

**Pennsylvania-Delaware AHEC
Community-Based Clinical Training
Opportunities Booklet for
Students of Health Professions**
*Learning to Practice the Art and Science of
Medicine Within Our Communities*



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The Pennsylvania-Delaware Area Health Education Center Program

A Distinctive Solution for Pennsylvania's and Delaware's Primary Health Care Needs.

Introducing the Pennsylvania-Delaware AHEC (PA-DE AHEC) Program

Let us introduce to you a distinguished network of physicians and health professionals committed to mentoring and teaching the next generation of health care practitioners. The PA-DE AHEC Program is a dual state network of community-based physicians and health care professionals affiliated with Pennsylvania's eight medical schools and over 90 health care institutions. The coordination of this program is through the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Temple University School of Medicine, Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University, University of Delaware School of Nursing and many other participating health science institutions and universities. ***Building educational capacity and diverse learning environment for students in health professions training through academic and community partnerships.***

Community-based training

Clinical training opportunities designed by your academic center and affiliating AHEC region focus on ambulatory care within the community. Currently, our preceptor network represents the disciplines of medicine, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy and allied health. This network houses over 1,000 practitioners representing over 896 community-based practices and health systems. Clinical training opportunities are located in urban, rural and suburban communities throughout Pennsylvania and Delaware. Special recruitment efforts are directed toward integrating physicians practicing in medically underserved areas. Currently over one third of our training sites are established in these areas as a means to support the strategic mission of the AHEC...***Increasing Access to Health Care.***

Besides excellent clinical training through AHEC affiliated training sites, the AHEC offers students the opportunity to experience the culture of diverse population, to work with community organizations in prevention and health education, and to participate in research and program evaluation. Practicing in communities with limited health care resources provides challenges to develop diagnostic and critical thinking skills. Students are also introduced to public health issues and learn more about the emerging collaboration between medicine and public health. ***The AHEC is your touchstone to the health professions and life long learning.***

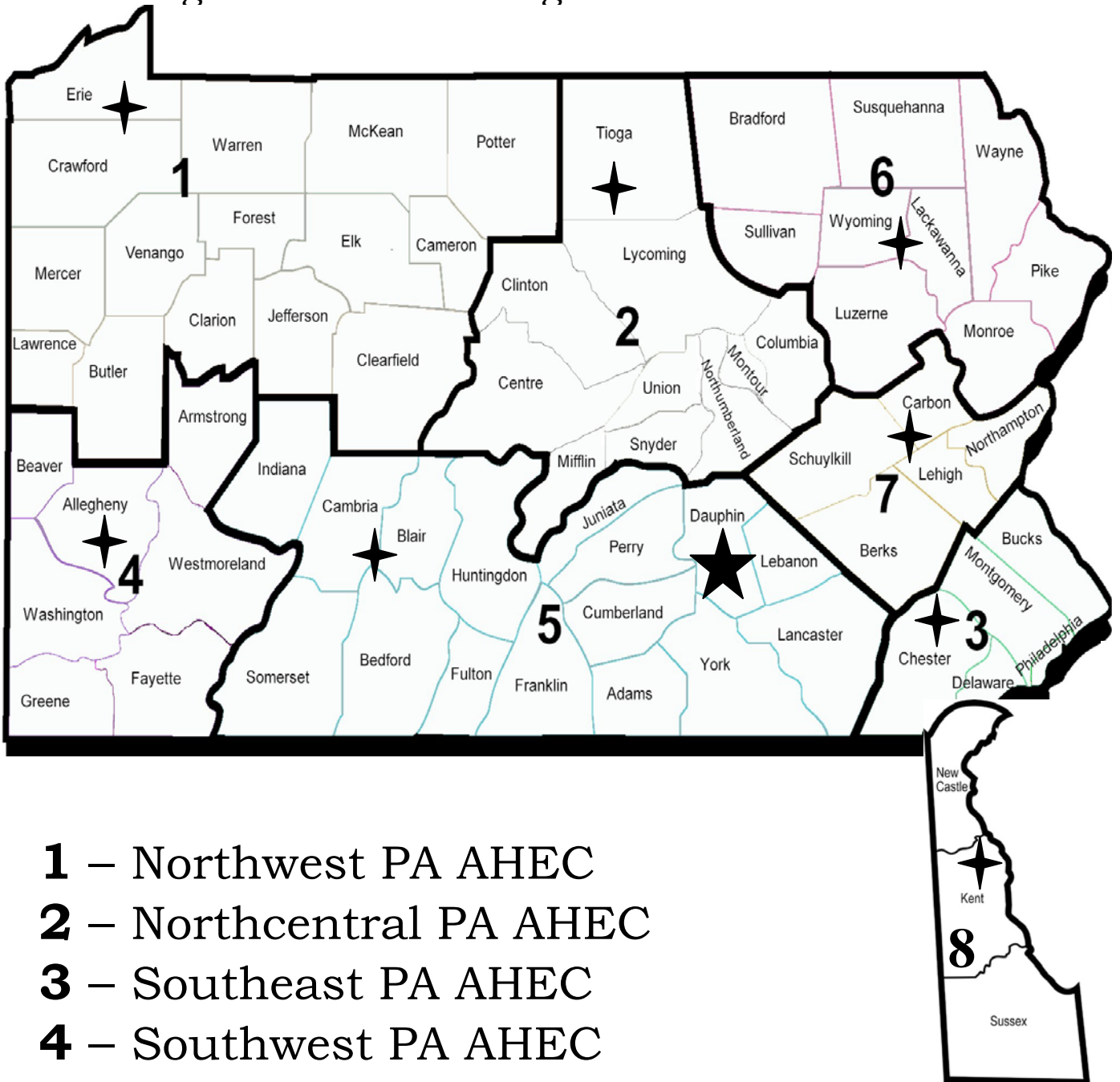
Site Selection

This booklet is designed for students to gain the understanding of the PA-DE AHEC community-based clinical training opportunities offered in Pennsylvania and Delaware. In the following pages you will find: [PA-DE AHEC Program Map](#) representing each regional AHEC center and counties and [Regional Student Rotation Descriptions](#). In the Regional Student Rotation Descriptions section, each PA-DE AHEC center provides a description of their Geography and Demographics, Clinical Training Opportunities and Student Clinical Training Rotation experiences.



If you are interested in learning more about the PA-DE AHEC program please see the appendix of this booklet for a more detailed explanation.

Pennsylvania-Delaware Area Health Education Center

Program Office and Regional Offices Locations



- 1** – Northwest PA AHEC
- 2** – Northcentral PA AHEC
- 3** – Southeast PA AHEC
- 4** – Southwest PA AHEC
- 5** – Southcentral PA AHEC
- 6** – Northeast PA AHEC
- 7** – Eastcentral PA AHEC
- 8** - Delaware AHEC

-  Region Headquarters
-  PA AHEC Program Office

Regional AHEC Contacts

Northwest PA AHEC

1913 West 8th Street, Erie, PA 16505
814-453-6551 www.nwpaahec.org

Northcentral PA AHEC

63R Main Street, Wellsboro, PA 16901
570-724-9145 www.ncpaahec.org

Southeast PA AHEC

35 South High Street, West Chester, PA 19382
610-430-7500 www.sepaahec.org

Southwest PA AHEC

400 North Lexington Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15208
412-247-0185 www.southwestahec.org

Southcentral PA AHEC

2056 Plank Road, Carrolltown, PA 15722
814-344-2222 www.scpa-ahec.org

Northeast PA AHEC

Keystone College, 1 College Green, LaPlume, PA 18440
570-945-5623 www.nepaahec.org

Eastcentral PA AHEC

5662 Interchange Road, Lehighton, PA 18235
610-379-2001 www.ecpaahec.org

Delaware AHEC Region

32 West Loockerman Street, Suite 102, Dover, DE 19904
(302) 734-7770 www.delawareahec.org

Regional Student Rotation Introductions

Northwest Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center



Counties Served:

Butler, Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Venango, Warren

The NW PA AHEC specializes in coordinating community-based education and training in rural and underserved areas for medical students, dental students, primary care residents, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacy students and public and allied health students. In the NW PA AHEC region, students will have the opportunity to put their classroom training into action and work with highly talented primary care clinicians who have been specifically chosen and oriented by NW PA AHEC to teach students. Our preceptors are extremely knowledgeable in the teaching process and are excited to work with rising health professions students at every level.

Geography and Demographics

As part of the statewide Pennsylvania-Delaware Area Health Education Center system, the NW PA AHEC fifteen-county region represents one-quarter of the landmass of Pennsylvania, but less than ten percent of its population. The area experiences more poverty, lower incomes, and higher unemployment than the state average. The character of the region is predominately rural, dotted with small towns with varying levels of health care services.

Clinical Training Opportunities

Our community based training sites can offer a variety of unique experiences that will help nurture your interest, skills and knowledge in primary care. You will meet preceptor role models who will provide you with high-quality training and you will become part of a patient care team. Our rural sites will expose you to patients who have multiple and/or chronic conditions that are affected by socio-economic barriers like transportation, health care costs, and lack of support systems or communication barriers. Hospital ERs are an initial site for many of these patients to acquire care instead of first visiting or consulting a primary care clinician. Further challenges include prevention education and maintenance of the population's health care. By rotating in the northwest region, you will learn how primary care clinicians handle the complexity and diversity of health care needs that exist when treating patients in rural communities.

NW PA AHEC also works with rural health centers and federally qualified health centers to cultivate clinical training experiences that teach students the rewards and challenges of working in grossly underserved communities. The special knowledge and skills required to provide quality care in areas with limited resources is the initial focus of these clinical experiences. Preceptors will demonstrate how to establish therapeutic relationships with at-risk patients to increase the quality of their life by concentrating on health promotion and disease management activities. Preceptors and their staff will share with you how living in rural Pennsylvania can be challenging at times but will also illustrate the benefits of country living.

Scenic Attractions

In addition to our premier educational opportunities, the NW PA AHEC region offers many social and recreational activities. Some of the activities include fine dining, art and historical museums, fairs, amusement parks, planetariums, zoos, site seeing, water parks, trails for hiking and biking, beaches, skiing, hunting, fishing, and boating.

Student Comments

A student recently commented: "The month spent with Dr. Bialas in Warren, PA, was the best rotation of my 3rd year in med school. The teaching was outstanding and Dr. Bialas allowed for much autonomy. His practice is a perfect mix of clinic, inpatient, and procedures, and Dr. Bialas allows students to participate in everything. I even got to perform parts of each colonoscopy and EGD. I highly recommend spending a month in Warren, PA, with Dr. Bialas."

If you would like more information about NW PA AHEC rotations, please contact the student coordinator by calling (814) 453-6551 or visiting the website: www.nwpaahec.org. **We enjoy discussing and finding opportunities to fit everyone's educational needs and interests.**

Northcentral Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center



Geography And Demographics

Northcentral Pennsylvania is a geographically and economically diverse region that includes urban areas such as State College and Williamsport, as well as many charming small towns and suburban areas. Northcentral Pennsylvania is primarily rural with more than one-half (51.5%) of its 638,653 residents residing in rural areas. Tioga County is the most rural of the 10 counties with 84% of the population defined as rural. Centre County is the least rural with 64% of its population defined as urban.

Counties Served:

Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, Tioga, Union

The population in Northcentral Pennsylvania tends to be older than in other parts of the state. Nearly 16% of residents in the Northcentral region are 65 or older. Northumberland County has the highest percentage of elderly residents in the region (19%). The percent of people living below the federal poverty level in Northcentral Pennsylvania ranges from 8.6% in Montour County to 11.8% in Clinton County. Per capita income levels are lowest in Tioga County (\$21,000) and highest in Montour County (\$28,000).

Health status indicators reveal that many pregnant women in Northcentral Pennsylvania do not receive prenatal care (18.7%). However, the percent of low birth weight children is still lower than the statewide average (6.9% vs. 8.2%). The age adjusted death rate ranges from a low of 7.4 in Union County to a high of 9.8 in Montour County. Many of the areas within the 10 counties are medically underserved. Thirteen areas within the Northcentral region have been designated as primary care health professional shortage areas and 16 areas have been designated as medically underserved.

Clinical Training Opportunities

The Northcentral PA AHEC works with over 50 preceptors whose specialties range from family practice, internal medicine and pediatrics to emergency medicine and psychiatry. Training sites throughout the region include free clinics, federally qualified health centers and private practices. Placements range from urban and suburban areas such as State College and Lewistown to rural communities such as Snow Shoe and Shamokin. All of our preceptors are highly committed to teaching.

The Northcentral PA AHEC provides free housing to medical students. Housing ranges from rooms in private homes to rented apartments and houses. In some locations meals are also provided free of charge to students.

Student Comments

“My time in my rural clinical rotation was both beneficial and rewarding. My preceptor helped to build on my previous knowledge and increase my proficiency with procedures. It was amazing to see how much OB/GYN a family doctor does in the rural setting as well as some of the medical problems that come along with rural living. I was a little apprehensive about starting my rural rotation but I really enjoyed it and had an excellent experience.” (Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine medical student, Elkland Laurel Health Center, Tioga County)

“I was extremely satisfied with my preceptor. He made this rotation one of my best experiences ever. Not only was the medical teaching exceptional, but he also spent time teaching things that are extremely important but are not taught at medical school – billing, differences between insurance companies, how to keep patient care a number one priority in this age of health care crisis.” (Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine medical student, Miller Family Health Center, Northumberland County)

“My family medicine/rural rotation with Family Practice Center was one of the best rotations during medical school thus far. Great working relationships, combined with the opportunity for many procedures made this a month full of rewards. The staff at the Center was very courteous as well as professional. I would recommend this rotation to all my friends.” (Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine medical student, Family Practice Center, Union County)

Scenic Attractions

Beautiful rural areas such as the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon highlight the Northcentral region. There are many state and federal parks that provide ample opportunities for outdoor activities such as biking, boating, canoeing, rafting, horseback riding and skiing. Nearby tourist attractions include the Corning Museum of Glass, the Little League Hall of Fame and wine tasting at the Keuka Lake wineries in New York State. State College and Williamsport offer a variety of restaurants, shops, nightlife and cultural activities and can be reached within a one to two hour drive from most points in the Northcentral region. Northcentral Pennsylvania is also home to several colleges and universities offering many cultural and academic events. These include Penn State University, Mansfield University, Susquehanna University, Bucknell University, Lycoming College, Lock Haven University and the Pennsylvania College of Technology.

If you would like more information about NC PA AHEC rotations, please contact the site coordinator by calling (570) 724-9145 or visit the website at www.ncpaahec.org.

Southeast Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center



Counties Served:
Bucks, Chester, Delaware,
Montgomery, Philadelphia

Geography And Demographics

The five county southeast Pennsylvania region is home to almost one third of the state's population. Only 8.7% of the region's 3,706,022 residents are rural. All counties in the region are classified as urban, although 38.6 % of Chester County residents live in rural areas. The population per square mile ranges from a low of 551 in Chester County to a high of 10,751 in Philadelphia County. Almost one-third of the region's population lives in the city of Philadelphia.

The region comprises a very diverse population, and includes the largest representation of minorities in Pennsylvania ranging from 7.7% in Bucks County to 54.1% in Philadelphia County. In Philadelphia County, 23.8% of the population has income below the poverty level. One fifth of the children in Philadelphia County live in poverty. Although the southeast region has higher incomes than any other in the state it also contains higher rates of poverty and larger numbers of persons receiving medical assistance payments that the remainder of the Commonwealth.

Rates for health status indicators vary across the five counties. The rate of AIDS ranges from 2.8 per 100,000 population to 62.4 per 100,000; the percentage of pregnant women receiving no prenatal care in the first trimester ranges from 8.2 to 28 percent. The leading cause of death among Philadelphians age 5 to 24 years is assault (homicide).

In the five county southeast region there are six major health systems including: Crozer Keystone Health System, Jefferson Health System, Mercy Health System, North Philadelphia Health System, Temple Health System and University of Pennsylvania Health System. In Philadelphia County there are 36 hospitals with 21 being acute care hospitals. Health Choices is the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare's managed care medicaid program.

Clinical Training Opportunities

With five medical schools and numerous nursing, physician assistant and allied health schools and colleges, the southeast Pennsylvania region is one of the top ten areas nationwide for medical and health professions education. The practice and educational environment is supported by state of the art learning centers, expert practitioners, widespread medical research, and collegial interface among educational institutions.

The Southeast PA AHEC coordinates with Temple University School of Medicine (TUSM) and collaborates with other medical schools in the region as well as many health professions education programs. The clinical director for the Southeast PA AHEC is David Barclay, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Family and Community Medicine for TUSM. Recently the AHEC has assisted TUSM with the recruitment of 40 community-based physicians to provide training to second year medical students. Training sites for medical and other health professions students include private

practices, community health centers, migrant health centers and other types of urban settings in which the poor and populations with special needs are served.

Most training sites are affiliated both with a specific health professions school and the AHEC and therefore only students from those schools can be placed at the site. The Southeast PA AHEC does have a limited number of sites that are not affiliated with a specific school, and therefore other students can be placed at these sites. Generally, the Southeast PA AHEC does not support housing or transportation, however the AHEC staff will direct students to organizations that can assist them to locate housing.

Student Comments

“In the hospital we see patients with diabetes, but we don’t teach them as much as we should due to time restraints. The diabetes educator does the primary teaching. Here I was able to teach diabetes patients about nutrition and their blood sugars. They came back in a few weeks, and I could teach them some more. I could see the long process of keeping them healthy instead of just when they were sick in the hospital.” (Nursing student, West Chester University at Community Volunteers in Medicine as quoted in Nursing Spectrum, April 2004)

“The clinic patients constantly challenge my own views and perceptions. There is no experience like it and I love every minute of it.” (Medical Student, TUSM at Temple C.A.R.E.S.)

“Group work is important in social work. This program is giving me grounding in doing group work. It is preparing me for the real world and has been wonderful experience.” (West Chester University Social Work Intern who trained at the Chester County Juvenile Detention Center)

Scenic Attractions

Each of the five counties has its own character and collectively they offer a range of lifestyles within rural areas of Bucks and Chester Counties, the suburban/small towns of Montgomery and Delaware Counties, and the “manageable” city of Philadelphia. Tourist attractions abound with a multitude of museums, the Philadelphia Orchestra and historical sites in Philadelphia, the James Michener Museum in Bucks County, the Barnes Museum in Montgomery County, the Brandywine River Museum and Valley Forge Park in Chester County, and Ridley Park State Park in Delaware County.

The region boasts exceptional eateries in all counties. Enthusiastic fans support many sports teams that have recently participated in national playoff events. The public transportation system is well developed. Access within two hours is possible to the Pocono mountains, New Jersey beaches, New York City and Washington, DC. In summary, the region centers around a “college town” with multiple health systems recognized for excellence, outstanding arts and entertainment centers, and geographic regions that offer a wide range of environments and lifestyles.

If you would like more information about SE PA AHEC rotations, please contact the site coordinator by calling (610) 430-7500 or visiting the website at: www.sepaahec.org.

Southwest Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center



Counties Served:
Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver,
Fayette, Greene, Washington,
Westmoreland

Geography and Demographics

Whether people are looking for the bright lights and big city feel of one of the world's top cultural destinations, or the quiet beauty of the surrounding countryside, Southwest Pennsylvania has it. From the wooded hiking and biking trails, dramatic overlooks and covered bridges, to the busy streets and exciting nightlife of Pittsburgh, to the quaint inns and antique shops of picturesque towns sprinkled throughout the region, this is an inviting, friendly place to visit and to live.

Industry: The Southwest region, once the industrial backbone of the world with steel, coal, glass and other industries, fell on hard times as those industries declined in the 1970's. Many of those old "steel towns" have not recovered and are empty shells of their once-dynamic selves. Other parts of the region have re-invented themselves with a diversified, vibrant economy based on health care, financial services, hospitality and tourism, information technology, and manufacturing.

Recreation: Much of the recreational activity centers around the three major rivers that run through the region. One of the positive sides of the decline of the steel industry has been that the region has been able to reclaim the rivers. Shorelines that once housed miles of steel mills and rail yards are now lined with hiking and biking trails, boat docks and tourist destinations. Other popular outdoor activities include golf, ice-skating, hunting, fishing, skiing, and camping.

Culture: "Cultural" offerings run the gamut from major sports teams, opera, ballet, symphony, and plays to antique shops, flea markets, and county fairs.

Population: Approximately 2.5 million people call southwestern PA "home." Pittsburgh, with its many academic and health institutions, has a diverse population, ethnically and racially. The outlying areas tend to be predominantly white. The region, in general, has an aging population.

Health Care: Pittsburgh is recognized as a world-class health care and transplant center. The region's health care is delivered in a variety of settings from large urban hospitals to rural community hospitals, from community health centers to private practices. There are many residency programs and health professions schools in the region

Underserved Populations: Industrial decline, mountainous terrain, cultural and socioeconomic issues all contribute to a sizeable portion of the population being underserved. Even in the shadow of Pittsburgh's renowned medical centers, isolated urban neighborhoods have adverse birth outcomes that rival those of third-world countries. In rural areas, topography and population density present challenges to maintaining an adequate health workforce where it is needed. There are 26 designated Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas, with nearly ½ million people, in the southwest region.

Clinical Training Opportunities

Training opportunities are available in a variety of settings, including community health centers, rural health clinics, private practices and residency programs. These sites are based on limited availability due to the large number of training programs that utilize community-based sites. Schools or students interested in training opportunities in the southwest region should contact the Southwest PA AHEC office.

Student Comments

SW PA AHEC is dedicated to working with our student preceptors to ensure both quality experiences and good matches to optimize professional and personal learning. Preceptors are regularly offered faculty development programs. Some of the student comments are as follows:

“My preceptor is an excellent physician and a great human. He is compassionate, resourceful, astute and a positive person. As a teacher he is one of the finest I have ever had in my entire life. He not only taught me about medicine, but he also taught me about health care economics and community practice. He knew my weaknesses and worked with me to improve upon them. His goal in teaching is to make me an excellent physician. As a physician he treats the entire person. I have the greatest respect for him and am grateful to have worked with him.”

“I believe my preceptor is an extraordinary teacher and clinician. He taught me that treating a patient involves much more than merely isolating the symptoms. There was never a day when I wasn’t completely impressed by both his unending knowledge, but also his ability to communicate with both the patients and myself in a meaningful manner. I shall never forget the lessons, advice or skills he taught me.”

“My preceptor is a natural teacher with high expectations of her students and herself. She provides students with enough independence to gain confidence, yet enough supervision to ensure quality care. She puts a lot of passion into her practice and cares deeply about the outcome of her patients. She put forth a lot of effort to provide me as a student with an excellent learning opportunity and life long love of medicine.”

Schools or students interested in training opportunities in the southwest region should contact the site coordinator by calling 412-247-0185 or visit the website at: www.southwestahec.org.

Southcentral Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center

The Southcentral Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center (SC PA AHEC) was incorporated in 1996 to improve the access of healthcare by providing education services particularly in medically underserved and rural communities. We accomplish this goal by offering health career opportunities, health professional development and public health initiatives for students, health professionals and the general public.



Counties Served:

Adams, Bedford, Blair,
Cambria, Cumberland,
Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton,
Huntington, Indiana, Juniata,
Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry,
Somerset, York

Geography and Demographics

The SC PA AHEC is one of eight regions within the Pennsylvania-Delaware Area Health Education Center system. It encompasses a sixteen county area with a very diverse population. Poverty, lower incomes, homeless and migrant workers are all familiar to the area. The SC region is predominately rural, with some urban underserved areas. Various levels of health care services function in the area.

Clinical Training Opportunities

Our preceptors offer a variety of unique experiences that will raise your interest in primary care. The preceptor will allow you to become part of the “team” when caring for patients. With such a diverse area, many different medical conditions, both chronic and acute, will be encountered. The rural areas will expose you to patients who are affected by socio-economic barriers such as health care costs, cultural and religious beliefs and communication barriers.

While working *with* the primary care physician, you will have the opportunity to care for patients in an acute care setting, community-based site, long term care facilities, home health care, physical therapy and fly with the trauma team on Med Star helicopter. Selecting the Southcentral PA AHEC region for your primary clerkship rotation will provide you the opportunity to learn what is involved for the physician in small rural communities. You will work with the physician; attend meetings, community functions and yes, in some areas, family functions.

Student Comments

Past students have commented that the primary care clerkship rotation completed with a SC PA AHEC preceptor was one of the best all year. Other comments include:

“This was a neat experience with a community doctor.”

“My preceptor was an inspiration. He loves his work and is enthusiastic about teaching.”

“Very enriching experience, doctor personalized rotation for the student; doctor was incredible.”

“I hope I can become the wonderful physician my preceptor is!”

These are only a few of the many excellent comments made by prior students.

Scenic Attractions

Additionally, the SC PA AHEC region offers some of the best skiing in Pennsylvania, with several resorts located throughout. Other activities include, boating, water skiing, trails for hiking and biking, hunting, fishing, amusement parks and museums.

For more information about the excellent learning opportunities at the SC PA AHEC, please contact the site coordinator by calling 814-344-2222 or visit the website at: www.scpa-ahec.org.

Northeast Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center



Geography & Demographics

Northeastern Pennsylvania is a region that combines rural beauty with proximity to major urban centers in New York and New England. At its heart is a valley with a coal mining past, currently noted for a string of newly vitalized small urban centers. Surrounding this area are the small towns and open areas of the Endless and Pocono Mountains. Interstates 80, 81, 84, and 476 provide easy access through the region.

Counties Served:

Bradford, Lackawanna,
Luzerne, Monroe, Pike,
Sullivan, Susquehanna,
Wayne, Wyoming

The mountains, streams, lakes, and valleys provide opportunity for outdoor sports in all seasons, and state and city parks provide opportunities for hiking and picnicking. A full range of artistic, cultural, and athletic activities are available at museums, theaters, civic centers, and arenas throughout the area.

In general, the population in the urban areas tends to be older, with the usual accompanying chronic illnesses. However, several of the rural counties have a significantly younger population, and two of those counties are the fastest growing in the state, as the population continues to move out from the New York and New Jersey. Although much of the region finds its diversity in ethnic rather than racial heritage, the two fast-growing counties have significant and growing populations of people from African-American and Hispanic backgrounds.

Throughout the region, health issues mirror the larger United States community, with mortality largely from cardiovascular disease or cancers, and expected morbidity from diseases such as diabetes, asthma, and mental illness. Dental health is also a major concern, with problems with adequate access to services, exacerbated by a population that is not protected by fluoridated water.

Health care facilities are numerous throughout the area, with six major health systems in the urban cities, one rural tertiary health system, and several hospitals serving mostly rural areas, with a range from a 25-bed community access hospital up to a 200-bed hospital that continues to expand rapidly. Although there are no schools of medicine in this region, area colleges, universities, and allied health schools educate nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and many allied health personnel. Each county in the region has a community health partnership to provide community-based advice and action on health issues.

Clinical Training Opportunities

The Northeast PA AHEC has a roster of approximately 50 health professionals from various disciplines who serve as preceptors. Our Clinical Coordinator oversees the preceptors and student placement and works with a Program Coordinator, who matches students with preceptors, facilitates housing, and troubleshoots the process of placement. Preceptors work in a variety of sites, several as physicians in isolated rural areas or urban underserved practices, and others as representatives of other health professions in interesting community programs. We place students in strong community experiences, which in the past have included assistance with health care to summer camps, interdisciplinary community health centers in both urban and rural areas, and presentations to children in Scout troops.

Student Comments

Students have expressed appreciation for the one-on-one attention given them by their preceptors. In some sites, students have been housed with students of other health professions, and have appreciated the off-duty interactions with those in other disciplines.

If you would like more information about NE PA AHEC rotations, please contact the student coordinator at (570) 945-5623 or visiting our website: www.nepaahec.org.

Eastcentral Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center



Counties Served:
Berks, Carbon, Lehigh,
Northampton, Schuylkill

Geography and Demographics

Eastcentral Pennsylvania AHEC region encompasses the counties of Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton and Schuylkill. It includes the Lehigh Valley and Reading areas with their high percentage of minority population as well as the more rural Carbon and Schuylkill counties. Each county is diverse in its geography with crystal clear lakes, woodlands, mountains, streams, waterfalls, cities, small towns, preserved farmland and valleys. Our area is reachable using Interstate 81 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Traveling throughout our area by Routes 422, 22, 78, 290, 903 and 443 will allow for the enjoyment of viewing delightful scenery.

The varying terrains open themselves to outdoor activities for all seasons. Opportunities abound for boating and kayaking, hiking, fishing, hunting, picnicking, swimming, cycling, arts and music festivals for the spring, summer and fall as well as a number of amusement parks. During the winter the land affords downhill and cross country skiing, snowboarding, tubing and snowmobiling.

Eastcentral Pennsylvania is rich in history and culture as demonstrated by its numerous museums and restaurants. Famous for its Pennsylvania Dutch culture, everyone is made welcomed to enjoy the farm stands and wineries, as well as the quaint stores offering homemade furniture, clothing and local specialty foods.

Cardiovascular disease, followed by cancer, is a major health concern in the region. Other health issues include stroke, diabetes, accidents and influenza. Carbon and Schuylkill county practices still see a number of patients with coal miner's pneumoconiosis. Access to dental treatment remains a challenge in portions of the Eastcentral region. Barriers to care include financial and geographic components as well as serious dental provider shortages for those with no insurance or Medical Assistance.

The Eastcentral counties are home to ten hospital networks with some of the larger systems hosting a variety of residency programs. These hospitals are major contributors to the local economy and are some of the largest employers in the region, particularly in the more rural communities.

Clinical Training Opportunities

At present, Eastcentral Pennsylvania AHEC is affiliated with 32 physicians in the fields of Family Practice, Internal Medicine and Pediatrics. First, third and fourth year medical students as well as Physician Assistants are overseen by a Clinical Coordinator who assists the AHEC Site Coordinator in placing students in practices that will address their needs and interests. The Clinical Coordinator orients the students to office practices, medical studies and characteristics of the region in which they will be doing their rotation.

Some students receive housing in local hospitals while others share a house that is leased by Eastcentral PA AHEC.

In addition to receiving a positive and comprehensive experience in the physicians' private practices, the students have the opportunity to work in local hospitals, visit nursing homes and make home visits. With the Eastcentral PA AHEC health educators, medical students visit schools to address health issues and to discuss health careers with students from Kindergarten through Grade 12. In the past, students have had the opportunity to work with a dental van program where they taught children about dental care, and several have assisted in working with local Relay for Life events. Students have also gained experience through their work with the local Mental Health/Mental Retardation agency.

Student Comments

The following comments reflect some of the students' appreciation for their preceptors and sites:

“All of the preceptors here were incredibly helpful and interested in teaching.”

“Excellent rotation. Extremely well organized. The faculty, residents and staff are wonderful to work with and enthusiastic about teaching.”

“EXCELLENT preceptor-> amazing clinician and teacher.”

“This was an excellent rotation. (The preceptor) took his time to teach with each patient that was seen. Very funny, all around great guy. Very involved with student teaching.”

“Attending and residents are committed to teaching in a warm, friendly environment; and the student is permitted to evaluate patients on his own, reporting directly to the attending preceptor.”

Further information may be viewed on our website at www.ecpaahcec.org and any questions may be presented to the site coordinator at 610-379-2001. We are looking forward to meeting you and wish you much success in your medical career!

Delaware Area Health Education Center

Delaware is the newest member of the AHEC network, joining the AHEC in 2003. The organization is becoming a vital link in our education and training program.



Geography and Demographics

Delaware is the second smallest state in the United States and has a population of almost 800,000 people. Divided into three counties, Delaware's population is very diverse representing distinct cultural backgrounds.

Our most northern county is New Castle with a population of 500,000 and contains our largest city, Wilmington. Wilmington is home to over half of the Fortune 500 companies, earning itself the nickname of "Corporate Capital of the World." Although Wilmington is in many ways an urban center, the drive is less than two hours to the beach and vast farmland. The ethnic groups housed within the city represent the diversity of the county. 25% of the city of Wilmington's 72,000 residents are African-American and Hispanic.

The center of Delaware is home to Kent County, containing Dover, our capitol. Rich with history and growing industries, Dover is ever expanding with agricultural communities, the Air Force Base, and cultural resurgence. Kent County contains 125,000 people with a growing African-American and Hispanic population representing 20% of the county's residents.

Lastly, our largest county measuring 950 square miles is Sussex. This is home not only to pristine farmland, but also to our beautiful and ever growing beach community. Sussex is proud to be the vacation spot for many DC residents and a growing year-round population. Over 150,000 people call Sussex County their home. This county also houses a significant African-American and Hispanic population representing one-fifth of the county's citizens.

The state of Delaware has been faced with an increase in the prevalence of cancer and higher cancer mortality rates. Compared with the national average over the past five years, Delaware has had an incidence rate 4.8 percent higher than the estimated U.S. rate. In this same period, the rate among Delaware African-Americans was 3.6 percent higher. Looking at the 1996-2000 time period, Delaware's cancer mortality rate was 9.6 percent higher than the U.S. rate for the same period. From 1971 through 2000, women died from cancer at the highest rate in the nation. Cancer is seen as the primary health crisis in Delaware.

The other growing health concern in Delaware is discussed less, but may eventually have as great an impact, HIV/AIDS. Since 1983, Delaware has recorded 3,810 cases of AIDS or HIV. In Delaware, more than 50 percent of the cases were attributable to drug use. In the African-American community, one in every 50 people has the disease.

Although each county is home to one or more hospitals or health care systems, access to primary health care is an issue of great concern for many of Delaware's citizens. The state is home to schools of nursing, such as the University of Delaware and other health science training programs, but does not have a school of medicine. The opportunity for a career in medicine is provided by a relationship with Jefferson Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM). Through an agreement with PCOM and Thomas Jefferson University, the traditions of excellence in medicine provide the foundation for training Delaware's physician workforce.

Community-based training

Jefferson Medical College and PCOM are the affiliating medical schools for the Delaware AHEC. Through these partnerships, opportunities for community-based training will be available in Delaware's diverse communities in the very near future. They are in the process of expanding the clinical training sites and preceptor network in to include the counties of Kent and Sussex. Access to each state is made easy with interstates roads and four lane highways making drive time very reasonable. For further information please contact the site coordinator by calling (302) 734-7770 or visit the website at www.delawareahec.org.

Appendix

History of the AHEC

In 1970, the Carnegie Commission published *The Report on Higher Education and the Nation's Health*. This report called for greater distribution of primary care physicians and health care services in underserved areas. The Report served to confirm the fact that many of Pennsylvania's residents, like those in the majority of states throughout the nation, live in areas where there are shortages of primary care practitioners. Residents may also be uninsured or underinsured or facing barriers in accessing essential health care services for other reasons.

With the findings of this study, the National AHEC was formed in 1972. The National AHEC Mission is to enhance access to quality health care, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of health care professionals through community and academic educational partnerships. The PA AHEC entered the national network of AHECs in 1994. The state of Delaware entered into the Pennsylvania and national network in 2002.

The PA-DE AHEC Program Office

The PA-DE AHEC system program office is administratively responsible to the Senior Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean of the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine. It is housed within the Center for Primary Care, Department of Family and Community Medicine. The AHEC program office benefits from its organizational affiliation in that the Associate Dean for Primary Care, Dr. James Herman serves as the Program Director. With his leadership position, his appointment fosters the support and coordinated efforts of the Center for Primary Care and pledges the backing of existing primary care efforts of the medical center to the AHEC program. Dr. Herman is also in the position to develop linkages with other disciplines within the college. Dr. Linda Kanzleiter, Assistant Professor at Penn State College of Medicine, Department of Family and Community Medicine, is the Associate Program Director of the PA-DE AHEC system. She is responsible for the development and direction of the entire AHEC system.

The PA-DE AHEC Program Office is physically located at the Penn State University College of Medicine Campus in Hershey, PA.

The Program Office is directly responsible to all funding sources supporting the PA-DE AHEC system. This entails ensuring compliance with all regulatory and mandated outcomes as well as the planning, developing, implementation, expansion and evaluation of the strategic objectives outlined by the contractual agreement. The PA-DE AHEC system program office is responsible for the following activities:

- ❖ Provide system-wide leadership for the PA-DE AHEC program.
- ❖ Provide fiscal, administrative and programmatic oversight to eight regional AHEC(s) in regards to all statewide grants, contractual agreements and the mission of the AHEC program in Pennsylvania.
- ❖ Maintain the statewide medical education and training infrastructure composed of:

PA-DE System Partners

Participating Institutions Contractual Relationships	Affiliating Partnerships Affiliation Agreements
Medical Schools: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, Temple University School of Medicine, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and Jefferson Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University.	Medical Schools: University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine and Drexel University
Dental Schools: University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine, University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine	Dental Schools: Temple University School Dentistry
Pharmacy: University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy	Pharmacy: Temple University School of Pharmacy, Wilkes University School of Pharmacy
Public Health: University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health	Public Health: University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health, Center of Preparedness
	Health Science Institutions: 67 institutions representing nursing, advanced practice nursing, physician assistant, dental hygienist, public health and allied health disciplines
	Health Delivery Systems: 848 AHEC affiliated community-based training sites
	Primary Care Physician/Preceptors: 866 current/924 total community-based preceptor network.

- ❖ Increase state fiscal allocation for the PA-DE AHEC; especially, AHEC(s) no longer eligible for core/basic AHEC federal funding.
- ❖ Maintain faculty appointments at Penn State University College of Medicine for the PA-DE AHEC Program Director and Associate Program Director.
- ❖ Maintain a statewide advisory board.
- ❖ Maintain an academic advisory council.
- ❖ Enter into cost reimbursement contracts with each participating medical schools, the respective AHEC centers and system-wide task forces.
- ❖ Provide technical support to AHEC(s) including overall organizational and programmatic development.
- ❖ Coordinate activities of all eight AHEC(s) in relation to the requirements of federal, state and private funding sources common to the system.
- ❖ Provide required formative and summative reports to all fiscal and regulatory agencies.
- ❖ Coordinate system-wide qualitative and quantitative evaluation efforts.
- ❖ Develop, implement and evaluate statewide education and training programs.
- ❖ Develop educational programs for distance learning activities.

- ❖ Plan and coordinate PA-DE AHEC statewide annual convention and cluster meetings.
- ❖ Monitor and advance the system-wide tracking system.
- ❖ Develop and maintain PA-DE AHEC website.
- ❖ Network statewide and national resources to advance the mission of the PA-DE AHEC.

PA-DE AHEC Program Organization

The PA-DE AHEC Program has developed a dual state infrastructure that includes: the University of Pittsburgh Schools of Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Pharmacy and Public Health; the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, School of Nursing and Agromedicine Program; the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine; Temple University Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing and Dentistry; Thomas Jefferson University, Jefferson Medical College and College of Nursing; Drexel University School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine and Midwifery Program, and Delaware University, School of Nursing.

The medical education and training infrastructure also includes over 90 health science institutions, and a community-based teaching network of over 1,000 physicians and health professionals representing 12 medical, oral and public health disciplines, and numerous community organizations inclusive of Pennsylvania's 67 counties and Delaware's three (3) counties.

The strength of the PA-DE AHEC Program rests with its diversity and scope of work. The key functions of the PA-DE AHEC Program rests with **access** and **building capacity**, which:

- ❖ **Creates community-based education and training networks.** These are developed through linking health professionals and their practices in underserved areas with academic centers and programs to create clinical training experiences for primary care residents, medical students, dental medicine students, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses and other allied health students. This clinical training network fosters an **increase in access** to health care services by increasing providers, and serves as an excellent **recruitment tool** for health care professionals to the community. Studies have demonstrated that primary care residents set up practice within a twenty-mile radius of training programs.
- ❖ **Recruits practitioners from the incumbent health professions workforce to medically underserved communities.** This is done through established recruitment programs and special placement opportunities. Special re-entry programs are offered to retrain nurses and other health careers for return to the workforce, and job re-training offered to adult learners interested in developing a career ladder or career change.
- ❖ **Retains practitioners working with disenfranchised populations and medically underserved communities.** This is accomplished through innovative and traditional continuing medical education programs, building linkages between the community practitioners and academic centers, providing telemedicine initiatives and self-directed educational modules to maintain knowledge and skills of health professionals, and fostering telemedicine programs for clinical consultation in some areas.

- ❖ **Prepares interested primary and secondary students from rural, urban and cultural diverse communities for college and/or career programs in the health professions through academic readiness programs.** With a cultural and ethnic diversity blending the nation, emphasis is placed on preparing under-represented minority students into the health careers through science, math, and English preparatory programs.
- ❖ **Retains the commitment of high school students, medical students, health professions students and residents through the pipeline of health professions education and training through selective mentoring, shadowing and special interest programs.**
- ❖ **Builds capacity within the health care community to address community and public health issues.** Such issues include bioterrorism and Healthy People 2010 objectives, especially with the medical, dental and mental health practice communities.

About Pennsylvania and Delaware

Pennsylvania and Delaware, like the nation, share the problem of maldistribution of health care providers and limited access to essential health care services. Pennsylvania houses a population of over 12 million people within a geographic range of 46,000 square miles, and supports one of the largest aging populations in the nation. Traditional market forces have not been very effective in making health care available to rural and inner city residents. It is estimated that 21% or greater have no health care coverage and a significant proportion remain underinsured. Lower income status means that rural and inner city communities have fewer financial resources to address the critical infrastructure needs for essential health care services. Primary care access and provider shortage in the state have resulted in areas of 55 of 67 counties being designated as Health Professional Shortage areas (HPSA), Medically Underserved Areas (MUA) or both. Dental Health Professions Shortage Areas and Mental Health Shortage Areas are representative of an increased number of counties without oral and mental health services. Delaware is a smaller state of three counties housing a population of 783,600 people. Over a decade, the state represents a population growth of 18%. However, the growth in population has not been accompanied by a reciprocal number of health professionals.

Increasing Access to Health Care

The PA-DE AHEC develops and coordinates community-based health education and clinical training for medical students, dental students, primary care residents, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacy, public and allied health students. Since our inaugural year of 1994, we have facilitated placement of over 31,000 students representing 78,500 clinical training weeks. These students are primarily recruited to train in underserved communities. Working with 51 community health centers, federally qualified centers, and NHSC designated centers, the PA-DE AHEC fosters clinical training experiences that teach students the rewards and challenges of working with at-risk populations and the special knowledge and skills required to provide quality health care in communities with limited resources. Over 2.3 people within Pennsylvania and Delaware rely upon the commitment and dedication of health professionals to maintain a quality of life. Individuals living in Coalport, Coudersport, Erie, Farrell, Emporium, Sharon, Monessan, East Liberty, Philadelphia, Scranton, Alum Bay, Nanty Glo, Chester, Sussex, Kent, and Wilmington, to name a few, have increased access to health care services because of AHEC.

We also work with migrant health centers and rural health centers, with special training programs for teaching students and professionals about parasitic diseases, pesticide poisons, skin cancer, and health screening for pre-existing diseases as these transient individuals move into our communities. Students and professionals are challenged to enhance diagnostic skills in practice environments with limited resources.

Health Professions Recruitment and Retention

The cornerstone of the mission of the PA-DE AHEC is the recruitment, distribution and retention of a quality health professions workforce for Pennsylvania and Delaware. Promoting the NHSC and State Loan Repayment and Scholarship programs are important first steps to introducing providers to Pennsylvania and Delaware. Developing and implementing math, science and English programs for students in disadvantaged school districts facilitates entrance into the health careers through a Grow Your Own approach to the health professions crisis. Special initiatives are also promoted in areas of nursing with re-entry programs (refresher courses for licensed nurses not practicing for five or more years), retraining programs that offer promotional and career advancement, and remedial programs that are targeted to a special adult learner seeking admission to the health careers. All AHEC regions look to facilitate nursing programs focused on recruitment, re-entry, retraining and retention initiatives.

Understanding that deskilling is one of the primary reasons health care professionals are not retained in areas of limited health care resources, the PA-DE AHEC Program defines, plans, develops and implements professional and educational resources are promoted to advance and retain our health professions workforce. Distinct practice support initiatives may include: “Return to Medical School Modules” for practitioners. During these programs, physicians or other health care professionals return to an academic center and spend two weeks updating skills in areas such as cardiology, ENT, obstetrics, or pediatrics. The course work is self-selected by the practitioners and often an AHEC region will fund the development of this educational initiative as a way to thank community-based teachers for teaching students. Our community-based physicians and health professions, who teach students are not financially reimbursed for time spent educating future practitioners. In fact, our in-kind contribution is well over \$11 million dollars, and represents the dedication and commitment of the health professions community and community-at-large to support the recruitment and retention of the future health professions workforce for our states. Additional continuing professional education programs are in traditional workshop and conference formats.

The PA-DE AHEC Program provides self-directed study programs as a way for practitioners to access continuing professional education programs in respect to the increasing professional and practice demands of their office and community. The PA-DE AHEC is currently offering a self-directed learning program on the screening, diagnosing and treatment of endocrine disease, psychiatric disorders and comorbidity. Web-based learning in areas of tobacco cessation and tobacco cessation pharmacotherapies are also venues of self-directed learning programs. In addition, statewide satellite broadcasts with capabilities to over 520 downlink sites within the system add another venue for continuing professional education. The PA-DE AHEC is very aware that continuing professional education programs and the linkages with medical schools and academic centers are credible and important factors to retaining the health professions workforce. It is proven through much research on the topic of recruitment and retention of physicians that physicians who teach and link to

academic centers through students and faculty retain their practice in areas of underserved communities longer than those who do not. The bridge between academia and the practice community is a legacy of the AHEC program, and a means to retaining the health professions workforce.

Public Health Infrastructure

Responding to the national, state and local needs of preparedness teams and public health workers, the PA-DE AHEC Program is an integral partner to the emerging public health infrastructure. The PA-DE AHEC provides, through its academic and community partnerships, program development as well as critical **access** to communities, at-risk populations and the health professions workforce for emerging public health issues, such as bioterrorism preparedness training to health professionals, especially to agricultural and migrant communities. The PA-DE AHEC also works with public health officials in areas of health promotion and disease prevention programs, which focus on minority health disparities and cultural sensitivity training for safety net providers. Many community and public health programs are also delivered to respond to the Healthy People 2010 objectives.