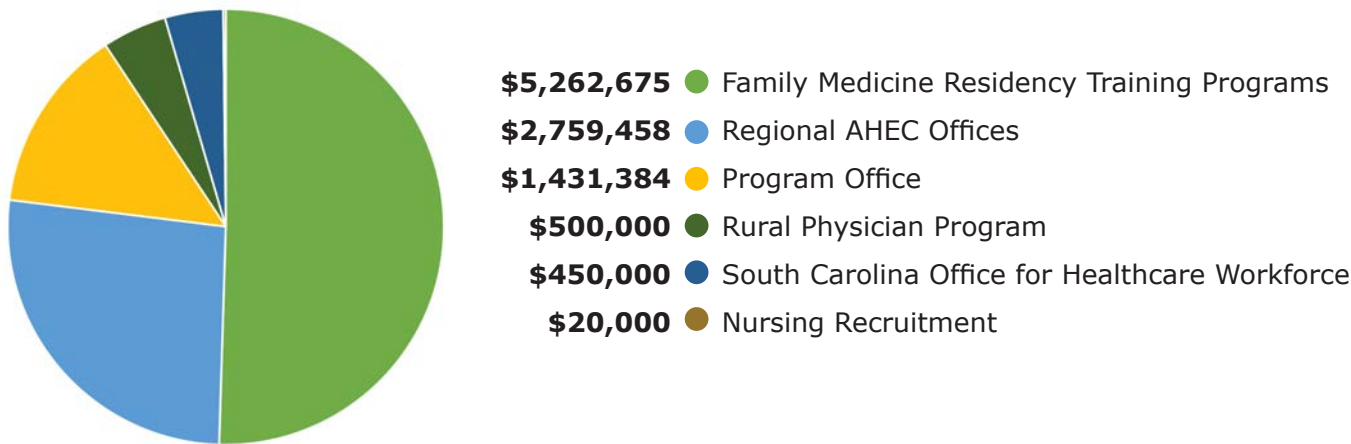
South Carolina AHEC launched a new website at [www.scahec.net](http://www.scahec.net). The new site is mobile friendly with more tools to better connect partners to resources.



# Fiscal Year 2017 Funding

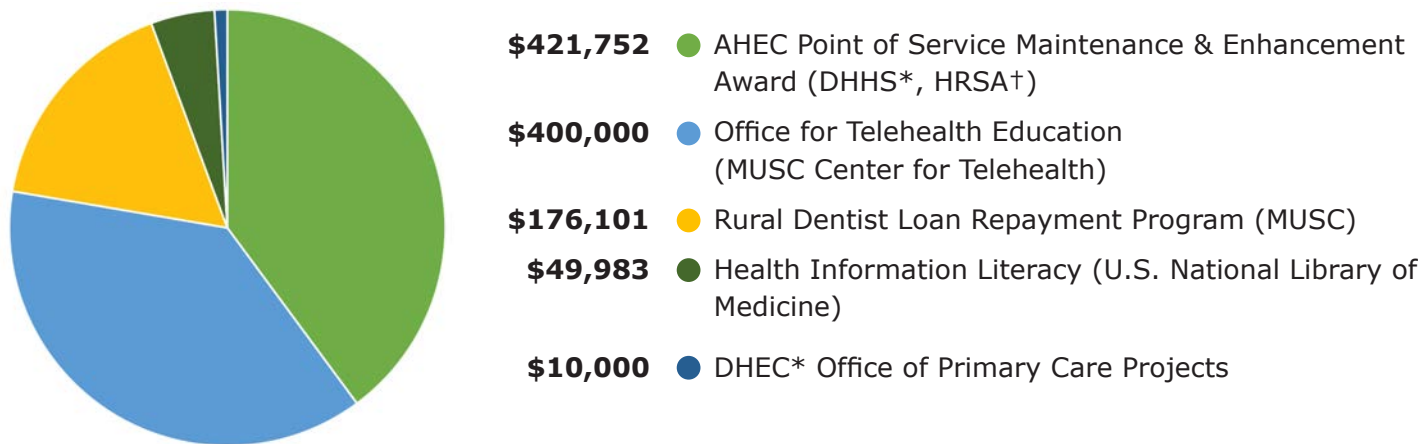
## State Funding

Funding appropriated by the state for the South Carolina AHEC totaled \$10,423,517.



## External Funding

Extramural funding for the South Carolina AHEC totaled \$1,057,836. Funding reported here spans periods across calendar and fiscal years.



## Contractual Funds

Contracts with the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services totaled \$978,521.

- \$519,229 ● Locum Tenens (SC DHHS\*)
- \$459,292 ● 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





## Regional Snapshot

# Lowcountry AHEC

Lowcountry AHEC is a not-for-profit center, serving twelve southeastern counties in South Carolina. The service area is a collection of rural and urban counties consisting of socioeconomically diverse populations that encompass both the very poor and the very affluent. Education levels trend with socioeconomic status: higher poverty is correlated with lower education levels and vice versa. A large area of the region is located at or near the I-95 corridor and population health issues include a high prevalence of diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. To address these health challenges, Lowcountry AHEC staff work diligently to provide programs and services that increase and diversify the health care workforce, place health professions students into rural and underserved areas and deliver continuing professional development using several modalities (live, via videoconference and on-demand).

This year, Lowcountry AHEC began a new partnership with Colleton County High School's Cougar New Tech Entrepreneurial Academy to provide online health career modules to ninth grade students in the New Tech Health Careers Academy (HCA). Previously, Colleton County High School students participated in the Lowcountry AHEC Health Careers Academy. Meetings were held after school and it was difficult to compete with other after school activities. With this new collaboration, Lowcountry AHEC is working with 70 freshman (compared to 20-25 students from all four grades in the previous program). The workshops that were formerly conducted after school are now delivered online with live activities taking place at the high school during the school day. In collaboration with partners such as the Colleton County Medical Center, USC Salkehatchie nursing program and the Veterans Victory House nursing care center, Lowcountry AHEC plans to build a comprehensive online curriculum that engages students throughout all four years of high school.

As part of the South Carolina AHEC System's emphasis on interprofessional education, Lowcountry AHEC partnered with MUSC, program office staff and the other regional AHEC centers to host Interprofessional Team Case Conferences (ITCC) (see page 10 for more information on the project). Four sessions were held in Beaufort with 28 health profession students participating from A.T. Still School of Osteopathic Medicine, the University of South Carolina and the Medical University of South Carolina. Students from various disciplines participated: MUSC physician assistant studies, MUSC physical therapy, MUSC nurse practitioner, MUSC public health, MUSC occupational therapy, MUSC pharmacy, USC pharmacy and A.T. Still osteopathic medicine.



# 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 health care 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; service-learning, mentoring and academic advising are key components of the curriculum. This year, Lowcountry AHEC partnered with Colleton County High School's Cougar New Tech Entrepreneurial Academy to adapt and deliver HCA modules to New Tech students online. Working closely with South Carolina AHEC personnel across the state, a new learning management system was launched to provide modules to 70 freshmen participating in New Tech's Health Careers Academy track. Two modules were developed and launched for freshman students in the fall and five additional modules will go live in the spring. More content will be developed to provide a comprehensive health careers introduction curriculum to the students as they progress through high school (see previous page for more information). These modules will soon be available to students across the state.

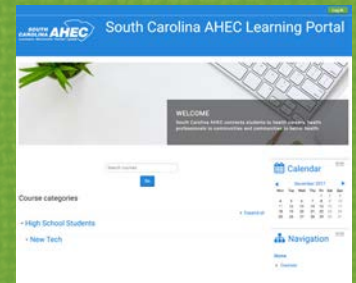
Our undergraduate program, Bench to Bedside (B2B), strives to increase the matriculation of underrepresented students into health professions education programs. This year, the program offered seminars to undergraduates across the state, provided college credit courses and supported student-led organizations with its four-year undergraduate partners. Additionally, planning began

## Where the Students Are

*We are excited to have the support of the [Lowcountry] AHEC staff along with the academic reinforcement that the consortium provides. We also hope that our program will reciprocate the work by assisting with the identification of potential participants for existing post-secondary programs promoted by the organization.*

**Jerolyn Murray, GCDF, MEd**

Lead Instructor,  
New Tech Health Careers Academy  
Colleton County High School



this year, with funding from The Duke Endowment, to extend the B2B curriculum to schools in the South Carolina Technical College System. The project, titled Bench to Bedside 2.0, will be based on a train-the-trainer model in which South Carolina AHEC staff will work collaboratively with faculty and staff at MUSC, USC and the technical colleges to develop a health professions introductory course. The project will then prepare faculty and staff at 3-5 partnering technical colleges to lead the course for students interested in pursuing advanced health professions degrees. The goal is to expand the reach of programs designed to increase students' preparation and competitiveness for entering health professions education programs.



## Service Learning

**3,459**

contact hours of service  
learning experience accrued  
by HCP students across  
South Carolina

## Certifications

**1,730**

contact hours of certifications  
and trainings completed by  
HCP students to prepare for  
health careers and education  
(e.g., CNA, CPR, AED)





## Regional Snapshot

# Mid-Carolina AHEC

Mid-Carolina AHEC's service area includes 11 counties, extending from the North Carolina border and through the center of the state to Georgia. Mid-Carolina AHEC provides educational programs at all points of the health professions pipeline in this predominantly rural region, routinely working with regional partners to navigate the changing health care landscape associated with education, recruitment and retention. Mid-Carolina AHEC is continually implementing and improving programs that support improved health care delivery, especially in rural and underserved areas.

In 2017, Mid-Carolina AHEC partnered with the USC Lancaster Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program, USC Columbia Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program and Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine – Carolinas Campus (VCOM) Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) program to provide 25 students with five interprofessional simulation experiences. The simulations utilized the simulation center at USC Lancaster and focused on maximizing interprofessional team skills, enhancing communication across disciplines and incorporating telehealth as a tool for diagnosis and treatment. A work group with USC Lancaster BSN faculty and VCOM faculty will determine the feasibility of incorporating a monthly IP simulation activity into the third-year medical students' curriculum. Furthermore, North Greenville University PA program faculty have also expressed interest in having students participate in the IP simulation cases.

In addition, Mid-Carolina partnered with the South Carolina Youth Diabetes Association (SCYDA) to host the first Sweet Science Conference in Myrtle Beach. The Sweet Science Conference provided diabetes education for pediatric nurses, especially school nurses. Participants were able to build confidence and strengthen their skills during hands-on sessions that explored the latest in diabetes technology. The conference also included a panel discussion with a child living with Type 1 diabetes, her family and three pediatric endocrinologists. This discussion provided learners with an opportunity to learn from the child and family to gain a better understanding of the challenges living with Type 1 diabetes brings to the entire family, especially in a rural/underserved community and school district. The attendees had an opportunity to earn more than ten continuing education hours for nurses and certified diabetes educators. Planning is already underway for the second annual conference in September of 2018.



# Health Professions Student Programs



The South Carolina AHEC Health Professions Student (HPS) Program collaborates with health professions education programs throughout the 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. South Carolina AHEC HPS programs also strive to prepare students to become effective members of interprofessional teams in order to provide comprehensive, high-quality care where it is needed most.

This year, in collaboration with faculty at MUSC, the Interprofessional Team Case Conference (ITCC) project began providing health professions students with an opportunity to participate in collaborative, interprofessional patient case reviews. These case conferences enable students to learn more about other health professionals' roles and to apply the knowledge of their respective fields to improve patient care. The majority of students participate during their community-based rotations while staying in AHEC regional housing or while placed in other areas of the state. The project utilizes telehealth technology to connect students, regardless of their individual locations. Forty-eight students from eight disciplines and four academic institutions participated in ITCCs this year. See the feature on the next page for more information on the program's outcomes.

## Rural & Underserved

757

community-based  
placements in rural and/or  
underserved settings

## Interprofessional

1,205

days of interprofessional  
housing assignments  
in AHEC housing for 96  
students

Furthermore, the South Carolina AHEC Institute for Primary Care (IPC) accepted its sixth interprofessional cohort of students. The IPC encourages and supports students in pursuit of a career in primary care. At the beginning of the 2017 academic year, 93 students from advanced practice nursing, medicine, pharmacy and physician assistant studies programs at MUSC and USC participated in the first two monthly seminars from four videoconference locations across the state.



## Returning to One's Roots

*Working with Pee Dee AHEC during my clinical training as a medical student provided me with the resources I needed to return to my local community and ultimately serve as a resident physician at McLeod Family Medicine. [Pee Dee AHEC HPS coordinators] worked tirelessly to help connect me to physicians within the McLeod network and the surrounding local communities such as Lake City and Hartsville to gain clinical experience and further my training. In fact, a memorable moment during my clinical training was working with Dr. Stephen Askins. Not only was he a former graduate of the McLeod Family Medicine Residency Program, but he also was from my hometown of Hemingway and his mother was my sixth-grade math teacher! As a result, I now have the opportunity to give back as a well-trained physician who can meet the needs of those around me. Thank you, AHEC, for giving me the opportunity to partner with the physicians who take care of my home community and for giving me guidance to become the physician I am today.*

**Rachel Fenters, DO**

Former Pee Dee AHEC HPS Student and  
Resident, McLeod Family Medicine Residency Training Program



48  
Students

8  
Disciplines

## Student Evaluation Data



# Interprofessional Team Case Conferences

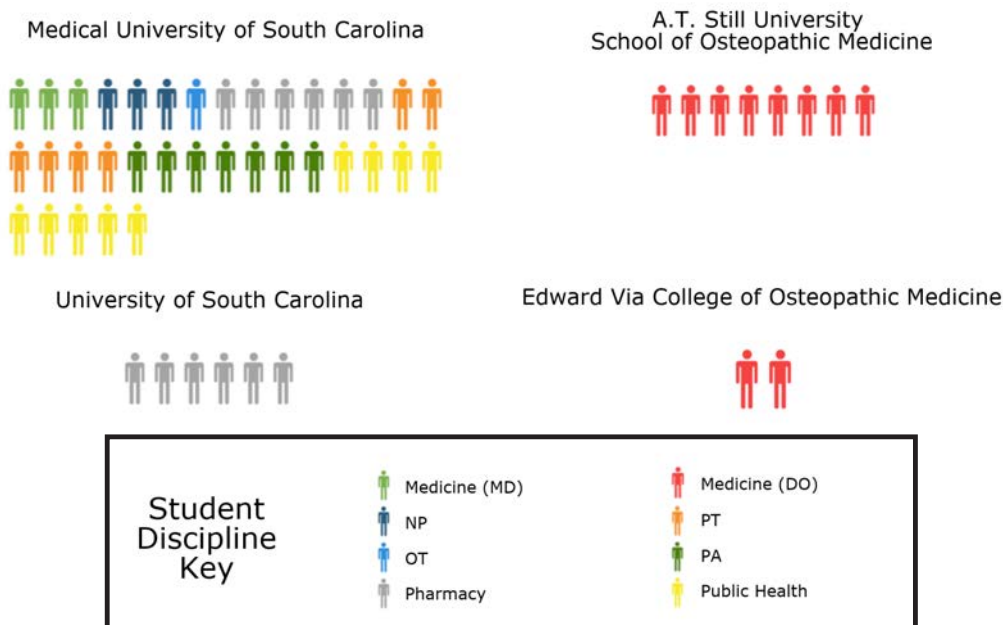
The ITCC pilot project provides students with an opportunity to engage in interprofessional collaboration during community-based clinical training, with an integration of population health. Based on student and faculty feedback, the model is a great way to engage students in a learning environment that addresses all four Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) core competencies. Students reported increased understanding of:

- Each discipline's role in patient care
- The value and challenges of developing and implementing a comprehensive care plan
- Need for and benefits of utilizing an interprofessional team approach to improve patient outcomes

Students especially reported the benefits of learning with, from and about health professions students from other institutions. Plans are currently underway for expanding the project to more students and programs.

***"[The ITCC] gave me insight to the idea that each profession looks at a patient differently and has different priorities that are completely understandable."*** - ITCC Participant

## Student Discipline by Institution





# 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.

This year, the state welcomed two new programs: Tidelands Health MUSC Family Medicine Residency Program (Murrells Inlet) and Grand Strand Health Family Medicine Residency Program (Myrtle Beach). Representatives from these programs have joined the South Carolina AHEC Family Medicine Directors Council and South Carolina AHEC looks forward to working closely with these new programs to increase the state's family medicine physician workforce. In order to address the shortage and maldistribution of primary care physicians in our state, the South Carolina AHEC also provides funding for and works closely with family medicine residency training programs located in Anderson, Charleston, Columbia, Florence, Greenville, Greenwood, Seneca and Spartanburg.

Since April 2017, the MUSC Department of Neurology has partnered with South Carolina's family medicine residency programs to provide eight neurology presentations. South Carolina AHEC hosted these presentations via videoconference to enable participation and collaboration statewide. Five of the state's family medicine residency programs have participated and topics have included the diagnosis and management of neuropathy, movement disorders, stroke, epilepsy, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, stroke, headache and neurological emergencies (coma). South Carolina AHEC looks



## Residents

# 214

family medicine residents trained in the eight AHEC-funded residency programs across the state last year

forward to continued partnership with MUSC to provide more of these opportunities to the family medicine residencies in the coming year.

The annual South Carolina AHEC Resident Scholarship Symposium is held each year in conjunction with the South Carolina Academy of Family Physicians (SCAFP) Annual Meeting. This year's symposium featured 16 podium presentations and 14 poster presentations. The presentations focus on research and quality improvement projects and give residents an opportunity to engage with other residents, faculty and SCAFP members to discuss how these projects translate into practice.



## Unbeatable Experience, Unforgettable Colleagues

*Becoming a doctor requires one to make many decisions and often times difficult ones. One of the best decisions, and easiest, was my decision to complete my residency training at Palmetto Health/USC Family Medicine. Never have I ever met a more dedicated group of co-residents, faculty and staff. I have felt like I have gained another family while here and although they will be missed as I graduate, the great memories and learning experiences I have gained will never be forgotten. I know that now I have gained the skills to provide quality care to my patients in the future. I have also learned the value of building relationships not only with my co-workers but also with my community.*

**Matthew Johnson, DO**

Sandhills Medical Foundation in Lugoff, SC

2017 Graduate, Palmetto Health/USC Family Medicine Residency Program





## Regional Snapshot

# Pee Dee AHEC

Located in the northeast corner of South Carolina, the Pee Dee region is home to the twelve rural counties surrounding the Florence area. Many Pee Dee residents face barriers to adequate health care such as low income, high unemployment and low levels of education, contributing to a population that is underserved and underinsured. There is also a high prevalence of hypertension, diabetes, stroke and heart disease.

Pee Dee AHEC is an educational hub for its region, serving health care professionals, students and facilities, with an emphasis on service to rural populations. Pee Dee AHEC HPS coordinators collaborate with medical facilities across the region to help place students in rural areas for their clinical rotations. Health professions students are also able to participate in the interprofessional team case conferences (ITCCs) and the Institute for Primary Care (IPC)—this year Pee Dee AHEC hosted medical, nurse practitioner, pharmacy and physician assistant students for both projects.

Pee Dee AHEC also continues to provide continuing professional development programs via videoconference and telehealth technology to both rural and underserved areas. The technology enables rural providers to participate without traveling long distances and enables non-rural providers to collaborate with providers from across the state. Pee Dee AHEC's education programs are available both live and on-demand, including programs addressing human trafficking, strangulation injuries, asthma, and COPD. Monthly programs for advanced practice registered nurses, echocardiography sonographers, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are also continually offered on both nights and weekends.



# Recruitment & Retention Programs

## 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, physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses who commit to practice in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) for four years. During FY 2017, seven physicians and five advanced practice nurses were funded.

Between 2009 and 2015, South Carolina's most economically isolated counties lost 20 percent of their family medicine and internal medicine physicians. During that same time period, the Rural Physician Program funded 13 new providers to work in those critical areas of need. The South Carolina Legislature awarded \$167,000 in additional recurring funds to the program this year. The program also receives a \$0.50 federal match for each state dollar invested. The additional funding enabled more applications to be considered and funded for the next fiscal year. Next year's annual report will detail the initial outcomes from this funding increase.

This year the program announced new resident recruitment incentive grants. This new component of the program seeks to increase the retention of family medicine physicians trained in South Carolina and encourage practice in rural and underserved areas. Residents who complete a South Carolina family medicine residency program and agree to practice full-time primary care in an outpatient setting upon graduation in a whole county geographic HPSA are eligible for up to four years of funding.

## Rural Dentist Program

The Rural Dentist Program was established by the South Carolina Legislature in 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. Three rural dentists and five MUSC dental faculty members were funded by the Rural Dentist Program in FY 2017.



## Helping Providers Help Others

*The Rural Physician Incentive Grant Program has been an incredible blessing for me and my career as a family medicine physician. After the great accomplishment of graduating from residency I was still faced with an extensive amount of debt that accumulated from attending a private medical school. I knew that I wanted to stay and practice locally, near my residency, but unfortunately student loan repayment was not an option in the position I desperately wanted. Thanks to the Rural Physician Incentive Grant Program, I felt confident in accepting a position in an underserved area of South Carolina. I knew that the money from the grant would present an excellent way for me to continue paying off my medical school debt and still serve the community by filling the role of a much needed primary care physician. Without this grant, I may have had to pursue my career elsewhere, however, now I am blessed to be able to continue to do what I love, full scope family medicine.*

**Holly Munson, DO**  
Walhalla, SC

## Choose Well Hiring Incentives

The New Morning Foundation contracted with South Carolina AHEC this year to provide hiring incentives to advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) at the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) health clinics to participate in the Choose Well initiative. The New Morning Foundation provides the funding for these incentives. The initiative seeks to decrease the number of unintended pregnancies in South Carolina through improved access to effective contraceptive methods and training providers about evidence-based contraceptive care and family planning. In 2017, 19 APRNs received hiring incentives.

## Retention Rates



87%

physicians funded with rural incentive grants still practice in South Carolina—**57% still in the same town as when initially funded**

72%

advanced practice providers funded with rural incentive grants still practice in South Carolina—**40% still in the same town as when initially funded**





## Regional Snapshot

# Upstate AHEC

Upstate AHEC is located near the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and serves a diverse population throughout urban and rural areas of its eleven-county region, which spans across the western corner of South Carolina. Upstate AHEC provides an extensive array of services through a pipeline that serves health care professionals, health professions students and high school and undergraduate students. Upstate AHEC has a rich legacy of offering high-quality didactic and clinical learning experiences and continues to be a bridge linking students to health care careers, health professions students to communities and the health care workforce to continuing education, supporting better health for South Carolinians.

This year, Upstate AHEC offered a certified nursing assistant (CNA) certification course in partnership with Riverside High School in Greer and the National Healthcare Center (NHC) of Greenville. The CNA course totals 100 hours of classroom, lab, and clinical experiences. Amanda Abrams, RN, CNA Coordinator/Health Science Instructor at Riverside High School, is Upstate AHEC's adjunct health science certification instructor and the contracted director for Upstate AHEC's HCP health education clinical experiences. Under the leadership of Ms. Abrams, Upstate AHEC proudly announced the first class of CNA certified graduates in June. Four students successfully completed the state board exam, resulting in a 100 percent pass rate for the first class.

The development of high school certification programs enables Upstate AHEC's HCP participants to leave high school with certifications that allow them to enter a career or be a more competitive applicant to a health professions education program. Upstate AHEC's longstanding partnership with Greenville Technical College opened doors for eligible high school and college students to enroll in an EMT program and Upstate AHEC has built on this experience to identify more certification opportunities. Additional certification opportunities now include CPR and basic life support (BLS), QPR Institute suicide prevention/gatekeeper, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) disaster training, paid feeding assistant, medical technologist and patient care technician certifications.



# Continuing Professional Development

South Carolina AHEC supports health care excellence throughout the state by offering educational programs to the state's many health care professionals so they can provide the best possible care to patients. This year, a statewide professional development needs assessment was distributed to health care professionals across the state. After analyzing responses from more than 800 professionals, the data is informing future programming to meet the education needs of the state's health care workforce.

## Palliative Care Series

South Carolina AHEC partnered with MUSC Palliative Care leaders Connie Dahlin, ANP-BC, ACHPN, FPCN, FAAN, and Pat Coyne, MSN, ACHPN, ACNS-BC, FAAN, FPCN to host and provide continuing education credit for Primary Palliative Care Practices and Principles. The two-day immersion courses, with funding from The Duke Endowment, were offered in each AHEC region to teach provider teams the core skills and concepts of palliative care. Sixty-nine participants from care teams across the state attended and the majority indicated they intended to implement at least one change in practice as a result of attending. The programs were such a success that two additional workshops have been added for 2018.

## Rural Matters: Recruiting and Retaining Our Rural Health Workforce

South Carolina AHEC has partnered with Teri Browne, PhD, MSW, and Rebecca Christopher, MSW, LMSW, from the USC College of Social Work to host and provide continuing education credit for Rural Matters: Recruiting and Retaining Our Rural Health Workforce. The program is supported by ICARED—a legislative grant funded by a rural health proviso with SC DHHS and the USC School of Medicine—and will be offered seven times at locations across the state. There are still five opportunities to attend in 2018 and registration is available at [www.scahec.net/schools](http://www.scahec.net/schools).

## Alliance for Healthier South Carolina Population Health Summit

This year marked the second annual South Carolina Population Health Summit, hosted by the Alliance for a Healthier South Carolina. South Carolina AHEC partnered with the Alliance to leverage the SCHOOLS videoconference network, connecting groups of participants from across the state for this day-long program centered on improving population health in South Carolina. There were more than 230 attendees participating from 10 locations across the state.



## Educational Programming

22,643

registrations

99,061

contact hours

## Participants

4,758

from rural  
communities

8,959

from medically  
underserved  
communities



## Working Together, Improving Care

*South Carolina Youth Diabetes Association began a partnership with Mid-Carolina AHEC for diabetes education for school nurses in 2015 . . . We feel our joint efforts to provide continuing diabetes education to school nurses in South Carolina has improved the care students with Type 1 Diabetes receive at school. Therefore, we feel this has the potential to decrease the number of school absences, emergency room visits, and hospitalizations for students with Type 1 diabetes in South Carolina. We also feel through providing continuing diabetes education to school nurses, diabetic skills can be reinforced with students, which will foster good diabetic habits as they grow. We remain excited about our partnership with Mid-Carolina AHEC and look forward to working together for years to come!*

**Traci P. Scott, RN, CDE**

South Carolina Youth Diabetes Association  
Board of Trustees Member





# Office for Telehealth Education

South Carolina AHEC is pleased to continue its partnership with the MUSC Center for Telehealth and the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA) to support the provision of education about the use and implementation of telehealth in South Carolina. This year, South Carolina AHEC joined Palmetto Care Connections to co-chair the SCTA Education Committee and participated in the SCTA strategic planning process to determine the path forward to support South Carolina's statewide telehealth efforts.

Furthermore, in collaboration with partners at MUSC and other institutions and organizations, six online educational modules related to the provision of telehealth were published online for use by providers and students across the state. The modules are available at [www.scahec.net/schools](http://www.scahec.net/schools).



## In the Cloud: Expanding Videoconference Access



In 2010, South Carolina AHEC received funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to install videoconferencing hardware within the South Carolina AHEC System and in hospital and practice locations across the state to provide distance education and expand collaboration opportunities. This network of hardware units and the registration system that supported it became the South Carolina Health Occupations Outreach Learning System (SCHOOLS).

Increasingly, partners and providers with busy schedules wish to attend meetings and programs from the convenience of their own computer/device in their practice or at home. As available technology has evolved, solutions are now available that can meet busy health care professionals where they are, when they need it.

At the end of 2017, South Carolina AHEC began the final stage of replacing the network of videoconference hardware across the state with a web-based system. The new system will allow participants to join AHEC webinars from their computer, tablet or mobile device. The new system will also be able to capture recordings of webinars, enabling participants who cannot attend to view them later online at their convenience. The deployment of the new system will continue into early 2018. The South Carolina AHEC System is excited about the new opportunities it brings and believes the new system will increase learning and collaboration opportunities for partners, providers and students in an evolving health care environment.



## Strong Statewide Partnerships

*The [South Carolina] Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC) provides a very valuable service to South Carolina's health care providers and professionals. They do an amazing job of reaching into our rural/underserved communities and providing such services as continuing education, training, and recruitment and retention of providers. AHEC does a tremendous job in providing financial incentives to newly recruited physicians, dentists and advanced practice providers. Palmetto Care Connections and AHEC are working together to increase telehealth services across the state and to ensure that school curricula include telehealth education for students and residents. PCC is proud to partner with AHEC! They have an awesome team!*

**Kathy Schwarting, MHA**, Executive Director, Palmetto Care Connections





# South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce

The South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce (SCOHW) was established in 2009 as a program within the South Carolina AHEC System with funding from The Duke Endowment. In 2016, the office became a permanent statewide resource when it received recurring funding from the South Carolina Legislature.

The SCOHW supports effective workforce planning efforts throughout the state by studying the issues that affect the available supply of health care providers. The office creates discipline-specific reports, publishes the South Carolina Health Professions Data Book and responds to data requests to provide unbiased information to decision makers when they need it.

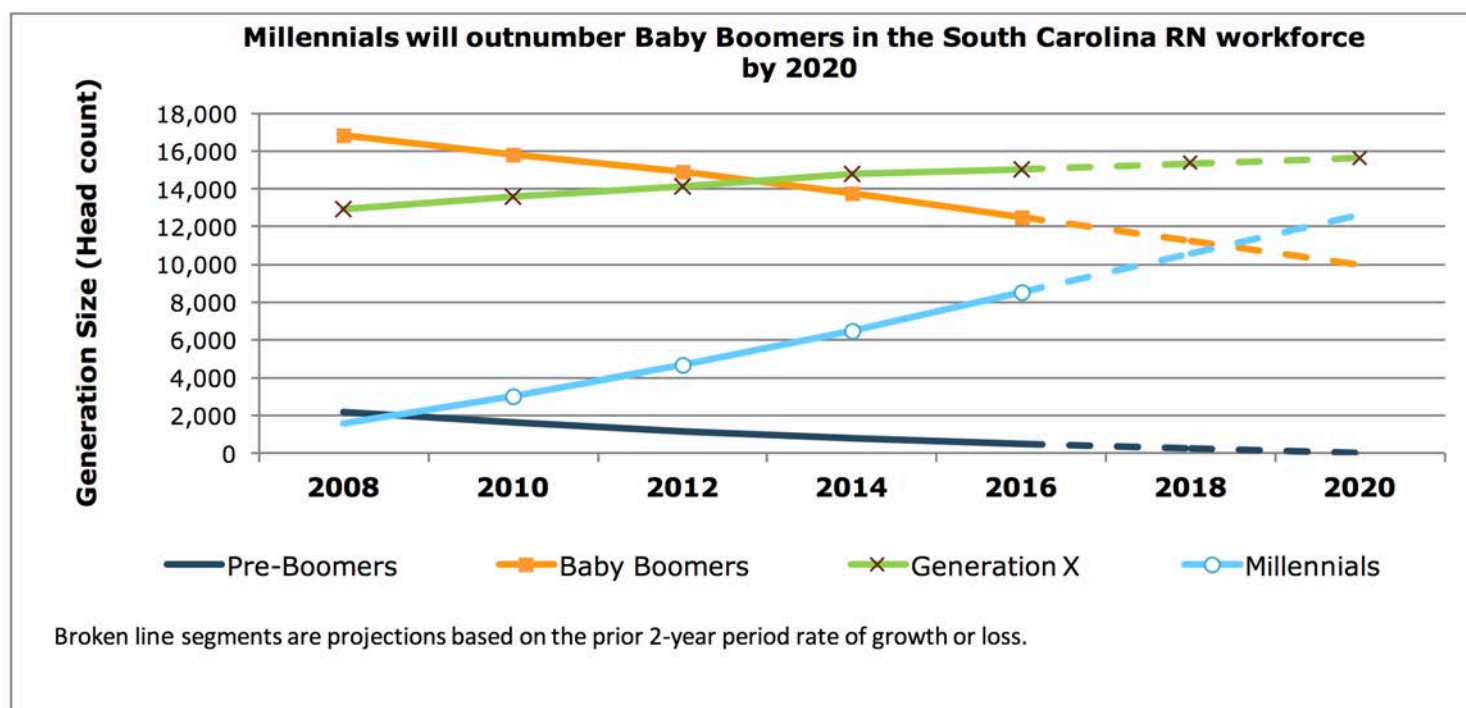
In 2017, the SCOHW was busy working on a number of projects and released many data briefs and reports. Find out more about this year's work below and see these reports and more in full at [www.scohw.org](http://www.scohw.org).

## Primary Care Practice Survey

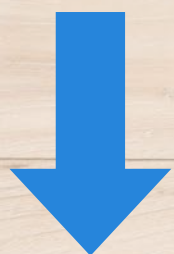
The SCOHW partnered with the South Carolina Office of Primary Care to assess the extent to which primary care practices in the state were accepting new patients, the wait time for a first appointment, whether insurance status made a difference and whether a sliding fee scale was available for uninsured clients.

## Recent Changes in the Balance of Generations within the RN Workforce in South Carolina

A national study of the RN workforce shows that people in the millennial generation are entering the nursing profession at historically high rates and will quickly outnumber baby boomers in the nursing workforce. The SCOHW replicated that study for South Carolina and found similar trends. Although generation X is now the largest age group in the RN workforce, millennials will outnumber baby boomers in South Carolina by 2018. These generational changes in the RN workforce may have an impact on work behaviors and expectations.







9%  
Decrease

*Percent of primary care physicians lost in non-metropolitan counties between 2009 and 2015. This decrease was concentrated in family medicine and internal medicine—the physicians most likely to treat adults and seniors.*

### **Nursing Education Programs Survey**

In May of 2017, the SCOHW published the results of their survey of South Carolina nursing education programs, which documented student numbers and statewide capacity by program level (LPN, AND, BSN and graduate level) during the 2015–2016 academic year. Conducted jointly with the Office of Healthcare Workforce Research for Nursing, the survey results show a strong interest in nursing education that exceeded the capacity of most existing programs. However, many nursing programs plan to expand enrollments in the near future to accommodate more students.

### **Physician Workforce**

Between 2009 and 2015, there were substantial changes in the physician workforce. A series of three data briefs explores those changes. Findings include a decrease in the number of physicians who are self-employed and/or in solo practice; a reduction in the number of hours physicians worked each week; a loss of primary care physicians in the most rural South Carolina counties despite overall growth in the primary care workforce; the way that physician age, gender and employment status affects work hours; increasing racial and gender diversity among physicians and more.

### **Residency Training Choices of South Carolina Medical School Seniors: 2016 and 2017**

This report examines how many recent medical school graduates in South Carolina remain in-state for their initial GME training and how that is changing over time. Overall, the percentage of students who remain in state for GME training has decreased slightly in recent years. However, those percentages vary considerably between different areas of clinical specialization and from year to year. In addition, the percentage of graduates choosing different clinical specialties also varies widely over time.

### **The Migration Patterns of Physicians Who Were in Residency Training in South Carolina in 2009**

The structure of the job market for physicians has changed substantially in recent years. Historically, the majority of physicians beginning their practice became professional entrepreneurs who owned their practice or entered into partnership agreements with other physicians in group practices. Now physicians, especially new physicians, are operating in a job market largely driven by health care systems and their staffing needs. This data brief summarizes results from a study tracing the geographic migration patterns of new physicians who were in GME training programs in South Carolina in 2009. The majority left the state but many more trained in other states moved into South Carolina by 2015. On balance South Carolina imported more new physicians than it lost.

Find these reports and more online in the  
South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce report database:

[www.scohw.org](http://www.scohw.org)



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*South Carolina AHEC staff from the regional centers and program office met for the annual meeting at Lowcountry AHEC in Walterboro in March 2017.*



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