



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Alabama Statewide Area
Health Education Center
(AHEC)

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ABOUT ALABAMA AHEC

Founded in 2012, Alabama Statewide Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) is comprised of five AHEC Centers serving all 67 counties of the state. HRSA and state-funded, the Alabama Statewide AHEC Program Office is guided by the Statewide AHEC Advisory Council and housed within the University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine and Department of Family and Community Medicine.


Alabama Statewide AHEC program aims to meet the needs of the communities we serve through robust partnerships focusing on exposure, education, and training of the current and future healthcare workforce. Our programs are dedicated to future career development, quality healthcare treatment, and enhanced healthcare access throughout the state.

MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM OFFICE

The Alabama Statewide Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) team is proud of this year's successful collaborative efforts! The steadfast dedication of the team has led us to impact numerous regional communities, extend our reach to underserved populations, and maintain our unwavering commitment to enhancing Alabama's medical workforce by fostering education and partnerships throughout the state.

Within our organization, we have prioritized reinforcing the foundations of our existing statewide programs while providing essential support to our regional centers. A notable achievement was hosting the first annual AHEC Scholar's Day. This event emphasized the significance of cultural competency for the upcoming healthcare workforce, ensuring awareness of statewide issues and underserved communities.

The Alabama Statewide AHEC Program Office is sponsoring the Alabama Preceptor Tax Incentive Program (PTIP), addressing the need for increased access to community-based training for students in various health professions. Under this program, qualified health professionals providing unpaid clinical preceptorships will receive a tax credit, encouraging their valuable contributions. We aim to strengthen our healthcare system to benefit all Alabamians by addressing the healthcare workforce shortage exacerbated by the pandemic.



Since launching our marketing campaign in September, we have seen remarkable growth in our outreach. We have gained greater visibility and engagement with our Scholars and rural Alabamians. We expanded our digital presence on Facebook and LinkedIn while providing a monthly newsletter and a new website that better caters to the communities we serve. Our primary goal at Alabama Statewide AHEC is to enhance rural and underserved healthcare through education and workforce development. By diversifying our communication channels, we can educate and inspire our communities in a more accessible way.

Our marketing, educational, and legislative efforts have been instrumental in raising awareness, fostering collaborations, and establishing Alabama Statewide AHEC as a leading institution in medical education and workforce development within the state. We will continue these efforts and expand our presence across the state.

Alabama Statewide AHEC Program Office

Alabama Statewide AHEC STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2022, Alabama Statewide AHEC launched its three-year Strategic Plan with the goal of enhancing access to quality healthcare by improving the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals via strategic partnerships with academic programs, communities, and professional organizations. The Strategic Plan includes four primary areas of focus: healthcare workforce, community, resources, and organizational culture. The following highlights provide a brief look into our progress.



HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE: FUTURE OF RURAL AND UNDERSERVED HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

GOAL:

Build a ready workforce so all Alabamians have equal access to quality healthcare

RESULT:

Alabama Statewide AHEC focused on the rising healthcare workforce by supporting Pathways, Scholars, and Community Health Workers Programs for high school, health professions college students, and healthcare professionals



ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE BUILDING TRUST AND ADAPTABILITY

GOAL:

Cultivate a collaborative culture that fosters innovation, trust, and adaptability

RESULT:

Alabama Statewide AHEC implemented monthly and quarterly meetings and workshops for the five centers and the program office, along with site visits

As for stakeholders, we established an Advisory Committee for guidance in the healthcare sector, while utilizing newsletters to keep stakeholders in the know



RESOURCES

CENTRALIZED SUPPORT AND FUNDING

GOAL:

Grow and diversify funding and leverage resources to multiply statewide impact and ensure sustainability

RESULT:

Alabama Statewide AHEC focused on the rising healthcare workforce by supporting Pathways & Scholars Programs for high school and health professions college students

Connected Regional AHECs to UAB grant opportunities

Advocated for and sponsored the Preceptor Tax Incentive Program Bill (Passed June 2023)

Housing and mileage reimbursement resource for CBET students



COMMUNITY

AWARENESS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GOAL:

Increase awareness and understanding of AHEC and strengthen partnerships in communities across the state

RESULT:

Alabama Statewide AHEC launched a marketing campaign to increase presence across social media, access to website, engagement via email marketing and monthly newsletters

Key Observations

Moment of Opportunity

New leadership supporting the statewide program office and the COVID-19 Pandemic response requiring less focus, gave way for AHEC to reevaluate its priorities and develop a strategic plan designed to guide the next three years.

Stakeholder Alignment

One theme emerged from the stakeholders in the externally focused strategic planning phase. AHEC needs to strengthen existing partnerships and build new partnerships, particularly at the community and regional levels.

Partnerships and Collaboration

The success of the strategic plan depends on building external partnerships while nurturing internal relationships.

Core Strengths

Harnessing the already present strengths of AHEC: reaching all 67 counties and building relationships within those communities, while having a central, adaptable leadership will ensure consistency and success throughout the three-year strategic plan.

Consultant Guidance

Organizational Alignment

AHEC has to follow complex guidelines between legislation, academic medical center models/structures for the state program office, and five independent 501c3 centers with independent boards. For AHEC to successfully implement its plan AHEC leaders and staff in the state program office and leaders and staff in the five centers must be fully aligned and engaged, with room for individualization at the center level.

Management Tool

The strategic plan should be utilized as a management tool to keep all stakeholders aligned. Leadership should make a commitment to provide key stakeholders with an annual update on progress toward plan implementation.

Communication and Rollout

Stakeholders at all levels have to do their part, but to do so they need a clear understanding of the strategic plan and how their role aligns with the priorities, goals, and objectives of the AHEC.

Implementation Process

Sustainable change requires time, resources, and a continued focus on alignment of the four priorities and thirteen objectives with realistic action steps, processes, infrastructure, and timelines.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



ALABAMA AHEC SCHOLARS DAY

BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

Rural & Underserved Healthcare Workforce

Build a ready workforce so all Alabamians have equal access to quality healthcare

Objectives

01 RECRUIT AND SUPPORT FUTURE WORKFORCE FROM RURAL AND UNDERSERVED AREAS AND ENCOURAGE THEIR RETURN FOR HEALTHCARE PRACTICE

Pathways Program

Scholars Program

Preceptor Tax Incentive Program

02 INCREASE LONG-TERM RETENTION OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS IN RURAL AND UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Pathways Program

Scholars Program

Preceptor Tax Incentive Program

03 INCREASE PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Preceptor Tax Incentive Program

04 PROMOTE AND SUPPORT COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

Community Health Workers Program

PATHWAYS PROGRAM

Alabama AHEC Pathways Program

Statewide, Alabama AHEC seeks to develop a robust pathway for Alabama students to expand and enhance the healthcare workforce in Alabama, which is facing significant shortages in all health-related fields across the state. AHEC's healthcare pathways program provides an intensive learning environment for a fixed number of students to emerge from high school uniquely prepared to participate and lead in today's healthcare workforce. This allows for greater reach and value, contributing to and supporting an even larger future healthcare workforce for the state. A more diverse and well-dispersed workforce educated on the health disparities and unique challenges our state faces will be prepared to contribute to a healthier population in Alabama.

Pathway (pipeline) activities that target high school students for recruitment into health careers have remained an important focus of the centers. The need to better distribute health professionals across the rural areas of Alabama requires that we recruit young people from those rural areas into health careers. Each center has conducted numerous health career presentations, targeted high schools for school-based health career enrichment programs and summer health career camps, and arranged field trips and college tours.

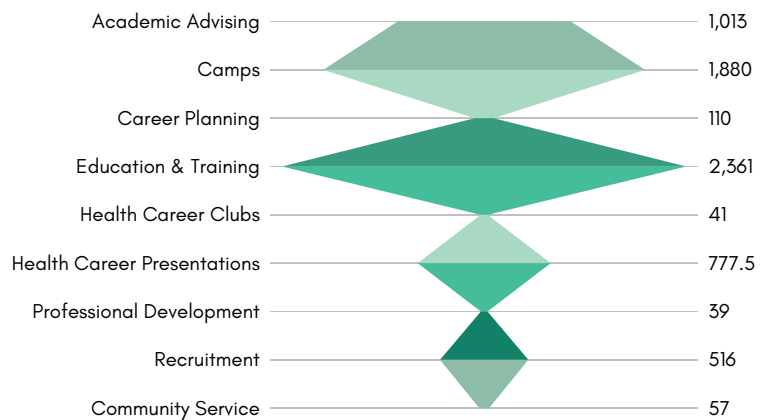
1,009 Pathway Program
Participants

35 Pathway Events
Across the State

The Centers also work closely with the Health Science Programs in their local high schools and the HOSA Future Health Professionals chapters. A team from the Centers and Statewide Program Office attended the annual statewide HOSA conference. During the past years, AHEC facilitated the participation of **24,082** individuals in high school and college (grades 9-16) in pathway activities that exposed them to health careers and developed an intent to pursue post-secondary education in a health profession.

The Alabama Statewide AHEC Program Office is collaborating with the HRSA-funded UAB Comprehensive Urban Underserved and Rural Experience Program for Medical Students (CU2RE) to develop a statewide pipeline program that will offer a certificate training program.

6,794
 Unique Hours of
 Pathways Events
 & Learning



PATHWAYS PROGRAMS

Camp LEAP (Learn Everything About Patients)

North Alabama AHEC (NAAHEC) hosts Camp LEAP (Learning Everything About Patients), a summer enrichment 5-day program promoting health careers exploration. It is designed for high school students (grades 8 to 11) interested in health professions. Through intensive and interactive activities, students experience basic health skills training, anatomy lab, and other fun/educational workshops. NAAHEC also hosts Youth Service Zone activities to encourage volunteerism and foster a lifelong commitment to better their communities. Youth Service projects emphasize gratitude for the service of others while students provide service themselves through creative and impactful community projects.



Lamont Dupree, North Alabama AHEC's Associate Director, and 16 students of Camp LEAP pose after a day of Health Career Exploration at the UAB Huntsville Regional Medical Campus.

760

Unique Hours of
Camp LEAP
Learning

19

Camp LEAP
Students

57

Hours of
Community
Service at Camp
LEAP

Teacher Testimonials

"Our HOSA students have been able to complete several community service projects with North Alabama AHEC. Through these service projects, our HOSA students have gained confidence in organizing events, developed a compassion for others, and learned how just small acts of kindness can make a huge impact on our community. Our HOSA officers have gained additional skills through our service projects, such as the ability to communicate in a professional manner... We are very appreciative to have a partnership with North Alabama AHEC."

HOSA teacher, local high school

"My students have enjoyed having Mr. Dupree visit the Health Science classroom every year (as part of the pipeline program). His love and enthusiasm for his job are inspiring! We look forward to seeing him every year!"

Science teacher at a rural county high school

PATHWAYS PROGRAMS

Discovery MedCamp

Southeast Alabama AHEC's (SEAAHEC) signature Pathway activity, Discovery MedCamp, provides hands-on opportunities for campers to explore future healthcare career options. We strive to improve the camp yearly by adding more hands-on experiences and disciplines. For Discovery MedCamp 2023, SEAAHEC has added Medical Laboratory Sciences and a Career Exploration Fair.



Southeast Alabama AHEC's Paula Cheatwood guiding MedCamp Students participating in an activity on the first day of MedCamp on Auburn University's campus.

The fair is a chance for the campers and their parents to learn more about the programs highlighted in the camp, as well as some programs from other universities and community colleges not offered by Auburn University. First Aid and CPR training has also been added to the camp for 2023, and campers will leave with their certification. Up to **30 campers** from across the state will have the opportunity to explore 8 different healthcare fields through hands-on activities and tours.

Through funding from the UAB CU2RE program, SEAAHEC is working to expand offerings for its health science students by including two additional school systems.

Student Testimonials

28

Discovery
MedCamp
Students

1,120

Unique Hours of
Discovery
MedCamp
Learning

Day 1

Intro Session
& Audiology

Day 2

Nutrition &
VCOM

Day 3

CPR Training
and Pharmacy

Day 4

Nursing &
ER/Mercy
Medical Clinic



"Before I went to MedCamp in June, I had an idea of what I wanted to do when I graduated high school. During the camp, I was astonished at how many jobs are in the medical field. We talked about dentistry, physicians, nurses, social workers, and dietitians. Another experience I loved was visiting a hospital and visiting it to see what life would be like in a hospital. The experience of touring the hospital opened my eyes to my future. The camp also gave great information to help me through college applications and what I should look for after high school... After leaving the camp, everything solidified that I wanted to be a Nurse Anesthetist... I owe Southeast Alabama AHEC and Auburn University so much for helping to change my views towards healthcare."

Zaina Marcum



Career & Professional Enrichment (CAPE) and Health Careers 101

Southern Alabama AHEC (SAAHEC) designed and implemented both the Career and Professional Enrichment (CAPE) and Health Careers 101 programs in their service area. Both programs encourage high school students in grades 9-12 from rural and disadvantaged backgrounds to enter health careers through classroom presentations, free ACT prep classes, campus tours, career counseling, soft skills training, mock interviews, summer camps, and other health-related activities such as self-management skills to increase resiliency.



Southern Alabama AHEC CAPE Students posing in front of the Troy University statue while on a college tour.

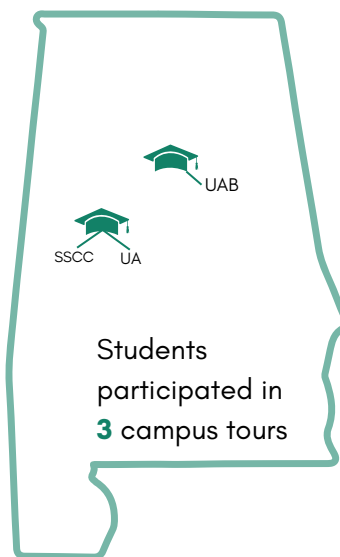
187 Unique Hours of CAPE Learning

115 CAPE Students



Health Professions Academy (HPA)

West Central Alabama AHEC (WCAAHEC) has partnered with Shelton State Community College to host the Health Professions Academy (HPA) program. HPA provides high school students interested in healthcare with the opportunity to participate in a year-long academic enrichment program that includes dual enrollment, ACT preparation, access to healthcare professionals from various disciplines, and more.



The HPA program allows students from medically underserved backgrounds to learn the importance of healthcare in the communities. The goal is to make the program a longitudinal program that will connect students to AHEC Scholars, CBSE, and eventually work in our rural communities.



Students selected to participate in the program this year



West Central Alabama AHEC HPA Students posing for a group photo after touring University of Alabama at Birmingham.



SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The AHEC Scholars program is a national initiative designed to improve the distribution and diversity of healthcare professionals in underserved communities. The program is open to students enrolled in healthcare professional programs who are interested in working in rural or urban underserved communities. The program offers a **two-year** curriculum, which includes **clinical experiences, didactic learning, and community-based projects.**

The AHEC Scholars program partners with local non-profits, academic institutions, and healthcare providers to provide students with opportunities to gain hands-on experience and learn from healthcare professionals in their communities. The program provides students with a well-rounded educational experience that includes training in **cultural competency, interprofessional education, behavioral health integration, social determinants of health, practice transformation, and current and emerging health issues.** Upon completing the program, AHEC Scholars are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to provide quality care to underserved populations and address healthcare disparities in the communities they serve.

179 AHEC Scholars from Cohorts 4 & 5

53

Scholars Graduated from AHEC Scholars in FY 2022-2023

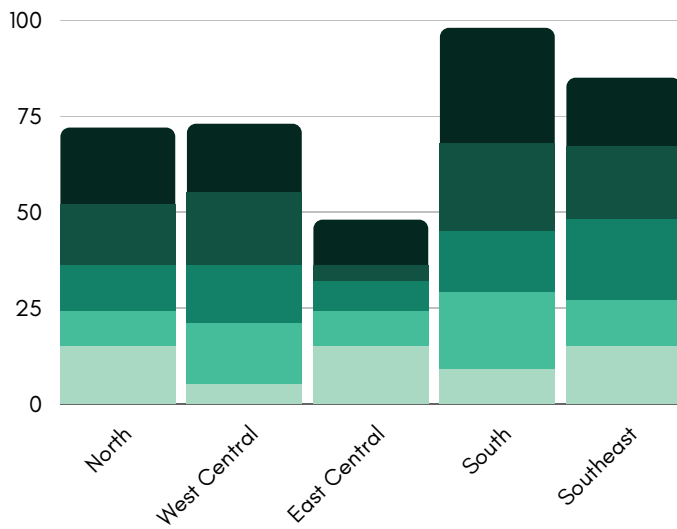
Discipline	Credentials	%
Medicine	Doctoral	8%
Physician Assistant	Masters	9%
Nurse Practitioner	Masters	13%
Nursing	Doctoral	4%
Nursing, ADN	Associates	8%
Nursing, BSN	Bachelors	8%
Microbiology	Bachelors	2%
Biomedical Sciences	Bachelors	4%
Healthcare Management & Informatics	Bachelors	2%
Pharmacy	Doctoral	8%
Public Health	Bachelors	8%
Public Health	Masters	9%
Social Work	Bachelors	6%
Social Work	Masters	4%
Speech & Hearing Sciences	Masters	2%
Communicative Science and Disorders	Bachelors	8%

85

Scholars Began the AHEC Scholars Program in FY 2022-2023

Discipline	Credentials	%
Physician Assistant	Masters	6%
Nurse Practitioner	Masters	11%
Nursing, AND	Associates	11%
Nursing, BSN	Bachelors	13%
Applied Health Science	Bachelors	18%
Community Health	Masters	4%
Medical Assisting	Associates	1%
Microbiology	Bachelors	0%
Occupational Therapy	Masters	7%
Pre-Med	Bachelors	2%
Public Health, Bachelors	Bachelors	5%
Radiologic Technology	Associates	8%
Social Work	Bachelors	1%
Social Work	Masters	6%
Communicative Science and Disorders	Bachelors	5%
Speech Therapy & Audiology	Masters	1%
Physical Therapy	Masters	1%
Optometry, Doctorate	Doctorate	1%

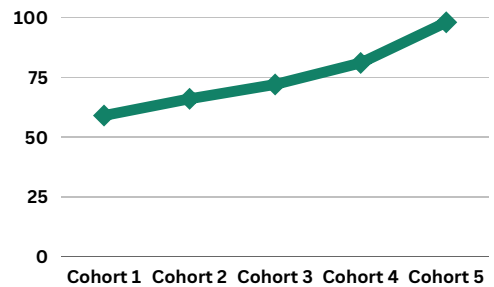
AHEC Scholars Statistics by Cohort year



With the lightest being Cohort 1, our first year of AHEC Scholars, and the darkest being Cohort 5, the most recent additions to the AHEC Scholars program.

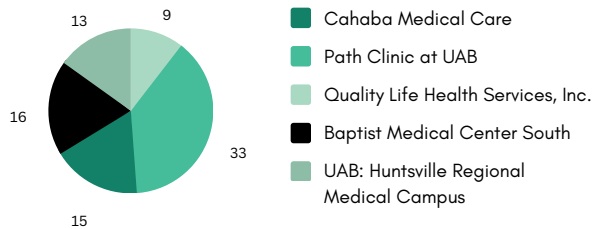
278 Total AHEC Scholars graduates (Cohorts 1-4) to date

AHEC Scholars Program Size



Our AHEC Scholars Program has steadily increased from Cohort 1 of 2018 to Cohort 5 of 2022.

36807 Total Rotation Hours for Scholars with AHEC Sponsors



Our largest Scholars Clinical Rotation Partner is the Path Clinic at UAB with 33 individual rotations throughout the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

848 Scholars Clinical Rotations with AHEC Partners

SCHOLARS PROGRAM

AHEC Scholars of the Year

Each center awards one student, in their final year of the program, with the honor of being the AHEC Scholar of the Year. Engaging and outstanding, these students showcase the qualities we look for in our AHEC Scholars and the qualities that will better Alabama's healthcare workforce. We look forward to seeing how they thrive and better the communities they touch.

North



Zia George

Alabama A&M University,
Bachelor of Arts in
Communicative Sciences

Zia George is passionately pursuing a degree in Communicative Sciences and Disorders at Alabama A&M University. Her profound commitment to this field was ignited by her cousin's speech struggles, driving her to empower individuals to regain their voices. She currently serves as President of the National Student Speech and Language Hearing Association, Financial Secretary for Delta Delta Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., and Vice President of College Democrats. Zia is also a Fellow with the Campus Vote Project, advocating for voting rights. Academically, she's a National Honors Society member, an Alabama A&M University Merit Scholar, and has earned honors like the AAMU Freshman Presidential List and AAMU Sophomore of the Year. Zia is not only a scholar but also a community builder. She founded "Easier Said Than Run," a youth fitness initiative that provided exercise and healthy snacks for six weeks during the summer. Zia George is also Miss Black and Gold, embodying excellence in all her endeavors. She aspires to earn a Master's degree in Communicative Sciences and Disorders, driven by her goal to help individuals express themselves and boost their self-confidence. She is honored to be North Alabama AHEC's Scholar of the Year.

West Central



Da'Jon Stoudemire

Stillman College,
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

Da'Jon Stoudemire, a native of Montgomery, Alabama, recently graduated from Stillman College with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. While attending Stillman College, he had the honor of being named the 2022/2023 HBCU White House Initiative Scholar. Aside from that, Mr. Stoudemire also participated in the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Blazer Brain Research Program, where he received his first research experience. Mr. Stoudemire recently completed the HBCU American Heart Association Scholars Program and the CDC John R. Lewis Scholars Program. He is also a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., and Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology. In the fall of 2023, Mr. Stoudemire plans to attend Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine with a concentration in Social, Behavioral, and Population Sciences. As a 2021/2023 West Central AHEC Scholar and 2023 West Central AHEC Scholar of the Year, Mr. Stoudemire is beyond grateful to have worked with brilliant students in the program and hopes to apply what he learned.

East Central



Mike Anderson

University of Alabama at
Birmingham, Medical Student

Mike Anderson is a second-year medical student at UAB Heersink School of Medicine (UABHSOM). Growing up in a small town in Wisconsin, he relocated to Birmingham in 2018 to accept a finance job at United Healthcare and follow his passion for competitive fishing. He soon discovered a calling for expanding access to healthcare and education, leading him to pursue a medical career. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he founded the UABHSOM student organization Equal Access Alabama to expand student clinical experiences through service in underserved areas. Mike received the inaugural Power of One service award from the nonprofit organization A Promise To Help for his dedication. He recently attended the 2023 National AHEC Organization Biennial Conference, where he collaborated with like-minded individuals and drafted plans to expand the Alabama AHEC Scholars Program. Mike is also active in the Birmingham community with Big Brothers Big Sisters for 4+ years as a mentor and member of the Young Advisory Board. He serves as President of his medical school class and a member of the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship Class of 2022-2023. He plans to pursue a dermatology career focusing on skin cancer prevention and management in underserved areas.

Southeast



Kendahl Brown

Tuskegee University,
Bachelor of Arts
in Social Work

Kendahl Brown is a driven and dedicated senior at Tuskegee University, pursuing a degree in Social Work. Hailing from Orange County, California, Kendahl's journey in the field of social work is characterized by passion, leadership, and academic excellence. As a committed advocate for social change and community well-being, Kendahl has actively engaged in various extracurricular activities, reflecting her dedication to positively impacting society. She proudly serves as the President of the Tuskegee University Social Work Alliance. She is a Phi Alpha Honor Society member and has consistently achieved academic excellence, earning a place on the Dean's List for five consecutive semesters. Recognizing the importance of leadership and service, Kendahl is an active member of the Collegiate 100 and the National Society of Leadership and Success. Kendahl's passion for making a difference extends beyond the campus borders. She has pursued hands-on experience as an intern at the Central Alabama Veterans Healthcare System, where she has honed her skills and knowledge in providing crucial support to veterans in need. She is Southeast Alabama AHEC's Scholar of the Year for 2022-2023. Looking ahead, her goal is to secure a full-time social work position at a Veterans Affairs hospital, where she can directly impact the lives of veterans who have served our nation. Additionally, Kendahl aspires to open her own private counseling practice, providing a safe and empathetic space for individuals seeking guidance and support.

Southern



Callie Mims

University of South Alabama,
Combined-Integrated Clinical
& Counseling Psychology
Doctoral Student

Callie Mims, a third-year student in the University of South Alabama's Combined Clinical-Counseling Doctoral Program, is a dedicated scholar on a mission to explore the complex interplay of human psychology and societal influences. In July 2023, she earned her Master of Science in Psychology, with her thesis focusing on gender role discrepancy stress, BMI, and their impact on body ideals and dissatisfaction. Prior to this, she received dual degrees, a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and a Bachelor of Arts in Women's Studies, from the University of Florida, reflecting her comprehensive understanding of human behavior and societal dynamics. Callie's research interests are deeply rooted in issues related to gender roles, perceptions of masculinity and femininity, and their effects on individual well-being and mental health. She particularly strives to address the intricate challenges surrounding body image and disordered eating, aiming to foster a more inclusive and compassionate society. As an advocate and scholar, Callie is poised to continue making substantial contributions to the fields of psychology and gender equity, driven by her unwavering commitment to understanding and improving the human experience. Her journey exemplifies her dedication to these critical areas of study and her determination to leave a lasting impact. She is South Alabama AHEC's Scholar of the Year for 2022-2023.

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

Scholars Day

January 27, 2023

On Friday, January 27th, the Alabama AHEC Statewide Program office hosted the first Annual Scholars Day at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. **38 attendees** from across the State heard from keynote speaker **T. Marie King** who guided participants through identifying, addressing, and eliminating their individual biases, which is necessary for an inclusive and safe healthcare environment.



The attendees then participated in a working lunch on trauma-informed care with AHEC Board Member **Erin Lunn McAdams, PA-C**. Afterward, T. Marie led the group through the Civil Rights district to visualize the crucial points of her keynote speech.



We anticipate this event to be the first of many our program office will host to give our Scholars a more well-rounded and informed look into the healthcare world.

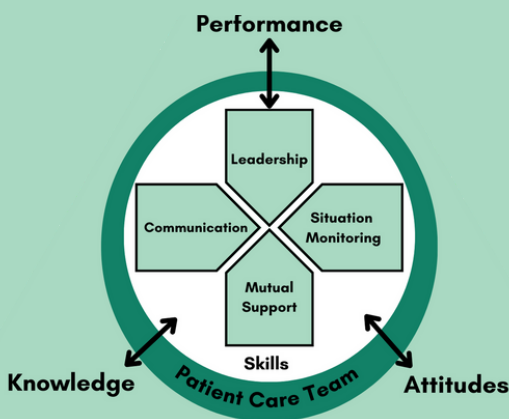
The success of this event granted the Statewide Program Office the opportunity to present “Your World is Not THE World” at the **2023 NAO Biennial Conference**. Presenting at NAO’s Biennial Conference enabled our team to share the work we are doing in the State of Alabama, connect with other AHEC Centers across the country, exchange ideas, and open the door to future collaborations.

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

AHEC Scholars Webinar: TeamSTEPPS

March 24, 2023

On Friday, March 24, **Dr. Kala Dixon**, the Director of the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Office of Interprofessional and Continuing Education, led the March AHEC Scholars Webinar in an overview of TeamSTEPPS and its application; TeamSTEPPS is a teamwork system developed by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. It aims to improve patient safety and quality of care by enhancing communication and teamwork among healthcare providers. The program emphasizes the importance of leadership, situation monitoring, mutual support, and communication in achieving successful teamwork.



TeamSTEPPS provides healthcare providers with a common language and framework for effective communication, and it has been implemented in various healthcare settings across the United States. To improve healthcare outcomes, teams must work together by clearly communicating, monitoring a patient's situation, strong leadership, and mutual support.

The **37 attendees** discussed the conflicts that surface when working in a team and how to navigate them. By implementing TeamSTEPPS principles, healthcare students can become better leaders and team players, which ultimately leads to better patient care and outcomes.

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

AHEC Scholars Webinar: The Science of HIV Medicine

April 21, 2023

In April, our Scholars heard from **Dr. Mike Saag** and **Dr. Greer Burkholder**, in collaboration with the **UAB Center for AIDS Research and the AIDS Education and Training Centers**. The presentation focused on The Science of HIV Medicine. As the world continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of understanding HIV medicine has become increasingly apparent. AHEC Scholars, in particular, can benefit greatly from learning about the field of HIV medicine, as it provides a foundation for understanding the science behind infectious disease and the development of effective treatment strategies. Furthermore, the lessons learned from HIV research and collaboration can be applied to other public health crises, such as COVID-19, highlighting the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to healthcare.

The field of HIV medicine has been instrumental in the fight against COVID-19. The knowledge and expertise gained through decades of research and collaboration has allowed medical professionals to quickly identify risk factors and develop strategies to slow the spread of the virus. Similarly, medications used to treat HIV have been repurposed for use in COVID-19 patients, with promising results.



The progress made in HIV medicine demonstrates the importance of scientific research and collaboration in addressing public health crises, and serves as a reminder of the ongoing need for continued innovation and advancements in the field.



CENTER FOR AIDS RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

ARHA Pre-Conference Event

April 26 & April 27, 2023

Preceding the ARHA Conference, the Alabama Statewide AHEC Program Office held two separate events dedicated to Scholars. The first event on Wednesday evening, April 26, was a dinner workshop with **Dr. Michael Weiderman** focusing on leadership and communication in healthcare. Dr. Weiderman mapped the path to a more understanding work environment, a necessary element for well-rounded care.



The second event was Thursday morning, April 27, when scholars listened to three speakers on oral health in rural Alabama. Most students were not in dental care disciplines, so they learned how to identify oral health issues and redirect patients to specialized healthcare providers.



Our first speaker, **Dr. Michael Lockwood** revealed how severe the oral health crisis is in our state, as Alabama had the 5th highest incidence of oral cancer nationally. Our second speaker, **Dr. Conan Davis** discussed legislative efforts to alleviate the oral health crisis and what we can do on the ground and as other healthcare providers.

Dr. Raquel Mazer reviewed misconceptions and facts regarding dentistry while also addressing the barriers that separate Alabamians from quality dental care. Scholars going into non-dental disciplines should be able to identify the symptoms of poor oral health and its effects on the entire body.



These events were an excellent opportunity for Scholars to learn from one another and to gain valuable insights from the four keynote speakers. We hope to see more events like this in the future, and we encourage everyone to continue their efforts to improve access to care and preventative measures for all!



STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

2023 NAO Biennial Conference

June 27-30, 2023

The NAO Biennial Conference, held on June 27-30, 2023, provided a valuable platform for the Alabama Statewide AHEC to connect with professionals, educators, and fellow scholars from nationwide AHEC programs. In Salt Lake City, Utah, this networking opportunity facilitated knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and relationship-building within the vibrant AHEC community.



Throughout the conference, attendees benefited from diverse educational sessions, workshops, and keynote presentations focusing on improving healthcare outcomes

All of our Executive Directors from the regional centers were able to attend, demonstrating a shared commitment to advancing healthcare education and improving rural health. Moreover, several centers also brought their AHEC Scholars Program Managers and selected AHEC Scholars, further highlighting the comprehensive and collaborative approach of the Alabama Statewide AHEC Program. Our members actively participated in various educational sessions, workshops, and keynote presentations throughout the conference.

The Alabama Statewide AHEC Program Office was honored to present an impactful "Your World is Not THE World" breakout session. The Program Office drew inspiration from the successful AHEC Scholars Day event held in January at the renowned Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. Led by **Dr. Becky Reamey** and **Earl Johnson** of the Statewide Program Office, the session provided attendees with a comprehensive understanding of different biases and their relevance in healthcare. Through open dialogue and shared experiences, participants understood the importance of providing unbiased patient care. By acknowledging biases and actively working towards overcoming them, healthcare providers can enhance the quality of care and reduce disparities in healthcare outcomes.

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

Our statewide Community Health Worker efforts bridge gaps between healthcare providers and the communities they serve. They provide essential services such as health education, preventive care, and support for managing chronic conditions, particularly in underserved and vulnerable populations. By building trust and fostering communication within their communities, Community Health Workers empower individuals to make informed health decisions and access the care they need.

With our Community Health Workers program, we strive to touch every county. Each center has tailored their community health workers program to address the specific needs of their communities.

Southwest Alabama Opioid Response WCAAHEC

The Southwest Alabama Opioid Response Project is an initiative of the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program and aims to reduce the morbidity and mortality of substance use disorder (SUD), including opioid use disorder (OUD) in the rural Alabama communities of Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Coffee, Conecuh, Covington, Dallas, Escambia, Greene, Henry, Marengo, Monroe, Perry, Sumter and Wilcox Counties. WCAAHEC Manages three grants related to SAOR: RCORP II, RCORP III, RCORP IV.

thesaorproject.mailchimpsites.com

23

Community-
Based Health
Events

11 CHWs
Placed

Central Alabama Neighborhood Health Initiative

SEAAHEC

The Central Alabama Neighborhood Health Initiative (CANHI) was founded to collaboratively increase the rates of COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, increase health literacy, improve patient experience, and patient-provider relations in Elmore, Montgomery, and Pike Counties.

empower334.org

All of Us Mobile Bus SAAHEC

The mobile All of Us Bus frequents the rural communities of Mobile, Alabama. CHWs assist with community outreach, engagement, and education on the program prior to the bus coming to the community.

saahec.org/all-of-us-program

670 People
Served

NAAHEC

na-ahec.org/community-health-workers

The Community Health Workers in North Alabama work on vaccines, addiction, senior citizens, food security, and other community-based health efforts.

327 People
Educated

ECAAHEC

East Centrals' Community Health Workers serve in 10 of the 16 counties in ECAAHECs' service area. They typically focus on COVID-19 vaccines and tests and Opioid Prevention Education.

RESOURCES AND FUNDING



ALABAMA AHEC SCHOLARS DAY

BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

Resources & Funding

Grow and diversify funding and leverage resources to multiply statewide impact and ensure sustainability

Objectives

01

CREATE A ROBUST FUND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

UAB Grants to Centers

Preceptor Tax Incentive Program

02

DEVELOP A CENTRALIZED INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT FUNDRAISINGS

Preceptor Tax Incentive Program

Scholars Program

UAB Grants to Centers

Advisory Committee

03

IDENTIFY AND LEVERAGE AVAILABLE RESOURCES STATEWIDE (PHYSICAL PLANT, PEOPLE, TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, ETC.)

Preceptor Tax Incentive Program

CBET Reimbursement Program

ALABAMA AHEC PRECEPTOR TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The Need

Practice in Rural Communities

24%

Alabama
Dentist

24%

Alabama
Primary Care
Physicians

20%

Alabama
Nurse
Practitioner

15%

Alabama
Physician
Assistants

The State of Alabama does not have enough doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers to meet the needs of our healthcare system, especially in rural areas. We need more preceptors in these areas to train future workforce for rural communities.

Incentive programs improve recruitment and retention in rural areas, helping address the maldistribution of healthcare providers in Alabama.

Provide an income tax credit for unpaid community-based preceptors.

Rewarding community-based preceptors already working in these areas will encourage them to teach students and trainees and *attract new physicians and other providers* to rural and underserved communities.

\$500

Tax Credit Incentive

Eligible Disciplines

Medical Allopathic

Osteopathic

Dental

Optometric

Maximum
\$6,000
per
Calendar Year

160 hours of clinical preceptorship rotation

\$425

Tax Credit Incentive

Eligible Disciplines

Certified Nurse Practitioner

Certified Nurse Midwife

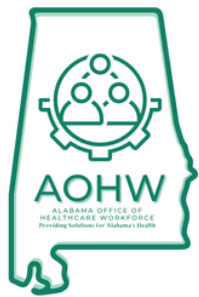
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist

Physicians Assistant

Maximum
\$5,100
per
Calendar Year

ALABAMA AHEC'S ROLE PRECEPTOR TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Alabama Statewide AHEC will execute and operate the Alabama Preceptor Tax Incentive Program (APTIP).



Alabama Statewide AHEC, partners, Representative Neil Rafferty, and Senator April Weaver advocated for this program to be passed by the Alabama Congress. The APTIP team researched how this incentive successfully operated in other states and coordinated with the leaders behind those programs to ensure APTIP would prosper.

Alabama Statewide AHEC will issue the credit certificates and report the program's condition, performance, and accomplishments.



PTIP advocates and sponsors stand behind Governor Kay Ivey after she signs the bill into legislation. July 2023.

Supporters



CBET MILEAGE AND HOUSING REIMBURSEMENT

Our Statewide Program wants to make rural Alabama more accessible. Reimbursing mileage and housing increases the likelihood of the upcoming healthcare workforce precepting in rural and underserved communities. The more the upcoming healthcare workforce engages with rural and underserved Alabama, the more likely they are to return to the communities to provide quality care.

Rotating with our statewide partners, CBET students were reimbursed for their mileage and housing to lift barriers while precepting in rural and urban settings. Compensating for mileage and accommodations for CBET students is one of the ways we make working in rural and underserved communities more accessible.

STATISTICS

28

CBET Rotation
Clinical
Programs

170

CBET Rotations Completed
or Trained in Rural or
Underserved areas

156

CBET Rotation
Clinical
Training Sites
(Rural & Urban)

276

CBET Students
who rotated
(Rural &
Urban)

21598

CBET Rotation
Hours in Rural
or Underserved
Communities

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE



ALABAMA AHEC SCHOLARS DAY

BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

Organizational Culture

Cultivate a collaborative culture that fosters innovation, trust, and adaptability

Objectives

01 ARTICULATE AND DEMONSTRATE THE VALUE AND BENEFIT OF AN INCLUSIVE, ENGAGED STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION SO ALL COMMUNITIES HAVE IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLNESS OUTCOMES

Newsletter

Advisory Committee

02 STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY BETWEEN STATE PROGRAM OFFICE, CENTERS, STATE AGENCIES, ADVISORY BOARDS, BOARDS OF DIRECTORS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Site Visits

Newsletter

Quarterly Reporting

Monthly Statewide Meetings

03 INCREASE TRUST AND PROMOTE HEALTHY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Monthly Statewide Meetings

Statewide Events

Newsletter

Advisory Committee

FOSTERING COLLABORATION



We emphasized a culture of accountability and collaboration within our strategic plan. For the success of Alabama Statewide AHEC, it is necessary to implement goalposts based on trust and innovation. Consistent communication, monthly and quarterly strategic alignment meetings, and productive site visits kept our organization moving towards concentricity.

From left to right: Dr. Becky Reamey ALAHEC Associate Director, Lamont Dupree NAAHEC Associate Director, Bailey Workman SAAHEC Program Manager, Marcus Fitts SEAAHEC Program Coordinator, Adrian Collier WCAAHEC Senior Program Manager, Md Ikbal Parveg SAAHEC Associate Director, and Earl Johnson ALAHEC Program Manager II. AHEC Scholars Day, January 2023



Our central organization aims to keep centers aligned in communication and compliance with our primary mission of uplifting rural Alabama's healthcare while advocating at a state legislative level for the regional center's needs.

SCHOLARS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A primary goal has been to flourish our upcoming healthcare workforce programs. The AHEC Scholars Program is for college students in the final years of their discipline program. While our centers have a significant presence in their communities, external assistance to recruit potential AHEC Scholars guarantees a higher program completion rate and a more consistent channel of students.

Representing

15

Health Profession
College Programs

The Committee had the opportunity to engage with AHEC Scholars to learn more about the program and how they can support the future success of the Scholars.

29

Scholars Advisory Committee
Members in attendance
(in person and virtual)

In August of 2023, we established the AHEC Scholars Advisory Committee, where we welcomed Deans and Instructors of healthcare professions from colleges across the state. With direct relationships and awareness of the upcoming healthcare workforce, we ask that they submit nominations of students who would excel within or benefit from our program. As healthcare disparities increased during the COVID-19 Pandemic, especially in rural areas, we have to work together as a state to make up for this unprecedented regression.

SCHOLARS PANEL



From left to right: Lamont Dupree (NAAHEC's Associate Director), Lauren Lee, Da'Jon Stoudemire, Erwinique Brown, and Mike Anderson.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



ALABAMA AHEC SCHOLARS DAY

BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

Awareness & Community Engagement

Increase awareness and understanding of AHEC and strengthen partnerships in communities across the state

Objectives

01 CLEARLY ARTICULATE AND SHARE WIDELY AHEC'S PURPOSE, VALUE, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES

New Website

Newsletter

Marketing Campaign

02 PROMOTE VIBRANT PARTNERSHIPS TO EXPAND REACH AND SUPPORT INITIATIVES

Marketing Campaign

Advisory Committee

Newsletter

03 PROMOTE AND EXPAND AHEC'S INFLUENCE THROUGH STRATEGIC RECRUITMENT FOR CENTER BOARDS AND STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Center Board of Directors

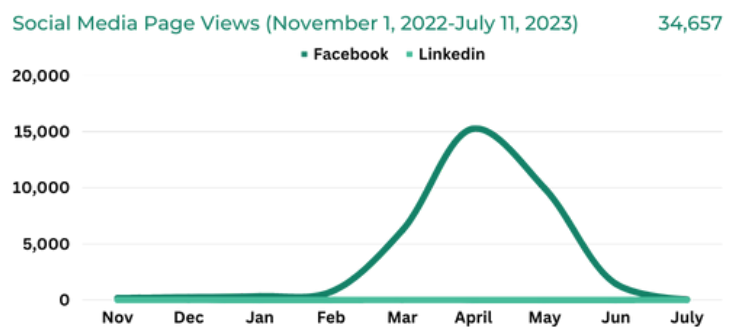
Advisory Committee

SOCIAL MEDIA & MARKETING

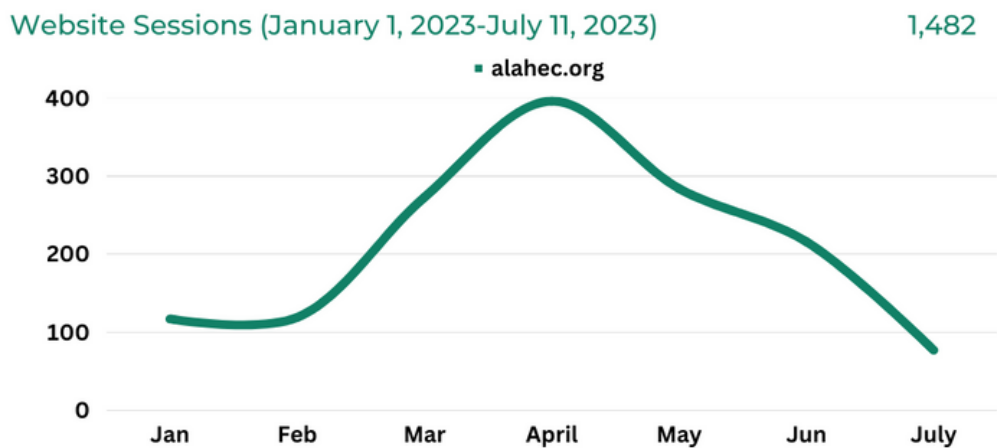


This year, our statewide program office launched a new marketing campaign that puts Alabama AHEC on the digital map! Since September, along with the growth of our communications department, our digital footprint has flourished. We now have a social media presence on Facebook and LinkedIn while maintaining a monthly newsletter to inform our followers on rural health and everything AHEC. We have developed a new website to keep track of our successes and for AHEC partners and communities to understand how AHEC can better serve rural and underserved Alabamians. Our website is also an educational resource for the current and incoming healthcare workforce.

Since the launch of our Social Media accounts, Alabama Statewide AHEC’s social media campaign on Facebook and LinkedIn pages have had over **34,500 page visits**. Our goal is to increase awareness and engagement with the community about the important healthcare development programs available through the Statewide Program Office and our Centers across the State. By utilizing targeted advertising and relevant content, we aim to reach a broad audience and positively impact the health and well-being of individuals throughout the state. This past year has been a significant success for our social media campaign, and we look forward to seeing what next year will bring!



Our monthly subscriber-based newsletter launched in October 2022 and has grown to over **500 subscribers**. Our newsletter content is designed to engage high school and college students, healthcare professionals, and public health activists. We announce updates on our regional centers' achievements and events, spotlight our AHEC Scholars across the state, and share AHEC-hosted events for Scholars. We also share news regarding state and federal healthcare legislation and updates on the state bills our program office is working alongside. By highlighting healthcare learning opportunities, both in-person and webinars, we aim to empower our readers with the knowledge and skills to succeed in their careers and improve healthcare for Alabamians. We are excited to provide this resource to the community and hope it will help increase awareness about all the great work being done across our state to further healthcare education and better serve our workforce.



In the fall of 2022, we introduced our new website, alahec.org. It has served as a valuable resource for healthcare professionals and students across the state. With a user-friendly interface, visitors can easily access information about training programs, events, and healthcare and workforce development resources. The website provides a directory of our regional centers for Scholars and community members to connect with. In addition, we maintain resources for educators, students, and healthcare providers that focus on improving underserved and rural Alabamians' healthcare systems. The website has been an incredible success, along with the entirety of our marketing campaign, and we look forward to how we can further positively impact Alabama's healthcare industry.

MEET THE TEAM

Alabama Statewide AHEC Program Office

Within its outreach efforts across all 67 counties of Alabama, the Alabama Statewide Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Program resides within the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Department of Family and Community Medicine. The Alabama Statewide AHEC Program remains committed to expanding the healthcare workforce of Alabama by maximizing diversity and facilitating distribution—particularly within its underserved and rural communities.

The goals of the Alabama Statewide AHEC Program are to influence the training of health professions students and residents toward primary care, to provide continuing education and support for targeted health providers, and to implement programs, services, and activities that target underrepresented minorities, rural and otherwise disadvantaged Alabamians for careers in the health professions. These goals are accomplished through an innovative, collaborative, and interprofessional response to the needs of our communities.



Michael B. Faircloth, MD

Director



Rebecca A. Reamey, PhD

Associate Director



Alia Tunagur

Director of Marketing

**Program Director,
Alabama Office of
Healthcare Workforce**



Earl L. Johnson

Program Manager



Rachel Watts

**Digital Marketing
Coordinator**



Karen Morro

Office Associate

North Alabama AHEC (NAAHEC)

Established as a community-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in 2016, the North Alabama Area Health Education Center (NAAHEC) is located on the campus of Alabama A&M University in Huntsville.

The aim of the NAAHEC is to improve access to quality healthcare, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals in underserved Alabama communities through community/academic educational partnerships.



Joe Crozier, MS

**Executive Director,
North Alabama
AHEC (NAAHEC)**

13 Counties in Service Region

- Colbert
- Cullman
- Franklin
- Jackson
- Lauderdale
- Lawrence
- Limestone
- Madison
- Marion
- Marshall
- Morgan
- Walker
- Winston

Lamont Dupree

Associate Director

Salana Usher

Community Health Worker Coordinator

Karen Leeling

Financial Administrator/Vaccine
Operations Coordinator



Vanessa Hall

**Executive Director,
Southern Alabama
AHEC (SAAHEC)**

Southern Alabama AHEC (SAAHEC)

Established as a community-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, the Southern Alabama Area Health Education Center (SAAHEC) was established in 2014, and opened its doors in January 2015.

SAAHEC is located in Georgiana, Alabama. The aim of SAAHEC is to cultivate healthy communities by bridging gaps in rural and underserved communities in Southern Alabama through education, prevention, healthcare workforce development and community partnerships.

Md Iqbal Parveg

Associate Director

Chastidy Jenkins

Community Health & Education
Manager

Katie Morgan

Community Outreach & Education
Liaison

10 Counties in Service Region

- Baldwin
- Butler
- Clarke
- Conecuh
- Covington
- Crenshaw
- Escambia
- Mobile
- Monroe
- Washington

Southeast Alabama AHEC (SEAAHEC)

Established in 2014 as a community-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, Southeast Alabama Area Health Education Center (SEAAHEC) is a non-profit, community-based organization in Montgomery, Alabama, and part of the Alabama Statewide AHEC Program.

SEAAHEC aims to enhance access to quality health care, promote diversity of the Southeast Alabama Workforce, and provide education opportunities for health care professionals in rural and underserved Southeast Alabama.



Paula Cheatwood
Executive Director,
Southeast Alabama
AHEC (SEAAHEC)

Ayanna Sterling

Program Manager, Advancing Health Literacy

Cynn'e Marshall

Community Health & Education Program Manager

Marcus Fitts

Program Coordinator, AHEC Scholars

Courtney Furman

Administrative Coordinator

16

Counties in Service Region

- Autauga
- Barbour
- Bullock
- Coffee
- Dale
- Elmore
- Geneva
- Henry
- Houston
- Lee
- Lowndes
- Macon
- Montgomery
- Pike
- Russell



Angela Anderson
Executive Director,
East Central
Alabama AHEC
(ECAAHEC)

East Central Alabama AHEC (ECAAHEC)

Established as a community-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, the East Central Alabama Area Health Education Center (ECAAHEC) began serving the healthcare needs of its region in 2015.

The ECAAHEC aims to improve the quality of healthcare in Alabama by providing training, education, and resources to healthcare professionals and students of healthcare.

16

Counties in Service Region

- Blount
- Calhoun
- Chambers
- Cherokee
- Chilton
- Clay
- Cleburne
- Coosa
- DeKalb
- Etowah
- Jefferson
- Randolph
- Shelby
- St. Clair
- Talladega
- Tallapoosa

Scott Boyd

Office Manager & CBET Program Director

Merry Crook

CHW Program Coordinator

Chip Tucker, DMD

AHEC Scholars Program Coordinator

West Central Alabama AHEC (WCAAHEC)

Established in 2018 as a community-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, the West Central Alabama Area Health Education Center (WCAAHEC) is located in Demopolis, Alabama, and focuses on impacting the lives of vulnerable populations in the communities it serves.

The aim of the WCAAHEC is to improve health equity in West Alabama by supporting healthcare workforce and community-based initiatives aimed to address social determinants of health by connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health.



Rosie London
MSM, MHR

**Executive Director,
West Central
Alabama AHEC
(WCAAHEC)**

Adrian Collier, M.Ed
Senior Program Manager

Jenell Pernell, A.AS
Administrative Manager

Chansica Lanier, MA
Program Manager

Mercedes Lightfoot, M.Ed
Population Health Coordinator

Liza Nicholson, DrPH, CRS-A/D
Director of Opioid Programs

Katie Summerville, MPA
Director of Grants and Strategic
Planning

Aaron Wilkes, MPA
Program Manager RCORP IV

13

Counties in Service Region

- Bibb
- Choctaw
- Dallas
- Fayette
- Greene
- Hale
- Lamar
- Marengo
- Perry
- Pickens
- Sumter
- Tuscaloosa
- Wilcox

THE FUTURE OF ALABAMA AHEC

- 1** Identify opportunities for the further development of the Alabama Statewide AHEC Program that covers all 67 counties of the state with five (5) community-based AHEC Centers.
- 2** Enhance the co-curricular experiences of the AHEC Scholars Program that prepares a diverse, culturally competent group of health professions students for recruitment into primary care and practice in rural or underserved areas of Alabama.
- 3** Facilitate community-based experiential training of health professions students in rural and underserved areas of Alabama to improve workforce distribution.
- 4** Cultivate partnerships to prepare underrepresented minority, rural, and other disadvantaged Alabama youth for careers in the health professions, including public health.
- 5** Support continuing education for practicing health professionals in Alabama on the core topic areas of interprofessional education/team-based practice, behavioral health integration, connecting communities and supporting health professionals, virtual learning and telehealth, social determinants of health, cultural competency, practice transformation, and selected current and emerging health issues.
- 6** Enhance and assess the comprehensive, outcome-focused evaluation of the Alabama Statewide AHEC Program and activities.
- 7** Increase and strengthen partnerships with preceptors and communities to improve workforce distribution in rural and underserved areas.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook



- Alabama AHEC Statewide Program
- North Alabama AHEC
- West Central Alabama AHEC
- East Central Alabama Area Health Education Center
- Southeast Alabama AHEC
- Southern Alabama AHEC
- Southwest Alabama Opioid Response Project

LinkedIn

- Alabama AHEC Statewide Program •
- North Alabama AHEC •



Websites



- alahec.org
- na-ahec.org
- wcaahec.org
- ecaahec.com
- seaahec.org
- saahec.org

Contact

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