

South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium

ANNUAL 2018 REPORT



Building and Supporting the Healthcare Workforce South Carolina Needs

Introduction



Ann Lefebvre, MSW, CPHQ
SC AHEC Executive Director

As Executive Director of South Carolina AHEC, I am honored to release our 2018 Annual Report. As you may know, I recently stepped into my role, having joined the team in November 2018. While carefully considering this position, I spent much of last year taking a close look at South Carolina AHEC as an organization: its people, its purpose and the opportunities that lie within the state. I was excited with what I found and filled with pride as I accepted the opportunity to lead the South Carolina AHEC System: an enduring organization that supports every point along the health professions pipeline from high school to retirement. I am pleased to share with you the many ways that South Carolina AHEC connects students to health professions, health professionals to communities and communities to better health. I hope you will join me in the coming year as we work hard to ensure that all residents of our great state have access to high-quality healthcare.

2018 Highlights



Hundreds of **high school and college students gained exposure to and preparation for future health professions** through regional AHEC health careers programs and Bench to Bedside college programs.



Health professions students lived and trained in rural communities across the state utilizing SC AHEC housing and participating in interprofessional learning experiences through AHEC case conferences and the Institute for Primary Care.



South Carolina's family medicine residency training programs and SC AHEC worked collaboratively to **support high-quality graduate medical education** in the state.



Advanced practice providers, dentists and physicians chose to practice in rural and underserved areas of the state with the help of SC AHEC incentive grant and loan repayment programs.



Health professionals maintained their licensures and learned the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the demands of a transforming healthcare system through AHEC continuing professional development programs.



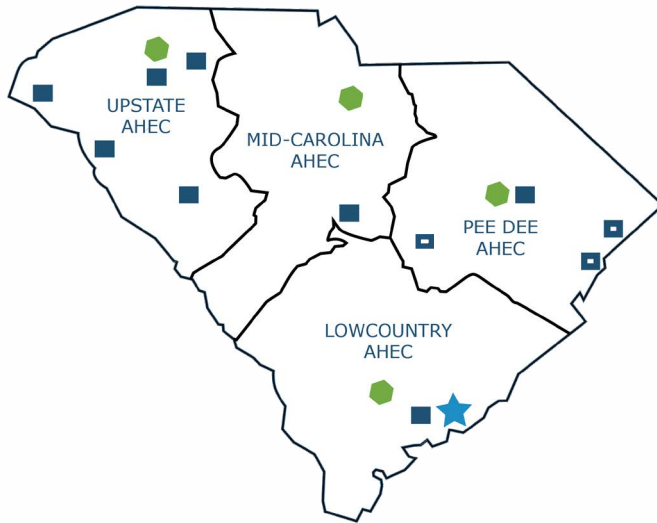
The introduction of SC AHEC's **new online webinar infrastructure replaces the need for professionals to travel to participate in educational programs** and supports statewide Telehealth Education initiatives.



The **SC Office for Healthcare Workforce released seven reports** including analyses on the registered nurse, licensed practical nurse and dental hygienist workforces; as well as the J-1 visa waiver program and the demand for EMS personnel in South Carolina.

SOUTH CAROLINA AHEC

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



1 Program Office ★

4 Regional AHEC Centers ●

8 AHEC-Funded Family Medicine Residency Training Programs ■

3 New Affiliated Family Medicine Residency Training Programs ■

Program Areas



Health Careers Pipeline Program

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



Continuing Professional Development

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



Health Professions Student Program

Facilitates health professions student training experiences in rural and underserved communities



Telehealth Education

Educates students and healthcare 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 healthcare workforce in South Carolina. Learn more at www.scohw.org



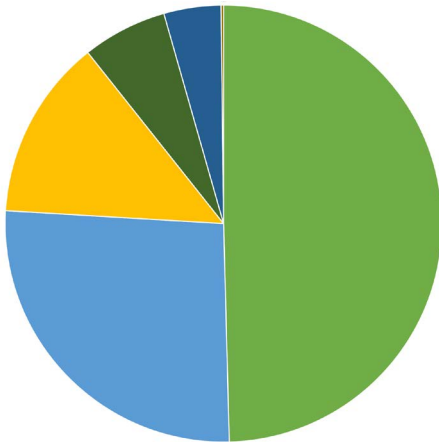
Recruitment & Retention Program

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

FISCAL YEAR 2018 FUNDING

State Funding

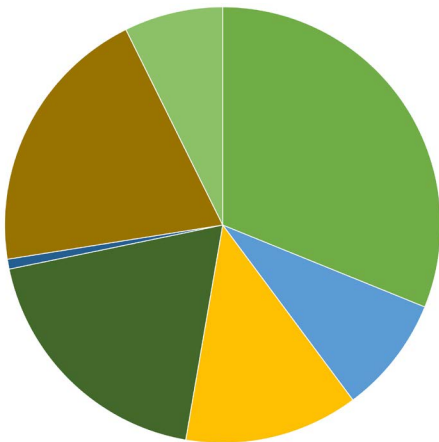
Funding appropriated by the state for the South Carolina AHEC totaled \$10,650,969.



- \$5,281,454 ● Family Medicine Residency Training Programs
- \$2,807,458 ● Regional AHEC Offices
- \$1,424,770 ● Program Office
- \$667,287 ● Rural Physician Program
- \$450,000 ● South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce
- \$20,000 ● Nursing Recruitment

External Funding

Extramural funding for the South Carolina AHEC totaled \$1,365,352. Funding reported here spans periods across calendar and fiscal years.



- \$425,036 ● AHEC Point of Service Maintenance & Enhancement Award (DHHS*, HRSA†)
- \$118,590 ● Office for Telehealth Education (MUSC Center for Telehealth)
- \$260,000 ● Bench to Bedside 2.0 (The Duke Endowment)
- \$176,101 ● Rural Dentist Loan Repayment Program (MUSC)
- \$10,000 ● Office of Primary Care Projects (DHEC**)
- \$275,625 ● Choose Well APRN Incentive Program (New Morning Foundation)
- \$100,000 ● Marlboro County Loan Repayment Incentives (Marlboro County General Hospital Foundation)

Contractual Funds

Contracts with the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services totaled \$1,049,367.

- \$529,617 ● Locum Tenens (SC DHHS*)
- \$519,750 ● Rural Physician Program/Rural Dentist Program (SC DHHS*)

*DHHS = Department of Health & Human Services

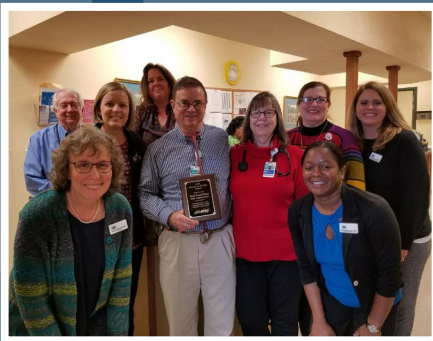
†HRSA = Health Resources & Services Administration

**DHEC = Department of Health & Environmental Control

EXCELLENCE AWARDS



Gateway Award
Jay Blankenship, MBA, HRV



Practice of the Year
Beaufort Memorial Harrison
Peeples Health Care Center



Preceptor of the Year
William A. Chinery, MD

Each year, South Carolina AHEC recognizes individuals and practices who make a significant contribution to health professions training and healthcare providers in the state.



Educator of the Year
Patricia Moran, MSN, RN, CPAN



Michel Porter AHEC Ambassador Award
Cheri Plyler, MBA



Better + Together

The work of South Carolina AHEC would not be possible without our extensive network of partnerships and collaborations. We partner with:

34 Institutions of Higher Education*	29 Middle & High Schools	16 State-Funded & Statewide Organizations
379 Preceptors	204 Training Sites	115 Consortium Members & Healthcare Partners

**Includes in-state and out-of-state institutions*

PARTNERS

DIVERSE & COMPETITIVE STUDENTS

Current Students



Future Health Professionals



AHEC Health Careers Programs build a more **diverse and representative future workforce** by **supporting underrepresented minority and disadvantaged students** on their paths to becoming health professionals.



3,596
Internship
Hours

Accrued across the state by Health Careers Program students to gain experience and become competitive applicants to jobs and academic programs

During the last year, AHEC Health Careers Programs achieved:

182

students attained Health Careers Achiever, Junior Scholar or Scholar status by accruing 20-110+ hours of activities

4,070

contact hours of programming delivered to high school students state-wide

360

contact hours programming delivered to students at 10 colleges and universities

19

faculty and staff members from 4 technical colleges completed train-the-trainer workshops

Lowcountry AHEC Highlights

Supporting Rural Nursing Education & Workforce Retention

Over the past year, Lowcountry AHEC has partnered with the Medical University of South Carolina's Advanced Nursing Education Workforce (ANEW) program, funded by a Health Resources and Services Administration grant (HRSA grant #T94HP30872). According to HRSA, the ANEW project seeks to increase access to primary care in rural and underserved areas by supporting academic clinical partnerships for nursing education. MUSC's ANEW project focuses on three nurse practitioner roles (Advanced Geriatric, Family, and Pediatric) and seeks to:

- increase longitudinal, immersive, clinical training experiences with rural and/or underserved populations for these APRN students
- develop a clinical preceptor education and support program
- facilitate post-graduate employment in rural and underserved areas

Lowcountry AHEC is collaborating with many of the grant activities. During the first year of the project, Lowcountry AHEC provided and/or assisted with 18 traineeships. These students completed longitudinal primary care clinical placements in rural/underserved areas, received stipends from the grant, and signed a commitment letter to work in a rural/underserved area upon graduation.

MUSC's College of Nursing developed online clinical preceptor education modules this past year. Lowcountry AHEC provided feedback, and the modules will be piloted in the next grant year and disseminated via the South Carolina AHEC learning platform for statewide use.

Lowcountry also assisted with the development of recruitment resources for rural/underserved areas. Two videos were created:

- Resource Video: Includes information about state and national incentive programs
- Testimonial Video: Primary care providers tell of their experiences working in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina

These videos will be pilot-tested in a rural practice via focus groups that will include primary care physicians, advanced practice nurses, physician assistants and students on clinical rotations. Once finalized, the videos will be disseminated statewide.



I had a great experience with Dr. Scott Luthman, a pediatrician at Colleton Medical Center. Up until this semester I'd only spent time within the pediatric primary care setting. I was able to spend time in the newborn nursery and was even able to observe a circumcision. Dr. Luthman was a great teacher and my experience in a rural healthcare facility provided me a new outlook in caring for rural and at-risk populations.

Naajah Hughes
ANEW Pediatric NP Student



Quick Facts

www.lcahec.com

Center Location: Walterboro

Counties Served: Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton, Jasper, Orangeburg

Region Population: 1,195,254

Health Status Indicators for this Region:

38.1% of Adults Diagnosed with Hypertension

66.9% of Adults Overweight or Obese

14.2% of Adults without Health Insurance

Connecting students to communities through

TRAINING & PREPARATION



720

Student placements
in medically-
underserved
communities



487

Student placements
in rural
communities



379

Health
professions
preceptors



204

Community-based
training sites

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

During the last year, Health Professions Student Programs achieved:

92,377 patient contacts via 977 health professions student placements

991 weeks of housing provided to students on rotation in rural communities

64% of placements were in a primary care setting

72 students from 9 health professions and 6 academic institutions participated in Interprofessional Team Case Conferences

83 students took part in the Institute for Primary Care monthly seminars

Mid-Carolina AHEC Highlights



This class has helped me pursue my goals with confidence. It was hard work but it was worth it all!

Marie Blackmon, CNA

Addressing Regional Workforce Needs

Mid-Carolina AHEC launched a certified nurse aide training program (CNATP) in early 2018 and has graduated its first cohort with a 100 percent pass rate for the certification exam. Mid-Carolina AHEC had been contacted by several stakeholders and partners in its region including Winthrop University, Springs Memorial Hospital and Chester Regional Medical Center expressing a need for a certified nurse aide training program. Such a program supports college students interested in health professions and addresses a workforce need for the midlands region. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education approved Mid-Carolina AHEC's application to establish the CNATP in March.

Mid-Carolina AHEC partnered with Lancaster County Adult Education and Springs Memorial Hospital to launch the program. The first cohort included eight students who

completed the program's clinical training at Springs Memorial Hospital's transitional care unit. The first cohort completed the program in June and all eight students passed the certification exam and are now working as certified nurse aides in four local healthcare facilities.

To support the need for CNAs in the region, Mid-Carolina AHEC plans to hold 3-4 training classes per year in the coming years, as well as add a second clinical training site at White Oak Manor long-term care facility.

Regional Community-Academic Partnerships That Work

Mid-Carolina AHEC partnered with the SC Hospital Association, Upper Midlands Rural Health Network and Springs Memorial Hospital on a Care Transitions Intervention (CTI) grant funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The three-year project utilizes Dr. Eric Coleman's model to improve patient outcomes and reduce hospital readmissions. Of the 12 hospitals participating in South Carolina, Springs Memorial Hospital currently has documented the most improvement in both patient outcomes and reduced readmissions.

In phase two of the project, third-year medical students from Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine-Carolinas Campus were given the opportunity to work with Springs Memorial Hospital's CTI coach. Students will accompany a CTI coach on home visits and follow-up interviews. The medical students will also work on an interprofessional team with physicians, nurses, and social workers to determine available resources to support the patient. Students are being taught and encouraged to use the CTI process and data as a potential research project.

Mid-Carolina AHEC
"Excellence in Health Care Through Education"



Quick Facts

www.midcarolinaahec.org

Center Location: Lancaster

Counties Served: Aiken, Cherokee, Chester, Fairfield, Chesterfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Newberry, Richland, Union, York

Region Population: 1,472,476

Health Status Indicators for this Region:

39.6% of Adults Diagnosed with Hypertension

68.2% of Adults Overweight or Obese

12.2% of Adults without Health Insurance

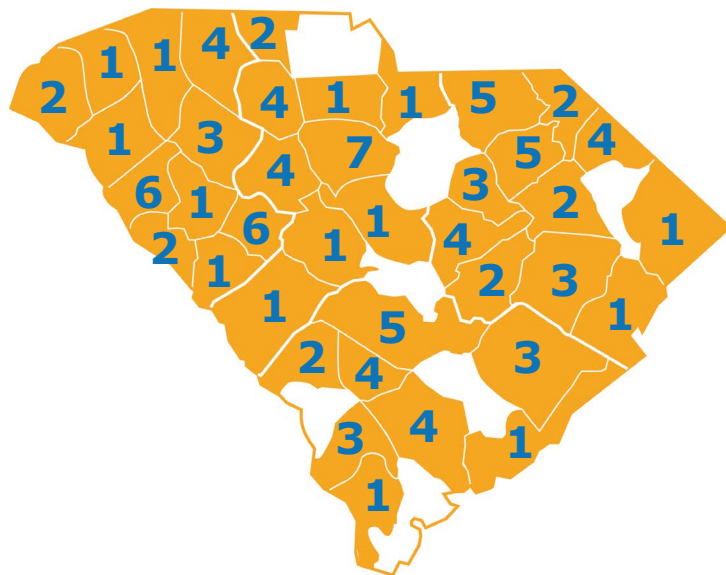
RECRUITMENT & RETENTION



105

Rural Incentive Grant Recipients Funded

*FY13-18: Physicians and
Advanced Practice Providers*



Graduate medical education, recruitment, and retention programs **build an effective healthcare workforce** and address the under-supply of clinicians in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina.

During the last year, AHEC Recruitment and Retention Programs achieved:

- 21** clinicians received rural incentive grants to practice in rural and underserved areas of the state for at least 4 years (9 physicians & 12 advanced practice providers)
- 4** rural dentists and 4 faculty members received loan repayment to practice in rural and underserved areas or serve as dental faculty at MUSC
- 214** residents trained in 11 family medicine residency training programs in SC
- 72** residents completed family medicine residency training in the state

New Project Highlight: AHEC Scholars

What is AHEC Scholars?

This year the South Carolina AHEC System started work on a new project aiming to address rural healthcare needs. The SC AHEC Scholars Program is a two-year interprofessional program partially funded by a HRSA grant that seeks to equip health professions students with the skills and training needed to become community-responsive leaders who provide care for rural and underserved populations.

South Carolina AHEC, in collaboration with MUSC, USC and other partners, is building upon and expanding existing programs to create the SC AHEC Scholars Program. The SC AHEC Scholars Program will implement a longitudinal, two-year, interprofessional curriculum with a focus on primary care transformation and teamwork. The objectives of the program are:

- Provide health professions students with didactic and experiential training (above and beyond their academic curricula) on practice transformation to develop the next generation of leaders in rural primary care.
- Engage 45-60 students in quality improvement initiatives at practices serving rural/underserved populations in South Carolina to accelerate the spread of best practices for improving healthcare services.
- Establish a collaborative relationship with community practices and the South Carolina Office of Rural Health in order to support quality improvement efforts and to ensure the needs of rural communities and the state are being met.

Who is involved?

The past year has served as a planning year for the grant. A team of staff from the four regional AHEC centers, the program office and core faculty worked together to plan and establish the new program. South Carolina AHEC partnered with faculty champions from MUSC and USC from the following academic programs:

- MUSC: Dental Medicine, Medicine, Nurse Practitioner, Pharmacy, and Physician Assistant
- USC: Medicine, Nurse Practitioner, Pharmacy, and Social Work

Faculty champions help guide curriculum design and student recruitment as well as serve as mentors for students in their programs.

Recruiting Tomorrow's Rural Professionals

AHEC Scholars strives to recruit a diverse, interprofessional cohort of students who would be most likely to ultimately practice in a rural/underserved area of South Carolina. Preference was given to applicants:



From a rural community and/or committed to rural practice



Committed to practicing in South Carolina



Committed to primary care



From an underrepresented minority and/or disadvantaged background

Planning Year Outcomes

Goals for the planning year were to establish the program curriculum and infrastructure needed to begin recruiting students at the beginning of the 2018-2019 academic year, including:

Curriculum and Program Structure



40

Hours of didactic training each year



40

**Hours of clinical/
experiential training each year**

Curriculum content is developed around seven core topic areas:

- Telehealth
- Interprofessional education
- Behavioral health integration
- Social determinants of health
- Cultural competency
- Practice transformation
- TeamSTEPPS®

More than 60 hours of innovative didactic and 10 hours of experiential training were developed focused on all of the core topics. Students, faculty, program office and regional AHEC staff piloted each online learning module this year.

SC AHEC Learning Portal

In creating the SC AHEC Scholars program, edits and improvements were made to existing online infrastructure to form a new SC AHEC Learning Portal to host online content for the students and facilitate collaboration. This year the task force developed an AHEC Scholars portal, enhanced the user profile types, added the ability for AHEC Scholars to submit activities for review by regional coordinators, improved longitudinal tracking capabilities of participants, and completed an upgrade of our learning management system to a new version for increased navigation.

What's Next?

The South Carolina AHEC System has begun recruiting its first interprofessional cohort of AHEC Scholars for the 2018-2019 academic year.



Encouraging Rural Success

I believe the AHEC Scholars program will bring greater awareness to our students regarding the health disparities in rural settings.

This program will allow our students to try to enhance access to and the quality of healthcare in these areas through innovation and interprofessional collaboration, hopefully to improve health outcomes in rural settings. We will be working with preceptors in these areas to provide them with resources to ensure success in these endeavors.

Betsy Blake, PharmD
Associate Professor
USC College of Pharmacy



Supporting a More Diverse Rural Workforce

I am thrilled that there is a focus on finding future providers who are underrepresented in medicine and/or were members of the underserved communities where they will hopefully practice. Patients often seek out providers with whom they share a similar background and increasing diversity of providers may also increase the number of community members who seek primary care. My hope is that the exposure to rural/underserved practices through AHEC Scholars will allow students to see the high-quality service they can provide to diverse communities, while also being personally fulfilled, and motivate them to choose this career path.

Kristen Hood Watson, MD
Assistant Dean for Resident Inclusion
MUSC College of Medicine

Supporting quality healthcare delivery with

WORKFORCE TRAINING



2018 Population Health Summit



215

Participants



11

Sites

South Carolina AHEC partnered with the Alliance for a Healthier South Carolina for yet another year for the 3rd Annual Population Health Summit. This innovative partnership convenes stakeholders in communities across the state in real-time to discuss the challenges and opportunities for achieving health equity in South Carolina.

The Summit leveraged South Carolina AHEC's statewide videoconference infrastructure and all four AHEC centers hosted groups in their regions.



AHEC Professional Development Programs **enhance health professionals' clinical skills, address ongoing and emerging health trends in the state and help professionals maintain their licensure.**

During the last year, AHEC Continuing Professional Development Programs achieved:

83,230

total contact hours of continuing professional development programming

973

registrations by professionals from rural communities

2,425

registrations by professionals from medically underserved communities

96

professionals participated in the Rural Matters series, in partnership with the USC College of Social Work's iCared initiative, across all 4 AHEC regions

Pee Dee AHEC Highlights

Finding Hope in Health Professions

Project HOPE is a Health Professions Opportunity Grant that serves as a workforce development program by facilitating education and training to low-income individuals for occupations in healthcare. Each year in Florence, multiple “boot camps” take place where students receive intense academic and hands-on training by a team of health science instructors accompanied by a week-long observation experience at McLeod Regional Medical Center. Students who successfully complete the program attain certification in one of 13 areas identified by labor market information as a high-needs profession.

Pee Dee AHEC has maintained a long-lasting relationship with Project HOPE. For the past two years, April Orange, Director of The McLeod School of Medical Technology, has served as a guest speaker in the academic career lecture series for the boot camps to introduce students to medical laboratory science as a health profession. The purpose of this series is to provide information about and a pathway for employment after gaining a certification.

This year, Pee Dee AHEC Health Careers Program Coordinator Matthew Peake facilitated Project HOPE's orientation, career tours, on-boarding, and in-depth observation experience during their job shadow week. The relationship between AHEC and Project HOPE has further expanded as Matthew was invited to share insights in national funding meetings for the upcoming grant cycle.

Typically, each boot camp averages 12 students. While there will still be 4 boot camps per year, there are plans to increase the average class size to 16 students. Project HOPE Job Developer Ken Davis said, “Currently we have 13 healthcare occupations available. We are looking to increase the possibilities for healthcare occupations to 16 options upon grant renewal.”

There is no doubt that Project HOPE yields successes for the entire Greater Pee Dee healthcare community. According to 2018 employment data, 53 Project HOPE graduates have earned gainful employment in a healthcare occupation. One student, Jackie Walker, MST, was even named the McLeod Regional Medical Center Emergency Department Technician of the Year.



[This] is healthcare training excellence in this community. When I visit, students are engaged. They learn accountability, honor, respect... and it starts to mean something to them. I am absolutely excited about the academic interest AHEC has taken in Project HOPE and the careers of our students.

Ken Davis
Job Developer, Project HOPE



Quick Facts

www.peedeeahec.net

Center Location: Florence

Counties Served: Chesterfield, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter, Williamsburg

Region Population: 924,825

Health Status Indicators for this Region:

44.3% of Adults Diagnosed with Hypertension

69.7% of Adults Overweight or Obese

15.3% of Adults without Health Insurance

TELEHEALTH EDUCATION

The SC AHEC Office for Telehealth Education supports the **education of students and health professionals on the usage and implementation of telehealth.**

89 professionals registered for SC AHEC's first webinar!



The MUSC Center for Telehealth school telemental health outreach team presented at the first AHEC webinar to school-based nurse telehealth sites and others on trauma informed care in the school-based setting.



Incorporated into the AHEC Scholars curriculum to expose these emerging clinicians to the usage of telehealth



Created by telehealth teams to support clinical needs for professionals in rural and underserved areas

During the last year, AHEC telehealth education programs, in collaboration with our partners, achieved:

235 participants registered for the first set of webinars implemented after AHEC successfully transitioned from a hardware codec network to web-based services in 2018

188 participants registered for on-demand educational programs about and/or presented by telehealth experts

SOUTH CAROLINA
Telehealth
ALLIANCE



Upstate AHEC Highlights

Hands On with Upstate AHEC Lab Experiences

The Upstate AHEC Health Careers Academy (HCA) is an integrative program offered to high school students in the greater upstate area who aspire to become successful health care professionals. The program provides an array of shadowing opportunities, team building exercises, rigorous academic preparation, professional development, and community-based learning. As a part of the HCA, students have the chance to sign up for lab experiences where they are exposed to interactive, hands-on activities related to STEM and healthcare.

This past year, 135 participants took part in ten labs provided by Upstate AHEC including: brain dissection, writing professional emails, CERT (community emergency response team) disaster training, resume writing, interview skills, eye dissection, communication skills, x-ray technology, leadership styles, mental health and yoga.

USC medical student Hope Conrad led the brain dissection lab using sheep brains from Carolina Kits. She went step-by-step with the students as the teams dissected the brains and recognized prominent portions. Students worked in teams and were responsible for presenting their dissections, simulating lab work in a college setting. Students completed a worksheet on the brain anatomy and functions and participated in a lecture and discussion about how various traumas and illnesses can impact health.

Ms. Conrad also shared her academic journey, where her passion for medicine came from, the process to get into medical school, and tips and tricks for college success. In the end, students left with a deeper understanding of the brain, its function and anatomy, and why it is such a vital organ!

The students of the HCA are dedicated, excited, and most importantly, compassionate. Through pipeline programs, Upstate AHEC looks forward to seeing each of them grow into competent, caring, and quality healthcare professionals.



Not only did I learn about the various skills needed to work in the healthcare field, but I also gained valuable relationships with my mentors and peers. With these labs came the confidence that the Upstate AHEC staff would always support my goals and aspirations. All the students gained not only necessary skills, but also new connections with medical professionals . . . The labs greatly enhanced my knowledge of science and math and various healthcare skills and professions; they gave me a new, realistic perspective of the healthcare industry. I am immensely grateful to have been a part of such an insightful program.

Kaustubha Reddy
Upstate AHEC HCA Student



Center Location: Greenville

Counties Served: Abbeville, Anderson, Edgefield, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Pickens, Saluda, Spartanburg

Region Population: 1,431,814

Quick Facts

www.upstateahec.org

Health Status Indicators for this Region:

39.8% of Adults Diagnosed with Hypertension

66.3% of Adults Overweight or Obese

13.1% of Adults without Health Insurance

HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE



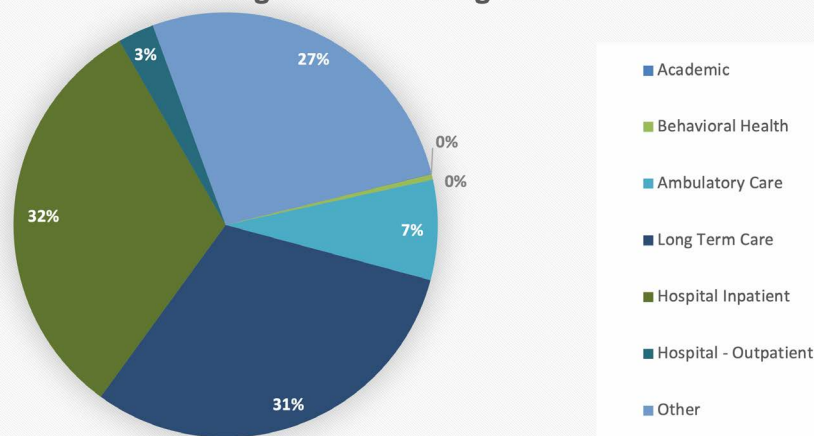
The South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce (SCOHW), a division of SC AHEC, studies the **issues that affect the balance of supply and demand for different types of healthcare professionals** in South Carolina.

Registered Nurses

Seventy percent of the RNs active in the state's workforce in 2016 received their entry nursing degree in South Carolina. Nearly nine percent (8.6%) of the RNs in the workforce are in advanced practice roles.

Of registered nurses (not including APRNs), 73 percent work as staff nurses or nurse managers. The next most common role is care coordinator/case manager/discharge planner.

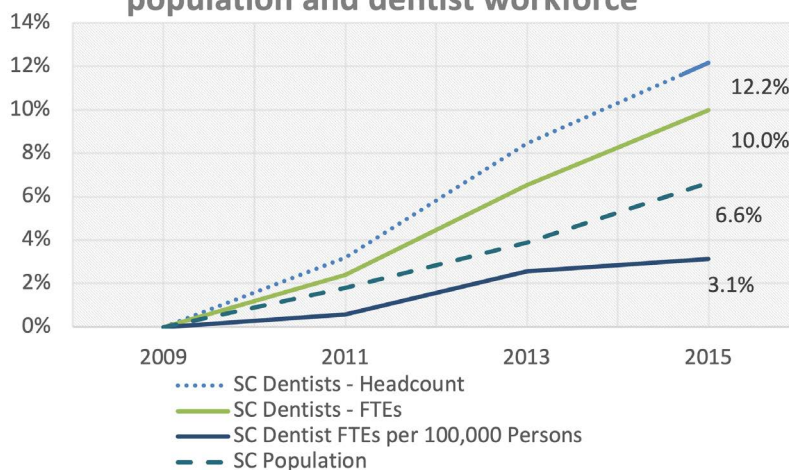
Employment Settings of Care Coordinators, Case Managers and Discharge Planners



Dentists

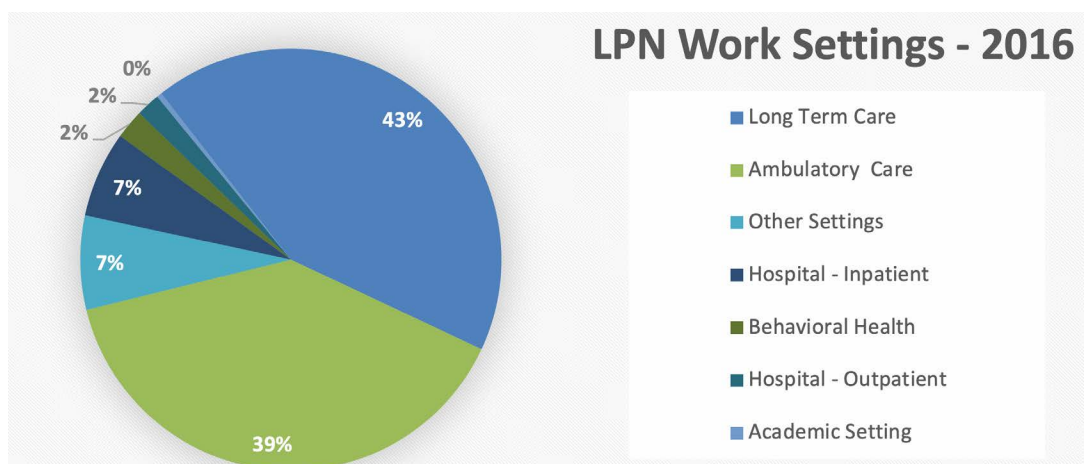
Although the number of dentists practicing in South Carolina grew by more than 12 percent between 2009 and 2015, a reduction in hours worked per week by dentists and the rapid growth in the general population means that the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) dentists for every 100,000 persons in the state grew by only 3.1 percent.

Cumulative growth in South Carolina's population and dentist workforce



Licensed Practical Nurses

Of LPNs active in the state's workforce in 2016, 70 percent of them received their entry nursing degree in South Carolina.

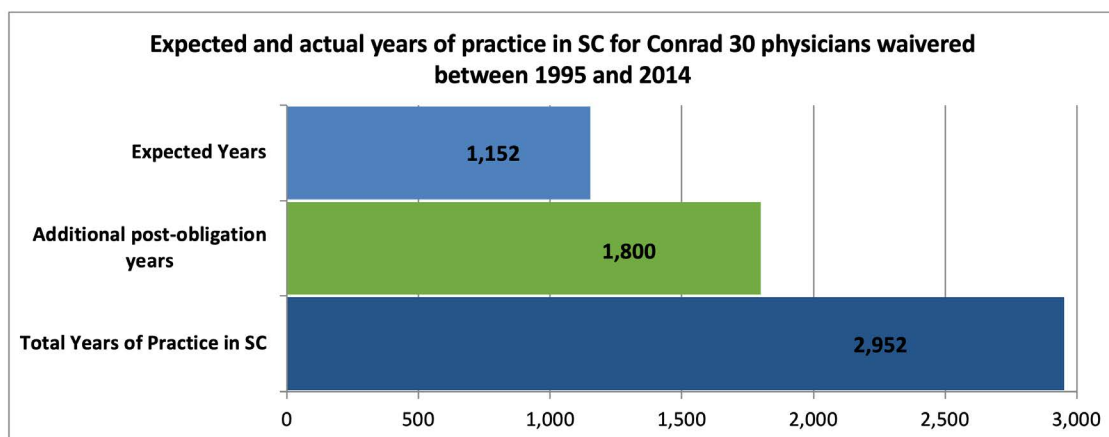


Impact of the Conrad 30 Waiver Program in South Carolina

The Exchange Visitor visa program (J-1 visas) administered by the U.S. State Department allows individuals from other countries around the world to work and/or study in the United States. These visa holders may stay in the United States for the duration of their education program and then are required to return to their home country for two years before seeking approval to re-enter the country.

Physicians holding a J-1 visa who want to remain in the U.S. for additional education or to practice as a physician may apply for a waiver of the 'return home' requirement through the Conrad 30 program. Those waivers allow a physician with a J-1 visa to stay in the U.S. for an additional three years if they agree to practice in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) or in a Medically Underserved Area (MUA).

In South Carolina the DHEC Office of Primary Care oversees the Conrad 30 program, and worked with the SCOHW in 2018 to assess the impact this program has had in our state. A total of 384 physicians received waivers in South Carolina between 1995 and 2014 and completed their service obligations (see chart below). Between 2015-2018, 101 physicians have received waivers.



South Carolina AHEC

Medical University of South Carolina
19 Hagood Avenue
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Charleston, SC 29425

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