

SC AHEC 2005 ANNUAL REPORT



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



Vision:

To be a leader
in building a
collaborative
educational system
designed to optimize
the health of South
Carolinians.

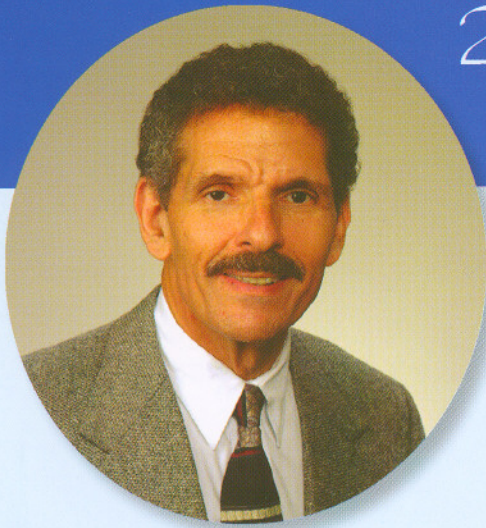
Mission:

To achieve
excellence in
health care through
recruitment,
retention, and
education.

Core Values:

Excellence, Integrity,
Effectiveness,
Professionalism,
Service, Efficiency.

2004-2005 ANNUAL REPORT



David R. Garr MD

David R. Garr, MD
Executive Director
South Carolina AHEC

I am most pleased and proud to introduce the South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium's (SC AHEC) 2004-05 Annual Report. The successes summarized in this report are the result of the contributions of the many talented people who work within the SC AHEC system, all of whom share the common goal of improving the access to high quality health care for the citizens of South Carolina.

The Student Development and Diversity Program continued its excellent work providing guidance to students interested in health care careers. The Summer Institute and Nursing Academy were well attended and reviewed by the students. A new grant from the Duke Endowment will help us create a statewide initiative to expand programs that will guide young people toward health care careers.

Once again, the Continuing Education Program has provided an impressive number of educational programs for 29,604 health care professionals. In addition, increasing the number of nurses in South Carolina remains a high priority, and the MAGNET Conference generated a huge amount of interest and participation.

The Bioterrorism and Public Health Emergency Preparedness Training Network, funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, provided educational programs and training for over 12,000 health care professionals from many different disciplines from 2003-2005. We were pleased to receive word that we were one of a small number of previously-funded projects to successfully compete for three additional years of funding to sustain our training network.

The Health Professions Student Program continues to work with students who receive a portion of their education in rural and underserved South Carolina communities. During this past year, we initiated discussions with several programs to expand the SC AHEC's role in coordinating community-based educational experiences for more students. Since 1993, the South Carolina Rural Interdisciplinary Program of Training (SCRIPT), administered by Lowcountry AHEC, has prepared health professions students to deliver culturally acceptable care in rural settings from a community-focused, team perspective. The amazing 13th year of SCRIPT will see the program increase the amount of research conducted concerning health care issues in rural settings.

The SC AHEC-affiliated Graduate Medical Education programs continue to do an excellent job training physicians in South Carolina. In 2005, 160 physicians graduated from these residency programs, many of whom have chosen to remain in South Carolina to provide health care for our citizens. During their training, these physicians provided direct health care services to tens of thousands of patients. Many of these individuals and families would not have had access to care were it not for the contributions of these Graduate Medical Education programs.

The Recruitment and Retention Program has continued its efforts to place more health care professionals in areas of need in South Carolina. The annual Practice Opportunities Fair and Family Medicine Interest Day provided an opportunity for residents and students to acquire information to help with their career planning. The Rural Physician Program provided incentives for physicians who chose to work in rural, underserved areas. In addition, the SC Legislature passed a bill to fund a new Rural Dentist Program modeled after the Rural Physician Program, which is administered by the SC AHEC.

The SC AHEC Information Service, a collaborative program with the MUSC Library, has continued to provide online textbooks, journals, and literature searches for health care professionals who teach health professions students and residents in their communities. This program continues to be refined to make it as user-friendly and accessible as possible.

In summary, 2004-05 has indeed been a most productive year. It is truly a privilege for me to celebrate these successes with the terrific people who comprise the SC AHEC team.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSITY PROGRAM

The South Carolina AHEC Student Development & Diversity Program (SDDP) addresses the need to increase the number of young people who aspire to become health care professionals. The program emphasizes the participation of students from underrepresented ethnic minority groups or those who are economically disadvantaged. Programs promote academic aspiration, preparation and motivation for high school and college students through a year-long curriculum and summer institutes. The SDDP also operates the SC AHEC Association of Future Health Professionals (AFHP) to reach potential students for health careers education. Highlights for 2004-2005 include:

- Programs and services provided for 1,617 high school and college students.
- 113 high school participants entered pre-health or health professions training at the undergraduate level.
- 130 undergraduate college students preparing for health professions training programs participated in the AFHP.



- 30 AFHP participants completed health professions training programs.
- 53 students participated in 9,112 hours of summer academic enrichment and internship programming.
- 157 students participated in the 4-day Future Health Professionals Leadership Institute held at SC State University. The week of June 6 was proclaimed "Future Health Professionals Week" by Governor Mark Sanford.
- 18 post-secondary school students participated in the 2005 SC AHEC Pre-Nursing Academy.
- Received the Minority Health Professions Award from the South Carolina DHEC.
- Collaborated with Clemson University's School of Nursing to sponsor the SC AHEC Day and include Saturday Academies in the Lowcountry.
- Received a grant award in June 2005 from The Duke Endowment to increase minority representation in the health care work force and better utilize the existing resources found in organizations and agencies across the state.

COALITIONS WORK TO DEVELOP HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

In 2003, the Institute of Medicine recommended increasing the number of minority health professionals as a key strategy for eliminating health disparities. The report indicated that health disparities are partly a result of the "unequal treatments" minorities encounter in the health care system. The report also cited studies that have shown that minority health care professionals are more likely to serve minority and medically underserved populations.

On December 6, 2004, the South Carolina AHEC sponsored a statewide workforce diversity Summit entitled "Increasing Minorities in Healthcare: Building Partnerships for Success." The numerous programs in South Carolina, which seek to improve the diversity of the health care workforce,

function independently. The result is a fragmented system that has failed to increase the percentage of underrepresented minorities in health care. The Summit's goal was to lay the groundwork for the establishment of regional coalitions to support and advance a statewide mission of increasing workforce diversity. Over 80 individuals represented schools, universities, hospitals, government agencies, and other programs.

Based on the Summit's success, the process of creating coalitions at the regional level to address minority health care workforce issues was initiated. South Carolina's four Area Health Education Centers were charged with the task of convening regional groups and developing action plans. The Upstate AHEC held its first coalition meeting in February,

2005, and was able to sustain the momentum from the summit. Representatives from across the Upstate met and discussed specific collaborative strategies for the region. The Upstate Coalition discussed the following topics: collaboration to meet individual and group objectives, interagency communication, dispelling myths about various programs, and information sharing. The group also arranged activities that the coalition could sponsor involving school personnel and students.

With the support and partnership from The Duke Endowment, the SC AHEC is launching this initiative statewide to establish coalitions in all four regions of South Carolina that will identify, mentor, and support minority students interested in health care careers.

CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM

The South Carolina AHEC continually evaluates the educational needs of health care professionals and provides educational programs designed to enhance their clinical skills and maintain their professional credentials. Over 29,600 health care professionals attended educational programs provided by SC AHEC regional centers last year.

Collaboration is the key to meeting the life long learning needs of practicing health care professionals. The SC AHEC has established excellent relationships with other state agencies, professional associations

and health care facilities to access needs and plan the content for educational programs.

This year we began several new collaborations with the South Carolina Board of Nursing that centered on the legal aspects of nursing and surveying inactive nurses. We also partnered with pharmacy programs at two and four-year colleges to develop a pharmacy tech training program.

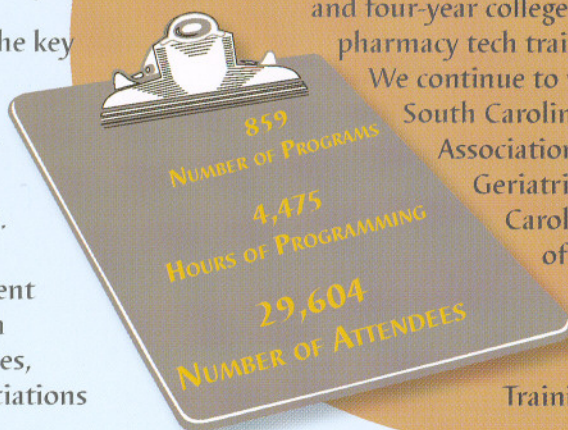
We continue to work with the South Carolina Hospital Association, South Carolina Geriatric Center, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, the HIV/AIDS Training Network, the

State School Nurses' Association and the American Heart Association.

Clinical skills programs focused on issues addressing end-of-life, pediatric and chronic diseases, among others.

The SC AHEC is currently in the third year of a nursing workforce project. Nationally known speakers were part of this year's MAGNET Conference that provided training to 150 nursing executives. The conference is designed to improve the work environment for nurses and therefore the recruitment and retention rates for the profession.

Health professionals give high marks for the quality, content and instruction of these Continuing Education programs. All offerings are guided by our Best Practice Standards.



PHARMACY TECH UPDATE FILLS TRAINING NEED

South Carolina AHEC's collaboration with academic institutions to meet the evolving continuing education needs of health care professionals across the state elevates the quality of programs and the professional competency of those professionals. Although partnership with the state's universities and colleges is ongoing, recent regulatory changes provided an excellent opportunity for South Carolina AHEC to utilize the expertise of faculty members for the development of a new training program.

Beginning on July 1, 2003, the state of South Carolina Board of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation required registered pharmacy technicians to complete 10 hours of approved continuing education annually in order to renew their registrations. These education requirements were designed to maintain the professional competency of pharmacy technicians and to improve their professional skills in order to protect the safety and health of South Carolina's citizens.

Pee Dee AHEC recognized this need as one that could be addressed statewide by the South Carolina AHEC Continuing Education Council which began accessing the current program opportunities across the state.

Continuing education programs for registered pharmacists were readily available, but programs specific to the pharmacy technician were not. The Council approached the Medical University of South Carolina College of Pharmacy and Midlands Technical College for their assistance in developing a training program that would be approved by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and Continuing Medical Education (CME).

The partners collaborated and designed the "2005 Update for Pharmacy Technicians". Topics covered included Pharmacy Law, Math, and Pharmacology. This Update was offered at locations across the state and provided participants with 4.0 ACPE contact hours. Approximately 515 pharmacy technicians attended this training across South Carolina.

Participant feedback was positive. "I really appreciate the session being directed to the pharmacy tech audience only", stated one respondent. In collaboration with the South Carolina College of Pharmacy, pharmacy technicians can continue to access the training via satellite programs.

HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENTS



A cornerstone upon which all SC AHEC programs are based is the creation and advancement of community-academic partnerships and other alliances to facilitate the education of primary care and other health care providers in professions with an inadequate supply. Health professions training programs have increasingly broadened the scope of their curricula to emphasize a community-based approach to health care and now require substantive student learning experiences in community settings distant from the academic health

science center. While in the community, students not only learn clinical skills from their preceptors in a "real world" setting, but they also may participate in community outreach activities targeting major health problems and initiating and participating in community health assessments and wellness programs for the local populace.

The SC AHEC regional centers employ student coordinators who assist health professions training programs in the identification of preceptors, procurement of student housing, scheduling of student rotations, orienting students to the community, and assisting students with their community health improvement projects. The SC AHEC is leading an effort to shift from discipline specific to interprofessional education for health profession students in both campus-based and community-based education. We have also assisted in defining records requirements for students going into the community as related to insurance, immigration, health screening and regulatory training.

HEALTH CARE SAFETY NET BENEFITS STUDENTS & PATIENTS

The health care needs of South Carolina's rural, underserved communities translate to a need for professionals who are prepared to provide quality care in a variety of settings. These populations often receive care through a safety net of community health/migrant health centers, county health departments and rural health clinics.

The South Carolina AHEC addresses this need by working cooperatively with academic institutions, health care organizations, and health professionals who provide care to underserved residents. By exposing students to learning experiences through these safety net providers, students experience first-hand the provision of care to underserved populations and gain the skills necessary to become competent in providing quality health care in communities with limited resources.

Examples of the development of health care professionals are evident across the four AHEC regions. This year, Mid-Carolina AHEC facilitated 69 weeks of clinical training for health administration, nutrition, pharmacy, and physician assistant students in six rural hospitals. The hospitals provided students with an opportunity to experience the challenges of providing care to populations where a significant amount of indigent care is provided by community hospitals.

In addition, nursing students received a total of 31 weeks of clinical training under the guidance of county public health nurses in the region. These students were exposed to health care services provided through SC DHEC clinics and made home visits with public health nurses. They were required to analyze the demographics and community health needs of the

counties where they were placed, and to investigate community health or social service resources in the region. These activities serve to cultivate nurses who are better prepared to address the public health needs of underserved rural populations.

Clinical experiences with community health centers, medical and dental offices, community pharmacies and health care agencies provide students with the opportunity to assist in medically underserved counties. Their participation in these rotations helps improve access to care for people residing in these counties. The majority of these activities take place at the regional level and center around the three tenets of the safety net concept: increasing access and promoting quality of care; promoting health workforce recruitment and diversity; and addressing current and emerging public health issues.

Student Disciplines Serving Medically Underserved 2004-2005

ADVANCE PRACTICE NURSE	68
DENTAL	4
HEALTH ADMINISTRATION	9
MEDICINE	190
NURSING	38
NUTRITION	1
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY	38
PHARMACY	37
PHYSICAL THERAPY	8
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT	177
SOCIAL WORK	2
SPEECH PATHOLOGY	3
Total Students	575

BIOTERRORISM & PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS



The South Carolina AHEC is completing its second year of a two-year grant for Bioterrorism and Public Health Emergency Preparedness. During the first two years of this grant, training modules, volunteer preparation courses, on-line courses and numerous videos were developed. A website has also been launched to provide health professionals with access to these materials. Training has been reinforced by table-top and classroom exercises that allow learners to practice what they learn.

Awareness programs were attended by over 12,000 health professionals, students and first responders. Programs were offered to community practitioners, hospital workers, long term care and community health center personnel, and academic faculty and students.

Building on the success of the awareness training completed during the past two years, the South Carolina AHEC was successful in competing for a new three-year, \$3.8 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration to continue addressing the training needs of health professionals across South Carolina.

Activities include providing regional and statewide training programs, implementing a volunteer preparation course, serving vulnerable populations including children and the elderly, and serving high risk target areas including rural communities, ports/coastal areas, and nuclear/chemical facilities. Also included is the establishment of a Bioterrorism Network Training Resource Center.

TABLE TOP EXERCISE TESTS REGION'S PREPAREDNESS

The voices at the table represented law enforcement, hospital administrators and public health officials from a four county region of South Carolina's Lowcountry. The scenario was fictional, but possible. What happens if a bioterrorism event occurs at a popular summer festival in Hampton County?

This scenario was explored through a bioterrorism table-top exercise that was co-sponsored by the Academy of Public Health Emergency Preparedness and the Lowcountry AHEC.

The table-top exercise began with participants listening to a scenario where patients with similar symptoms started arriving at hospitals in Colleton, Jasper, Hampton and Beaufort counties. At first it appeared the patients had a food borne illness, but as the scenario unfolded, it became evident that a more sinister cause was emerging. Botulism introduced intentionally into food served at the festival was affecting young and old, families and individuals alike. How well

would facilities and services already at full capacity because of festival related events meet the call for more personnel and resources to treat the ill and calm the fears of the "worried well"?

"We can never be too prepared for some intentional outbreak," stated Nick Davidson, Low Country District Director of Public Health Preparedness for the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC).

"But this can also be a great help to us in our day-to-day disease investigation," explained Davidson. "If we can coordinate responses in a relaxed setting, we can respond better to both intentional and unintentional events."

In this controlled exercise, the results were positive. The representatives

of the region already communicate well in the law enforcement and public health arenas and they understand the role of federal and state agencies in responding to local public health emergencies. Regional participants included hospitals, health care centers, police, fire and rescue, the coroner's office and state agencies.

Challenges faced by the participants included where to transport infected patients for advanced care, how to communicate more effectively between the regional medical centers, and the role local law enforcement officials would play in collecting evidence and apprehending a domestic terrorist.

"This exercise succeeded in increasing the awareness of bioterrorism training courses being offered in the region by Lowcountry AHEC and brought together various organizations to network and establish clearer lines of communication," explained Gail Sartain, Infection Control Practitioner and Education Coordinator for Colleton Medical Center.



RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAMS

The SC AHEC is committed to the recruitment of health professionals in South Carolina through the sponsorship of several initiatives to address the employment needs of the state's health care workforce.

70 Number of medical students who attended **The Family Medicine Interest Day** which promotes the specialty of family medicine and recruits medical students into the SC AHEC's Family Medicine Residency Training Programs.

54 Number of residents who participated in the **SC AHEC Residents' Annual Meeting** at Hickory Knob State Park. The meeting consisted of a Chief Residents Conference and a Research Symposium.

INFORMATION SERVICES

The South Carolina AHEC Information Services allows over 1,400 users access to 5,495 full text medical journals. This number is expected to increase as more publishers make their journals available in an electronic format.

The Information Services website offers a growing number of free journals through its e-journal access. This group includes FreeMedicalJournals.com, FreeBooks4Doctors, BioMed Central, High Wire Press, Medscape for WebMD, and Nursing Center journal articles. Users can also access password-protected materials including full text medical journals, MD Consult, e-Medicine and Good Citations.

The electronic journals were utilized over 9,000 times. An increase was seen in the use of nutrition journals by graduate students in dietetics at Winthrop University in the Mid-Carolina AHEC region. Users that search PubMed and use Loansome DOC to access medical libraries across the country received 3,730 paper articles, an increase of 10%. The majority of requested articles were delivered by e-mail.

In training sessions and discussions with hospital nursing personnel around the state, a need was identified to develop a Nursing Resources section on the Information Services website. Users can now access a host of nursing resources through the Nursing Center on the website.

Residency programs across South Carolina are visited every summer to give first year residents network accounts and showcase online resources. Training was also provided to rural hospitals, clinics, and physician preceptors.

47 Number of residents who attended **The 20th Annual AHEC Practice Opportunities Fair**. Sixty recruiters showcased statewide practice opportunities for residents.

36.5 Number of weeks of relief **The Locum Tenens Program** provided for physicians in underserved areas. This program assists family medicine and pediatric physicians by allowing them to attend seminars or take vacations.

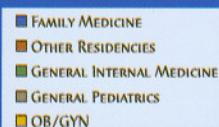
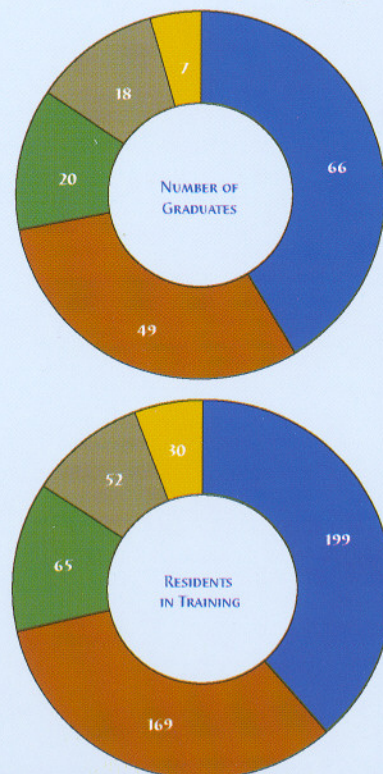
26 Number of **Rural Physician Incentive Grants** and National Health Service Corps' State Loan Repayment Grants awarded to primary care and advanced level practitioners. These grants assist in the establishment of practices across South Carolina.

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

In order to alleviate the shortage and maldistribution of physicians in our state, the SC AHEC sponsors graduate medical education residency training programs throughout South Carolina. AHEC-affiliated residency training programs graduate over 160 physicians each year. The number of residents in these graduate medical education programs has increased from 62 in 1972 to over 515, 61% of whom are residents in family medicine, general internal medicine, and general pediatrics.

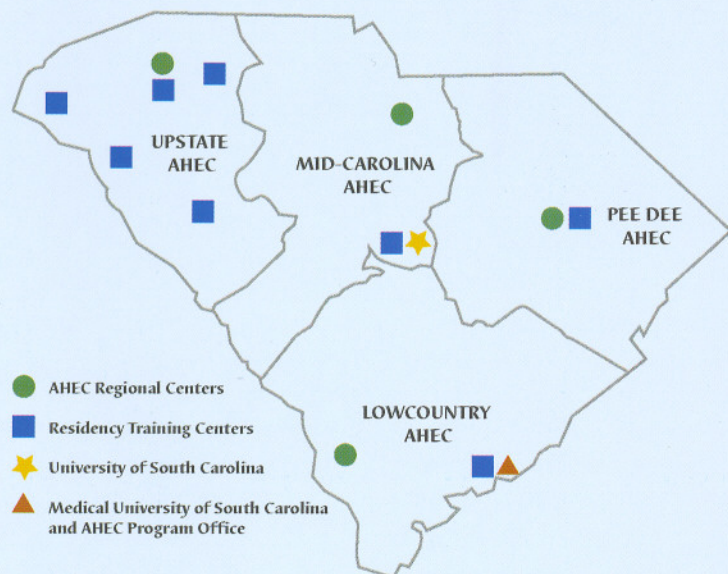
Primary care residency programs are based in eight communities across South Carolina and include sites for family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, combined internal medicine/pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, and emergency medicine. Additional residencies are offered in psychiatry, orthopedics, and surgery.

2004-2005 SC AHEC Residency Training Programs

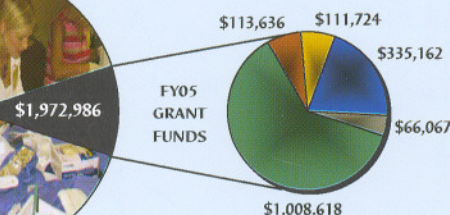


SC AHEC SYSTEM & FUNDING

The South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium (SC AHEC) exists to help improve the health of South Carolina's citizens. Established in 1972, we are the only organization in South Carolina that addresses health care workforce needs starting at the level of primary and secondary school education and extending to practicing health care professionals throughout the state. The success of the SC AHEC is due to the excellent partnerships that have been built with South Carolina's colleges, universities, teaching hospitals and communities.



FY05 STATE FUNDS
\$14,540,527



- BIOTERRORISM TRAINING & CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT (DHHS, HRSA*)
- COALITIONS FOR HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (DUKE ENDOWMENT)
- LOAN REPAYMENT (DHHS, HRSA)
- MODEL AHEC (DHHS, HRSA)
- SC AHEC LIBRARY/INFORMATION SERVICES (DUKE ENDOWMENT)

In addition to state and federal support, the SC AHEC affiliated institutions expended in excess of \$55,000,000 in local funds in FY05 to support the organization's mission and goals.

*HRSA = Health Resources and Services Administration

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