

South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium **2025 Annual Report**



*Building and supporting the healthcare
workforce South Carolina needs*

www.scahec.net



South Carolina
AHEC

Area Health Education Consortium

Welcome to the Annual Report



Ann Lefebvre, DSW, CPHQ
SC AHEC Executive Director

Welcome to the 2025 Annual Report from the South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC). South Carolina AHEC continues to support the wide array of needs in the healthcare workforce through connecting all points along the health professions development pipeline—from high school students to practicing health professions—to build and support South Carolina’s healthcare workforce. Our state is growing in population and with that growth, the dynamics of the healthcare workforce evolve as well. We continue to work with new and existing partners across the state to assess the state’s healthcare workforce needs and address them with data-driven strategies. I invite you to review the outcomes of our statewide system and the results our dedicated teams have accomplished this year.

FY25 At-A-Glance

13,706

total individuals served
across AHEC programs

30,430

total registrations across all
program areas

291,737 total contact hours of programming
delivered to participants, including:

11,802

health careers exploration
contact hours

192,242

health professions
student contact hours

87,291

continuing education
contact hours

Features in this year’s
annual report:

Our recent
rebrand, p.

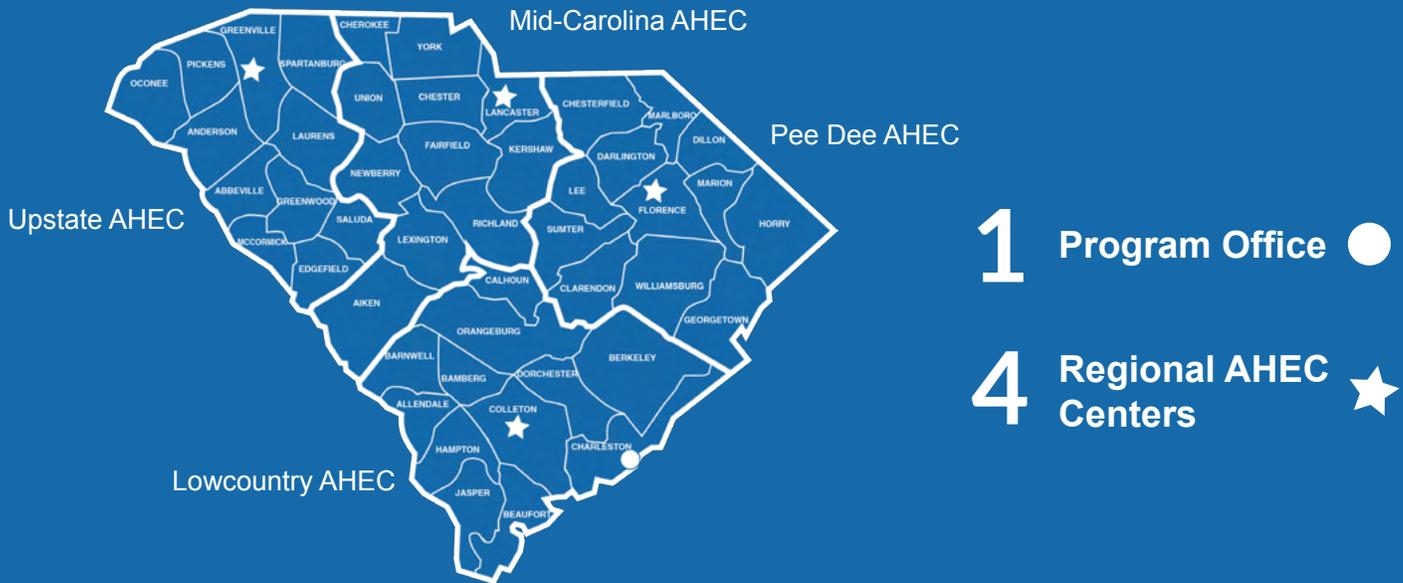
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Why this work
is important, p.

11

South Carolina AHEC System

South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC) connects students and professionals with the tools, training and resources necessary to develop an effective healthcare workforce, with a focus on primary care for rural and medically underserved areas. Our education, recruitment and retention programs serve as a bridge between academics and communities, connecting students to health careers, health professionals to communities and communities to better care. Since 1972, South Carolina AHEC has strived to improve the training and distribution of health professionals to build and support the healthcare workforce South Carolina needs to connect all communities to better health.



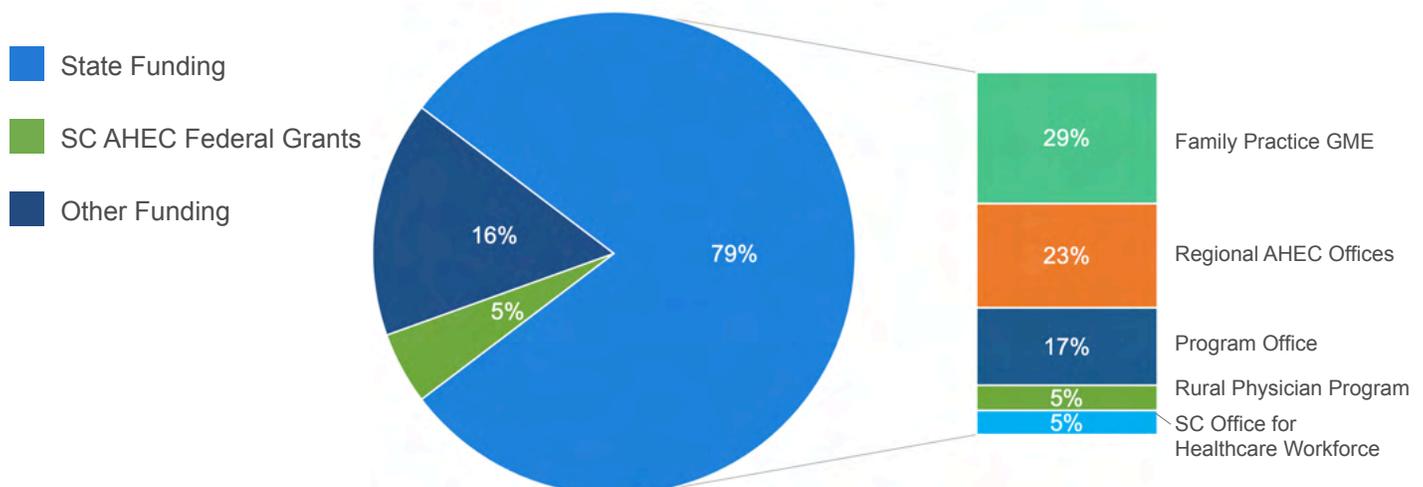
SC AHEC Programs Build and Support the Healthcare Workforce South Carolina Needs

- +
Health Careers Program
 Provides support to high school and college students, especially from rural and underserved communities, on their paths to becoming healthcare professionals, building an effective future healthcare workforce
- +
Health Professions Student Program
 Provides community-based training experiences, exposing students to the opportunities of working in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina
- +
Graduate Medical Education
 Works collaboratively with all family medicine residency programs in the state to facilitate recruitment for high-quality training in family medicine for South Carolina
- +
Recruitment & Retention Program
 Provides financial incentives to healthcare professionals who practice in rural and underserved areas to improve the distribution of providers statewide
- +
Continuing Professional Development
 Enhances clinical skills, addresses ongoing and emerging health trends and helps professionals maintain their licensure and certifications
- +
SC Office for Healthcare Workforce
 Analyzes data and provides policy-relevant information about the healthcare workforce in South Carolina

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Funding

State Funding		Amount
Family Practice GME		\$4,949,522
Regional AHEC Offices		\$3,929,250
Program Office		\$2,917,439
South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce		\$950,000
Rural Physician Incentive Program		\$917,287
	Total State Funding	\$13,663,498
Federal Grants Awarded to SC AHEC		Amount
AHEC Point of Service Maintenance & Enhancement Award, POSME (HRSA Grant)		\$674,437
Behavioral Health Loan Repayment Program (HRSA Grant)		\$157,815
	Total Federal Funding	\$832,252
Other Funding (Contracts, Direct Grants, Subawards on Others' Grants, etc.)		Amount
Rural Behavioral Health Professional Incentive Program (MUSC Contract)		\$1,500,000
Rural Physician Program/Rural Dentist Program (DHHS Contract)		\$888,534
Rural Dentist Loan Repayment Program (MUSC Contract)		\$176,101
Office for Telehealth Education (MUSC Center for Telehealth Contract)		\$100,000
Delta Dental of South Carolina (Direct Grant)		\$50,000
Results-Based Accountability (SCHA Grant)		\$48,206
Health Occupations Providing Excellence in Workforce Wellness & Resilience (USC Grant)		\$21,166
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Fellowship Program Exploratory Workgroup (BlueCross® BlueShield® of South Carolina Foundation* - Direct Grant)		\$20,043
DPH Primary Care Office Projects (DPH Contract)		\$18,644
	Total Other Funding	\$2,822,694
Total Funding for FY25		\$17,318,444

Funding Breakdown



* The BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Supporting the Pathway to a Strong Health Workforce

AHEC programs support all points along the health professions pathway



SC Office for Healthcare Workforce



Health Careers Programs



Graduate Medical Education



Continuing Professional Development



Health Professions Student Programs



Recruitment & Retention Programs



Destination: Better Healthcare

New Look, Same South Carolina AHEC

In May 2025, South Carolina AHEC unveiled a fresh new look – beginning with our logo and part of a broader update to how South Carolina AHEC presents itself visually.

The new look explained:

Take a close look at the logo and you'll see we've got the state of South Carolina crafted out of building blocks – a callback to our tagline: "Building and Supporting the Healthcare Workforce South Carolina Needs."

While AHEC's mission and scope of programs is broad and complex, the goal of the logo is for people, at first glance, to have an idea of the type of work we do.



South Carolina
AHEC

Area Health Education Consortium

a **graduate cap** to represent education & training

a **medical cross** to signify healthcare

a **group of people**, symbolic of communities and the healthcare workforce

a **location symbol** to emphasize our focus on local programs and events, as well as connecting students and health professionals to communities

Health Careers Program

Connecting Students to Health Careers

The South Carolina AHEC Health Careers Program provides support to high school and college students, especially from rural and medically underserved communities, on their paths to becoming healthcare professionals, building an effective future healthcare workforce.



Building the Foundations for a Future in Healthcare



Upstate AHEC has given me so much, but two things stand out the most: family and opportunities. We've built a close-knit community where we connect through shared hobbies, career interests, and genuine support for one another. Along with those relationships, AHEC offers countless opportunities and exposure to different areas of healthcare.

One of my favorite experiences was the mental health seminar. Together, we not only grew in confidence but also learned about the many paths to becoming a mental health professional. I'll also never forget the respiratory therapy session, where we had the chance to use a laryngoscope for intubation—a true hands-on learning experience. And of course, the Summer Enrichment program that I participated in my freshman year was what started it all, inspiring me to get involved in my community and pursue my passion for healthcare.

Lastly, none of this would have been possible without Mrs. Victoria and Ms. Latoya, who have been incredible mentors throughout my journey. They constantly expose us to new medical professions while making the learning process fun and engaging. Their energy and encouragement pushes everyone to do their best, and they've shown me just how impactful knowledge can be.

- Kemora M., Upstate AHEC HCP Student

Health Careers Program by the Numbers, FY25

11,802

total contact hours of programming delivered to

1,243

high school and college students

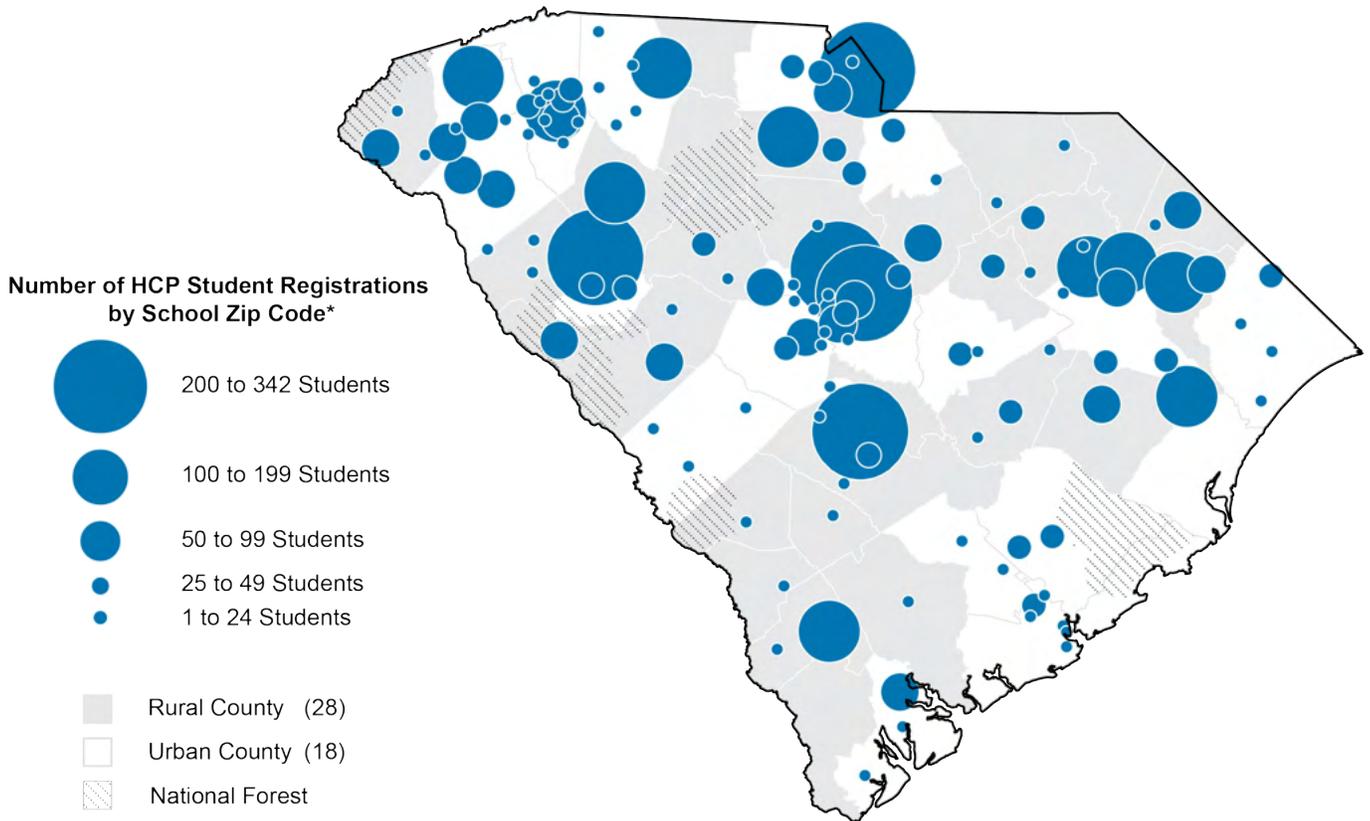
39%

of Health Careers Program students are from rural areas

678

students participating in hands-on experiences

SC AHEC Health Careers Program (HCP) Registrations by Student School Zip Code



Note: *Data show the unique number of Health Careers Program participants in FY2025 (7/1/2024-6/30/2025), by students' secondary school zip code. If secondary school zip code was missing, post-secondary school zip code was used. Map excludes 314 records that were missing zip code.

Sources: HCP data from South Carolina AHEC. Rural definition from the U.S. Census Bureau, Geography Division, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>. Rural counties are those counties where 50% or more of the population lives outside an urban area, based on the 2020 Census counts (updated 9/2023). Administrative Forest Boundaries (Feature Layer) from the USDA Forest Service FSGeodata Clearinghouse, accessed 2/2/2022. Produced by: South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce, a division of South Carolina AHEC.

Health Professions Student Program

Connecting Students to Communities

The South Carolina AHEC Health Professions Student Program provides community-based training experiences, exposing students to the opportunities of working in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina.



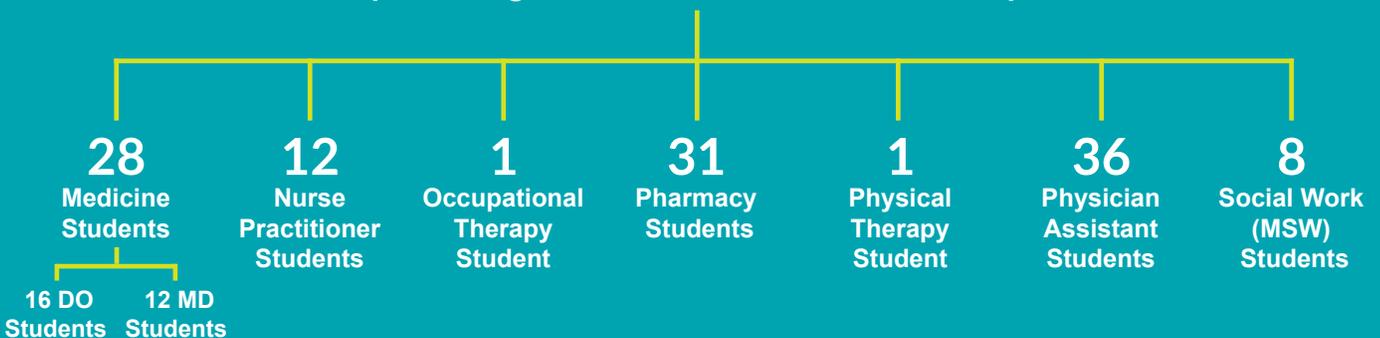
Supporting Tomorrow's Rural Practitioners



I cannot say enough about Pee Dee AHEC - from their support with logistical aspects of rotations, additional educational content relating to real life medicine, and simply being there for friendly conversations. My experience with the AHEC Scholars program has allowed me to grow not only as a future physician - but as a future educator! Growing up in Nichols I firsthand understand the need for rural physicians, this being the driving factor behind my choice to serve in a rural area, and cannot express how much my exposure to available resources through the Scholars program will help shape my care for patients. Thank you for all you do, and I highly recommend the program to any future healthcare professional!"

- Steele Willoughby, MHL, OMS-IV
VCOM - Carolinas Student & AHEC Scholar

117 SC AHEC Scholars participated in the program, representing 11 educational institutions and 7 professions:



Health Professions Student Program by the Numbers, FY25

1,134 training site placements with **355** preceptors at
179 community-based training sites

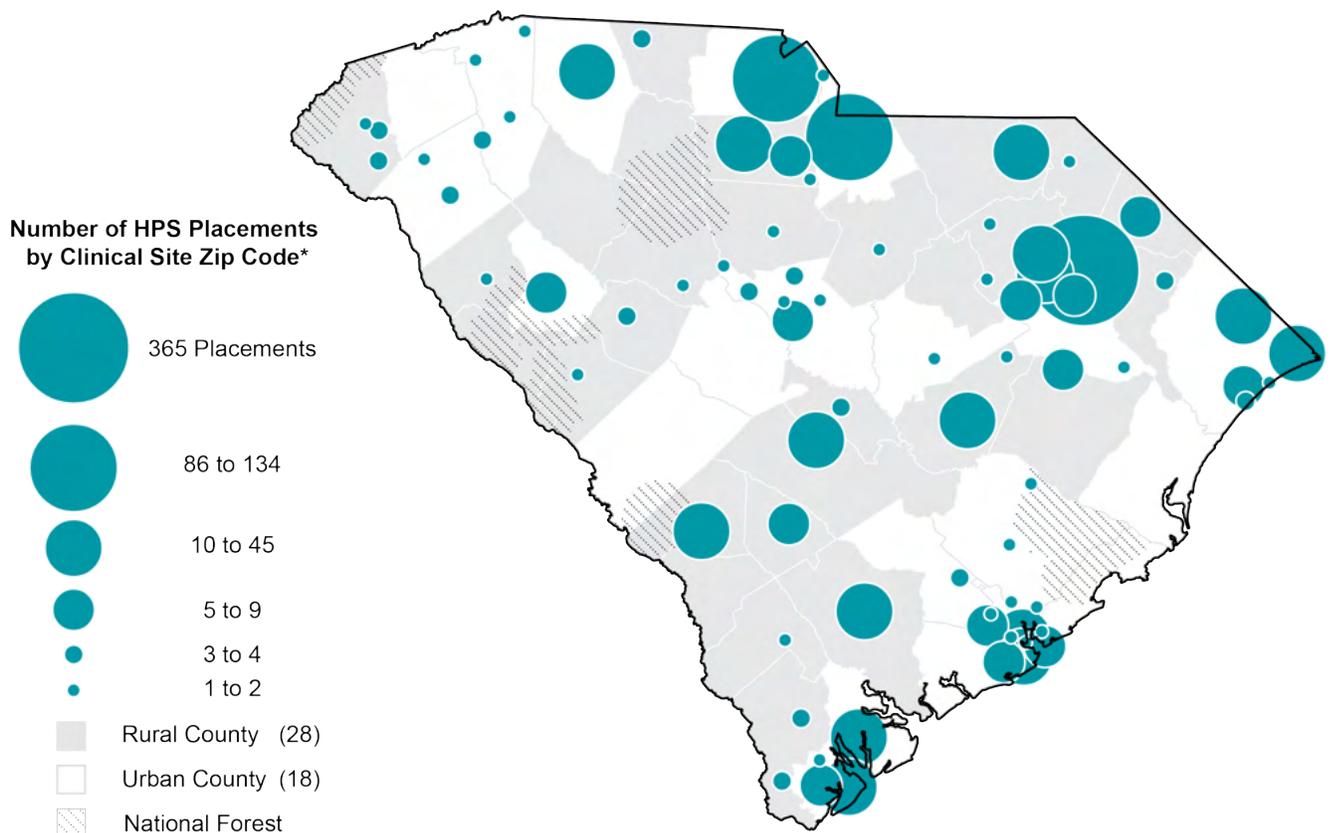
1,225

weeks of student housing across
251 housing placements for
199 students while on clinical
rotations

32%

of training placements in a rural
setting and 43% of placements in
a primary care setting

SC AHEC Student Training Placements by Clinical Site Zip Code



Note: *Data are based on the number of students participating in the SC AHEC HPS Program who performed clinical rotations in state fiscal year 2025 at the sites shown (n=1,134). Circles are located at the zip code centroid (center), may include more than one site, and may not represent actual street location. Map excludes out-of-state student training placements (n=45). Source: Student data from South Carolina AHEC. Rural definition from the U.S. Census Bureau, Geography Division, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>. Rural counties are those counties where 50% or more of the population lives outside an urbanized area, based on the 2020 Census counts (updated 9/2023). Administrative Forest Boundaries (Feature Layer) from the USDA Forest Service FSGeodata Clearinghouse, accessed 2/2/2022. Produced by: South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce, a division of South Carolina AHEC.

Graduate Medical Education

Connecting Physicians to Family Medicine Training

South Carolina AHEC works collaboratively with all family medicine residency programs in the state to facilitate recruitment for high-quality training in family medicine for South Carolina.



Supporting Innovative Training in Family Medicine



Over the last 10 years, I've helped lead family medicine pharmacists across the state who have gotten together to network, collaborate, and improve existing teaching to family medicine residents in South Carolina. Our group has accomplished many things including improving the onboarding process for family medicine pharmacists in residency programs, presenting at multiple regional and national conferences, and updating an online pharmacotherapy curriculum of over 50 modules. Central to these efforts is the ongoing support from South Carolina AHEC. Leadership and support from Ann Lefebvre, the Executive Director for South Carolina AHEC, has been phenomenal with regular meetings to update our group on statewide GME efforts and brainstorming on how our group can best serve rural workforce development. Staff with South Carolina AHEC including Dawn Leberknight, Kristin Cochran, and Jennifer Bailey have also provided tremendous support for our group to meet, learn from one another, and host our curriculum on AHEC's learning management system. Support for our group is one of the many ways that South Carolina AHEC continues to deliver on its mission to recruit, train, and educate healthcare providers focused on rural and under-resourced communities.”

- Scott W. Bragg, PharmD, BCPS,
MUSC College of Pharmacy and
Department of Family Medicine

Graduate Medical Education by the Numbers, FY25

2,236

contact hours of education accrued by

54

residents through the SC AHEC Learning Portal

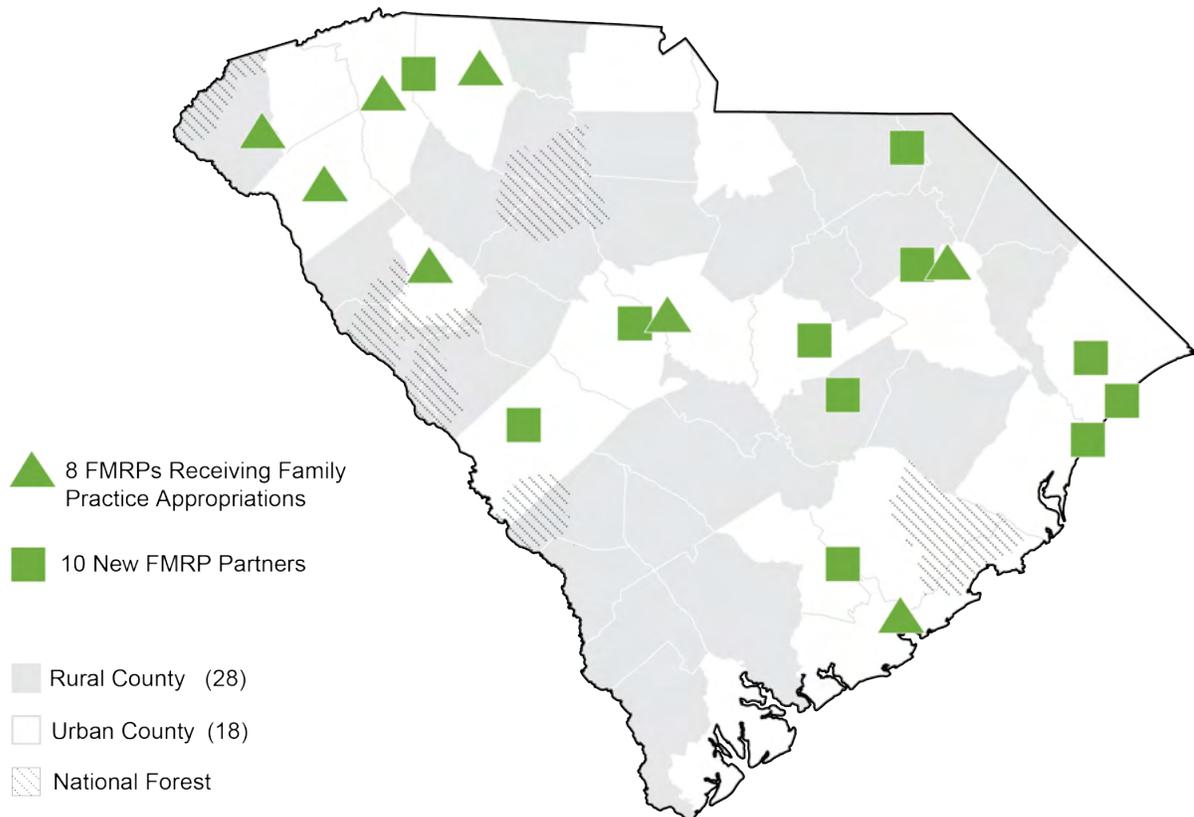
319

badges scanned by SC family medicine residency programs in the South Carolina booth block at the AAFP National Expo

52

medical students from 17 medical schools attended South Carolina Family Medicine Interest Day

Family Medicine Residency Programs (FMRPs) in South Carolina

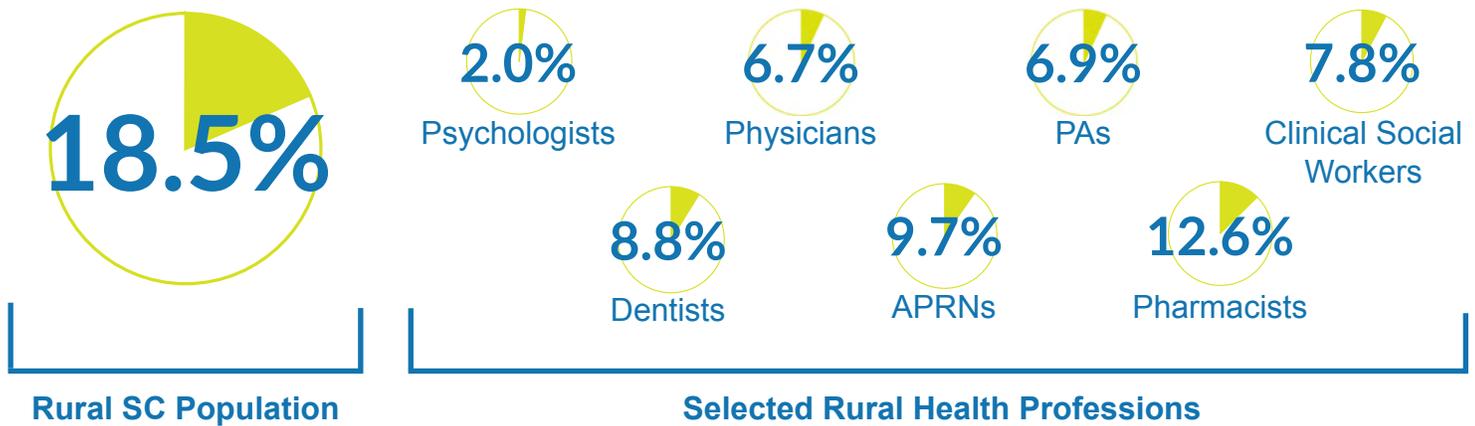


Note: Eighteen Family Medicine Residency Programs included based on residency program city. McLeod Health Rural FMRP has two locations (Cheraw & Manning). Rural definition from the U.S. Census Bureau, Geography Division, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>. Rural counties are those counties where 50% or more of the population lives outside an urban area, based on the 2020 Census counts (updated 9/2023). Administrative Forest Boundaries (Feature Layer) from the USDA Forest Service FSGeodata Clearinghouse, accessed 2/2/2022.

Why This Work Matters

In 2024, America's Health Rankings ranked South Carolina in the bottom half of states for access to healthcare: 37th for access to primary care providers, 40th for access to mental health care providers, and 42nd for access to dental care providers. This is, in part, due to a maldistribution of healthcare professionals between South Carolina's rural and urban communities.

While 18.5% of South Carolina's population lives in rural counties, only a much smaller proportion of the state's health professions workforce practices there:



Source: 2024 South Carolina Health Professions Data Book (SC Office for Healthcare Workforce)

To improve access to healthcare in all communities, maldistributions in the healthcare workforce must be addressed.

The Distinction: Workforce Shortage vs. Workforce Maldistribution

Shortage
A universal lack of the number of health professionals needed to address the provision of care

Maldistribution
A lack of a specific health professional or specialty in a specific area or setting

Why it matters: addressing maldistributions enables us to look at local factors that contribute to recruiting and retaining health professionals and devise data-driven, targeted solutions

How does AHEC build and support the state's healthcare workforce to address the maldistribution of providers in our rural communities?

Healthcare Workforce Pipeline



Continuing Professional Development

Local and low-cost continuing education enables health professionals to maintain their licensure and certifications and practice high-quality healthcare without traveling far from their communities.



Recruitment & Retention Programs

South Carolina financial incentive programs demonstrate high retention rates for participating health professionals staying in the rural/underserved communities in which they were funded to serve.



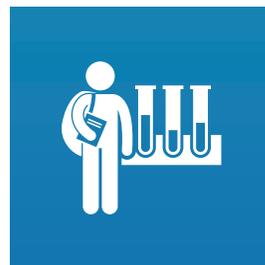
Graduate Medical Education

AHEC supports recruitment for family medicine physicians — health professionals who can provide full-scope, cradle-to-grave care for a rural/underserved community.



Health Professions Student Program

Students who have positive training experiences in rural/underserved areas are more likely to ultimately practice in a rural/underserved community.



Health Careers Program

Exposing students in rural/underserved communities to health careers early increases the likelihood they will pursue a career in healthcare.

South Carolina AHEC supports all points along the health professions pathway to broaden the distribution of the healthcare workforce, improve healthcare quality, and enhance delivery of healthcare to rural and medically underserved areas. Our programs connect students to health careers, healthcare professionals to the communities that need them, communities to better health through access to healthcare, and South Carolina to better health overall.

Recruitment & Retention Programs

Connecting Health Professionals to Communities

South Carolina AHEC’s Recruitment & Retention Programs utilize financial incentives to build an effective healthcare workforce to address the maldistribution of clinicians in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina.



Supporting the Healthcare Workforce



Receiving this grant enables me to support community activities and allows me to give back to the community I came from. Some activities include speaking at health fairs for local organizations, churches, and academic settings, assisting with preventive health screenings, and participating in exercise programs to promote fitness. This grant ensures that in addition to caring for patients I am also able to improve a healthier community by providing services to others.

- James Stroman II, DO; Orangeburg, SC

Participating Health Professionals, FY25

150 primary care, dental, and behavioral health professionals funded to practice in rural/underserved communities



*Funded by the Behavioral Health Professional Loan Repayment Program, funded by a State Loan Repayment Program Grant from HRSA, which concluded in August 2025.

Recruitment & Retention Program Participants, FY25

Rural Provider Incentive Program

16 advanced practice nurses

5 physician assistants

9 physicians

30 Total new participants

107 Total program participants

Rural Dentist Loan Repayment Program

6 community dentists

1 dental faculty at the MUSC College of Dental Medicine

7 Total new participants

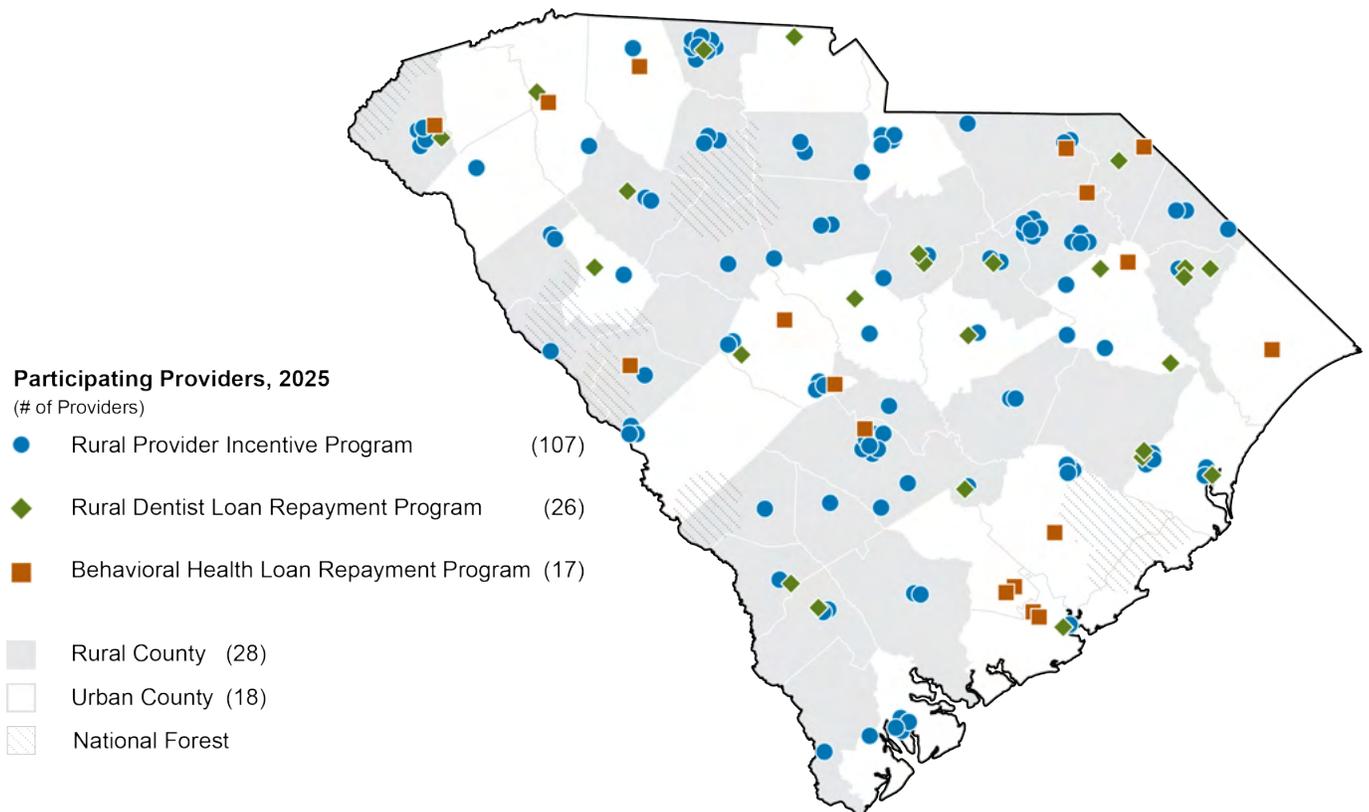
26 Total program participants

Rural Behavioral Health Professional Incentive Program

56 applicants approved for funding by the third-party board

The Rural Behavioral Health Professional Incentive Program was established via state budget proviso in FY25. The first set of participating professionals will be funded in FY26.

South Carolina Recruitment & Retention Program Participants, FY25



Note: Information is based on the provider's current practice zip code in 2025. Symbols are randomly scattered within the zip code area and may not indicate a precise address. Overlapping dots have been separated slightly for easier readability. Source: Rural Provider Incentive Program recipient data from South Carolina AHEC. Rural definition from the U.S. Census Bureau, Geography Division, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>. Rural counties are those counties where 50% or more of the population lives outside an urban area, based on the 2020 Census counts (updated 9/2023). Administrative Forest Boundaries (Feature Layer) from the USDA Forest Service FSGeodata Clearinghouse, accessed 2/2/2022. Produced by: South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce, a division of South Carolina AHEC.

Continuing Professional Development

Connecting Professionals to Training and Education

South Carolina AHEC Continuing Professional Development Programs enhance clinical skills, address ongoing and emerging health trends and help professionals maintain their licensure and certifications.



Supporting Health Professionals in the Provision of High-Quality Care



Working with Mid-Carolina AHEC has been a true pleasure. Their team demonstrates the highest level of professionalism and hospitality, consistently going above and beyond to meet scheduling needs and provide any necessary materials, including printed copies of presentations. I am honored to partner with them and am very pleased with the collaboration. I would highly recommend Mid-Carolina AHEC as a valuable and dependable partner.

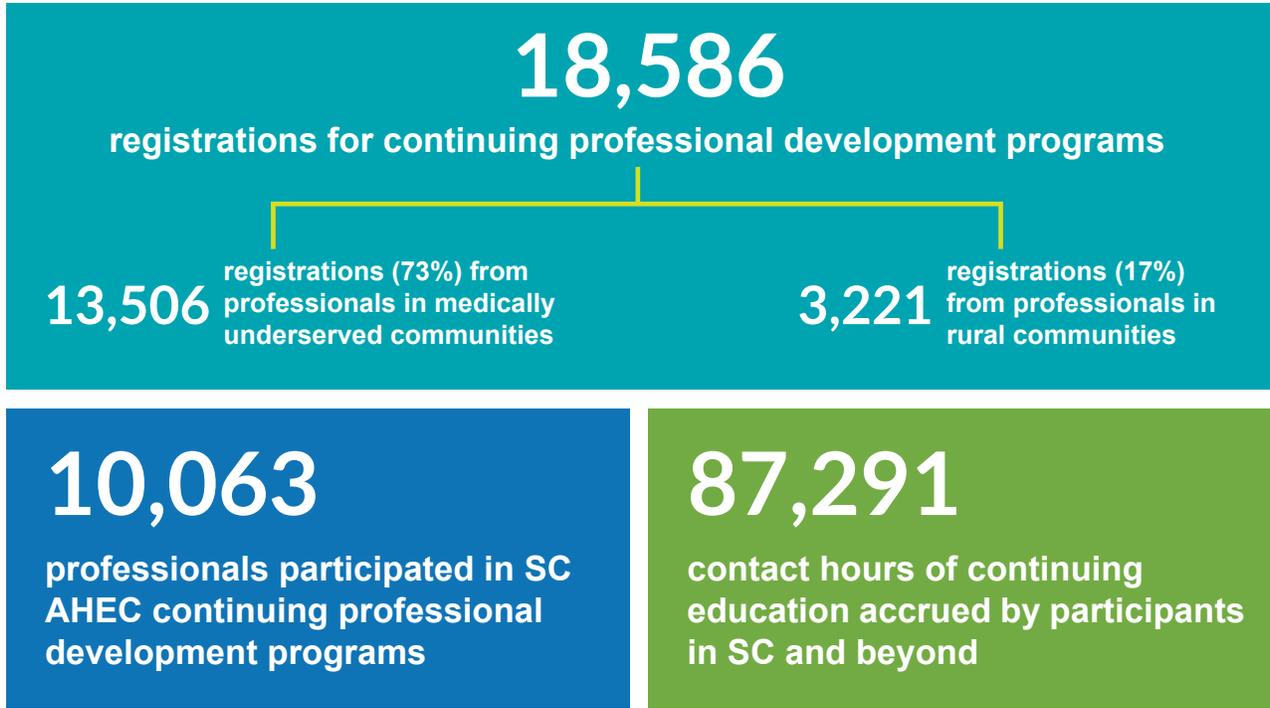
- Joan DuBose McClurkin, TF-CBT, MAC, LPCS, LAC, LCMHCS, AADC

I recently attended the 2025 Pee Dee Region Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Conference. It was a day spent in immersion of the many issues surrounding sexual assault and domestic violence. Vital information and education about how to recognize children of abuse and being culturally aware of victims were two of the topics that impact many of the providers, law enforcement personnel, and advocates in the Pee Dee. This day was well spent with relevant topics like non-fatal strangulation and ending with coverage of a case study. I highly recommend all interested people who deal with these situations attend this annual conference to stay informed and to stay aware. Well worth your time!

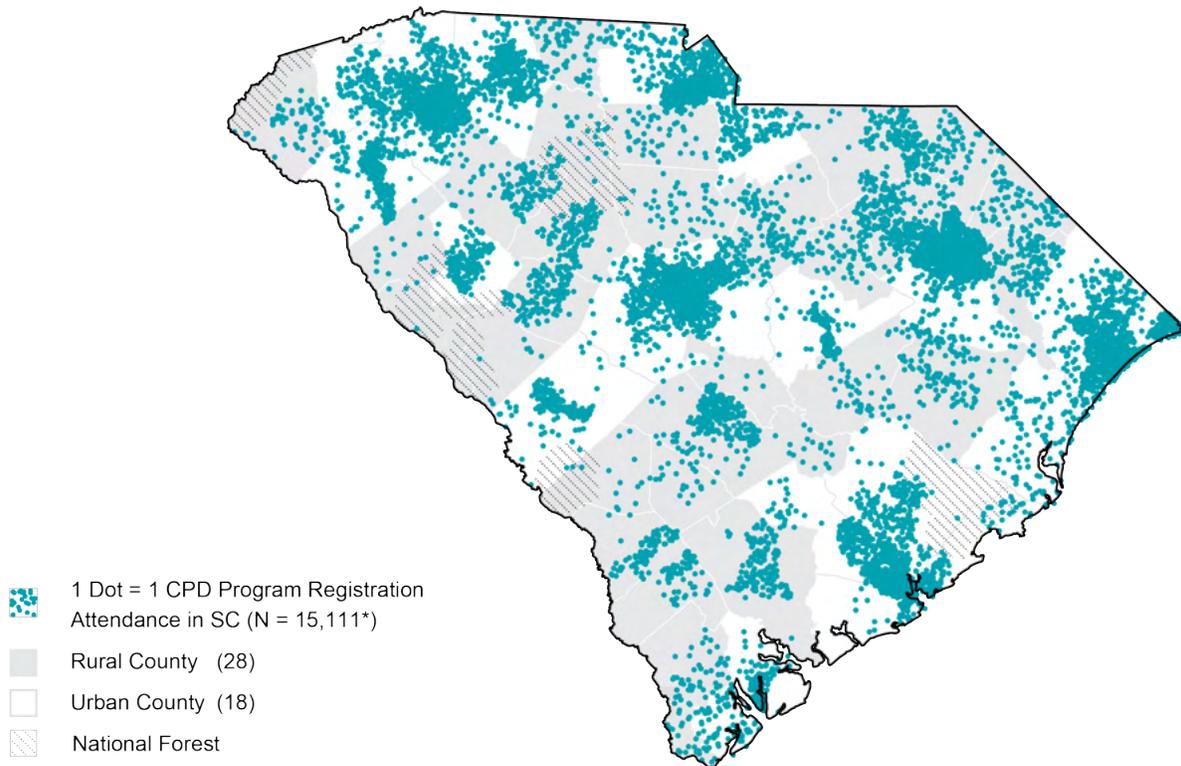


- Deborah L. Hopla, DNP, APRN-BC, FAANP, FAAN
Director MSN/FNP and DNP Programs, Francis Marion University

Continuing Professional Development by the Numbers, FY25



AHEC Continuing Professional Development Program Registrations by Zip Code

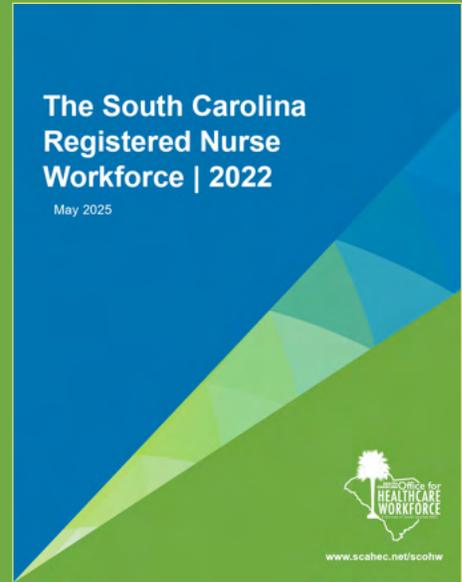
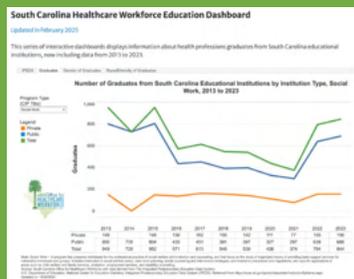


Note: *Data show the number of continuing professional development program registrations/attendances provided in FY2025 (7/1/2024-6/30/2025), by individuals' self-reported practice zip code. Dots are scattered randomly within the zip code area and show 15,111 records within South Carolina. Map excludes 970 out-of-state records and 2,521 records that had an invalid or missing zip code. Sources: CPD data from South Carolina AHEC. Rural definition from the U.S. Census Bureau, Geography Division, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>. Rural counties are those counties where 50% or more of the population lives outside an urban area, based on the 2020 Census counts (updated 9/2023). Administrative Forest Boundaries (Feature Layer) from the USDA Forest Service FSGeodata Clearinghouse, accessed 2/2/2022. Produced by: South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce, a division of South Carolina AHEC.

SC Office for Healthcare Workforce

Supporting Effective Healthcare Workforce Planning in South Carolina

The South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce (SCOHW), a division of South Carolina AHEC, studies issues that affect the balance of supply and demand for different types of healthcare professionals across the state. Its primary mission is to develop accurate, reliable information about the healthcare workforce in South Carolina and to make that information widely available to support planning and policy decisions.



Supporting Data-Driven Decision Making



The South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce is my trusted source for objective, high-quality data to guide nursing workforce decisions. Their invaluable resources drive research, highlight gaps, and give us the tools to shape solutions that directly impact the health of South Carolinians. Without their work, our ability to strengthen the state’s healthcare workforce would be greatly diminished.

- Marissa Bartmess, PhD, RN
Assistant Professor, USC College of Nursing

Access reports, briefs, visualizations and the South Carolina Health Professions Data Book at:

www.scahec.net/scohw



SC Office for Healthcare Workforce by the Numbers, FY25

1,585
report and publication views from website

10
new reports and data visualizations produced on South Carolina's healthcare workforce

67
data requests fulfilled

8
state and national presentations

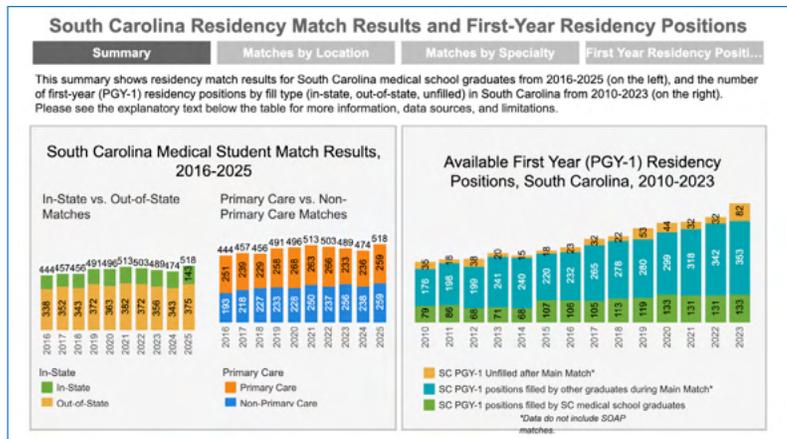
Featured Publications + Data Visualization

Medical Education in South Carolina | A Three-Brief Series

SC Residency Match Results and First-Year Residency Positions | Interactive Data Visualization

To understand the dynamics of physician supply, it's important to understand where, how and how many medical students are educated and trained in South Carolina. This three-brief series describes undergraduate and graduate medical education in South Carolina, including the four medical schools in the state and their characteristics, residency match trends for in-state medical graduates, and long-term trends in first-year residency positions.

These briefs are accompanied by an interactive dashboard that displays where and to which specialties South Carolina medical school graduates from 2016-2025 matched for their graduate medical education (GME, or residency).



South Carolina AHEC

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Suite 203
Charleston, SC 29407



South Carolina AHEC System staff gathered at the statewide staff meeting in April 2025

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Join our email list to stay up-to-date on South Carolina AHEC news and programs. Scan the QR code to sign up.