



UPDATE

NYS AHEC System Sustains Record Outreach

Mary J. Sienkiewicz, MBA, New York State AHEC System Associate Director

The New York State AHEC System has sustained record levels of outreach for 2007-08, training over 38,000 students throughout the state. The New York State AHEC System provided 2,351 medical, nursing and other health professions students (an increase of 13% over the previous year) with community-based training. A total of 14,650 health professionals (an increase of 75% over the previous year) attended continuing education, distance learning and web-based programs. Over 21,000 K-12 and college students learned about health careers through classroom and real-life settings, with a greater emphasis placed on multi-contact, sequential learning opportunities. A total of 1,114 post-secondary students participated in AHEC-sponsored programs, which represents an 84% increase over the previous year.

“Connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health.”

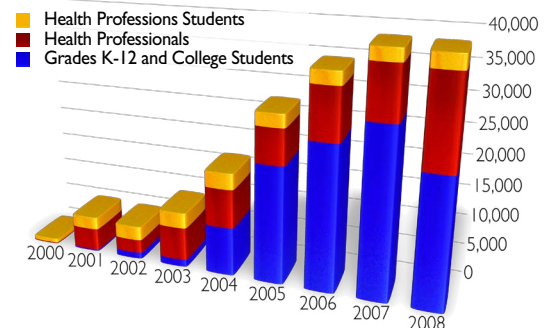
Since its inception, the New York State AHEC System has provided over 19,000 medical, nursing, and other health professions students with over 2 million hours of community-based training.

During the same period, these students, under community-based teacher supervision, provided care to more than 780,000 patients.

Since its inception, over 103,000 young people have learned about health careers through classroom and real-life settings.

During the same period, nearly 56,000 health professionals have enhanced their clinical skills through AHEC’s continuing education programs.

NYS AHEC System Accomplishments
Number Trained



NYS AHEC System Undertakes Multifaceted Program Evaluation

Linda S. Kahn, PhD, Research Associate Professor, National Research Service Award (NRSA) Fellow

In 2007, the New York State AHEC System developed and undertook a multifaceted program evaluation to measure the impact of NYS AHEC System and centers’ programs and organization.

An additional goal was to enable AHECs to identify and discuss areas for improvement with their boards. This statewide program evaluation consisted of four measures: 1) community impact surveys of long-standing community partners, 2) organizational survey of boards of each AHEC, 3) analysis of progress against deliverables, and 4) cost/financial analysis.

The community impact survey was

developed to ascertain the scope of AHEC and community collaboration, including types of programs, satisfaction, opportunities for further collaboration, and perceptions of major health workforce needs in the community. Community partners representing health care, higher education, public schools, and community organizations responded positively to the survey (N=112; 62% response rate) and expressed a high level of satisfaction with services, particularly pipeline and health professions training programs. A significant majority (84%) indicated they were generally satisfied with AHEC programming in their community or region. Respondents also provided substantive suggestions for future collaborations.

The organizational survey of boards of directors of each AHEC assessed the effectiveness of AHEC across five domains: (1) Mission and Purpose, (2) Finance and Sustainability, (3) Staffing and Environment, (4) Board of Directors and (5) Continuous Quality Improvement. AHEC board members expressed overall satisfaction with adherence to mission and purpose, effectiveness of executive leadership, planning, stakeholder input, environment and staffing (N=74; 58% response rate). A majority (96%) of board members agreed that the AHEC possesses a clearly defined mission which guides goals, objectives, and decisions. Most (94%) affirmed that the

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NYS AHEC System 2007 Pipeline Program Evaluation

Renee Cadzow, PhD, Evaluation Director

Andrea Nikischer, MS, Statewide Office Senior Project Manager

In 2007, over 25,370 kindergarten through college students participated in New York State AHEC System pipeline programs. These innovative programs provide students with exposure to health care careers and health professionals, reflecting the needs of the specific communities where the programs take place.

The pipeline programs range from Great Hospital Adventure puppet shows exposing the youngest (K-2) students to health care careers, to summer internship programs offering six to eight week paid and unpaid work experiences with practicing health professionals for high school and college students. New York State AHECs also offer a diverse array of middle school and high school programs, introducing youth to health care occupations.

The NYS AHEC System conducted an evaluation of selected middle school, high school and internship pipeline programs. Nine hundred and ninety-one (991) students completed pre and post evaluation forms at nine AHECs. The instruments measured students' change in knowledge and awareness of health careers before and after their participation in an AHEC program as well as their interest in pursuing health professions.

Across a diversity of AHECs, age groups, and programs, the majority of participants responded positively to their experience and affirmed that they learned more about health care careers as a result of their participation in these programs.

Students' knowledge and awareness of health careers increased significantly following program participation. Students improved their scores on the pre/post knowledge of health related careers by over 11% (N = 789; p<.001) on average. While many at the outset expressed an interest in a health career, the number

increased after participation in a pipeline program. Referring to health careers, one student said "I did not know how exciting it was." Another commented on the overall program saying that, "they really put things in perspective for me." This is testimony to the ability of these programs to not only initiate an interest in health careers but also to nurture and sustain this interest.

It is also important to remember that these programs target youth from disadvantaged backgrounds who may not otherwise have access to resources that would foster pursuit of health care career. As part of the New York State AHEC System pipeline programs, students receive not only exposure to health professionals and their work environments, but also instructional information on how and where to prepare for a health career. As the evaluation results demonstrate, most students agreed that the AHEC pipeline programs not only increased their knowledge, but intensified their desire to pursue a health career.

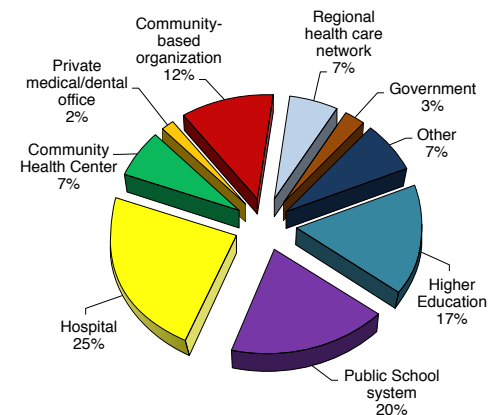
Program Evaluation

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AHEC has strong executive leadership, and 93% agreed that the AHEC has an executive decision-making process guided by mission, fiscal ability and consumer need.

Individual packets of all four reports comprising the 2007 New York State AHEC System Program Evaluation were prepared for each AHEC to share with its Board of Directors. Statewide summaries of all four reports were distributed to all AHECs, the Statewide Advisory Board, and are available on the AHEC website: www.ahec.buffalo.edu.

Types of Organizations Involved
(n=108)



Evaluation: "Did we do what we said we would do and is it worthwhile?"

Mary Sienkiewicz, MBA; Linda Kahn, PhD; Renee Cadzow, PhD

Evaluation is the process of determining significance, worth, or condition by careful approval and study. The ultimate evaluation for the New York State AHEC System is the extent to which we can reach our long-range goals to cultivate a workforce that closely reflects New York State's diverse population, to assure that each community has enough practitioners, particularly primary care providers, and ultimately to improve access to quality health care for everyone.

The New York State AHEC System

develops the health care workforce from "pipeline to practice," and begins with programs for K-12 and college students, continues with students in health professions training programs, and extends to health care providers in communities. Evaluation measures include: 1) needs assessments to assure that programs address needs of target populations and geographic areas, 2) process measures to determine the extent to which programs meet objectives, 3) outcome measures that reflect the change in knowledge, skills, attitudes and/or behaviors of learners, and 4) impact measures that assess the longer term results of programs.