Wisconsin AHEC is pleased to welcome two new staff members to its statewide program office. Courtney Saxler and Michael Jacob began their positions in January 2014.

Courtney Saxler, MPH, Community Health Internship Program (CHIP) Coordinator, Statewide Wisconsin AHEC

“[I am excited by this opportunity to connect students, local health departments, and the regional AHECs],” says Courtney. “[I’m passionate about promoting health equity and increasing access to health care, and this position enables me to apply that passion in a meaningful and effective way.]”

Prior to this AHEC position, Courtney worked at the Department of Health Services focusing on program planning and evaluation. Specifically, she worked on a CDC-funded project to improve coordination of chronic disease prevention and also health promotion programs.

Courtney’s past work experience also includes serving as the Healthy Living Director for the YMCA of Dane County, Childhood Obesity Prevention Program Coordinator for the Department of Family Medicine, and Study Coordinator for the UW Carbone Cancer Center.

Courtney received her Master of Public Health degree with an emphasis in Community Health from the University of Illinois-Chicago and her Bachelor of Science degree in Genetics from UW-Madison.

“This position will enable me to apply what I’ve learned professionally and academically to help improve the health and well-being of Wisconsin’s residents,” says Courtney. “I’m excited to work with the great people around the state who help make this program possible.”

Michael Jacob, MPA, Program Development and Administration for Statewide Wisconsin AHEC

Michael Jacob joined the AHEC Program office to oversee program development and administration. He’ll work closely with each of the regional centers and their boards to enhance and coordinate outreach and to assist with federal reporting requirements. He’ll also have a role in budgeting, contract administration and fundraising.

Michael recently spent ten years as the Program Director at Covering Kids & Families - Wisconsin, building local capacity to help families in need of health insurance coverage. In his “spare” time now he is a volunteer firefighter and studying to become certified as an EMT. Michael has a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from UW-Madison and a Master’s of Public Policy Administration and Analysis from the UW-Madison LaFollette Institute of Public Affairs.

“Working with local efforts on the supply side of health care is upstream from where I’ve had the privilege to work thus far,” says Michael. “I’m also eager to help our centers and state office tell the story of AHEC. We’ve become adept at documenting our outputs. Now is the time to translate those into outcomes, answering the question of ‘so what?’ for the communities and the constituents where AHEC is active. From students to providers to the people who ultimately receive care from health professionals we’ve helped develop: how are their lives better because of AHEC.”
SPECIAL EVENT: Students compete in first statewide healthcare case competition hosted by Wisconsin AHEC
By Alissa Siegenthaler, Wisconsin AHEC statewide communications assistant

Wisconsin AHEC held the first statewide healthcare case competition January 9 – 10, 2014, at the Kalahari Resort in the Wisconsin Dells. The eight teams, chosen from 17 that applied, competed for up to a $3,000 first-place cash prize.

The teams, made up of students studying healthcare disciplines from public and private universities across the state, represented all seven Wisconsin AHEC regions with two teams representing Northeast Wisconsin AHEC.

AHEC designed the healthcare case competition to show students the complexity of the healthcare delivery system and the need for collaboration between different healthcare professionals. Two months prior to the event, students analyzed the interprofessional efforts in a case study of a patient’s discharge process. On the competition day, each team presented its findings and recommendations for better collaboration to a panel of judges.

The case competition judges consisted of leaders from various disciplines within Wisconsin healthcare programs. The judges included Brenda Coleman Gray, Ph.D., MPH; Laura Scummier, MPH; Ruth Gresley, PhD, RN, CNW, ANEF; Megan Wittman, RN, MS; and Robert King.

Concurrent with the case competition, Wisconsin AHEC also hosted an interprofessional resource fair, called an “I.P. Village”, consisting of stations for multiple health professions. The hosts of the I.P. Village stations included a healthcare administrator, physician’s assistant, athletic trainer, physical therapist, medical technologist, registered nurse, nurse practitioner, and medical assistant. Touring the I.P. Village and talking with the professionals at that station gave the students an opportunity to explore roles and responsibilities through the perspective of different health care professionals.

Cash prizes were awarded to the top three teams.

- First place ($3,000) went to a team representing Milwaukee AHEC: Omoshalewa Bamkole (UW-Milwaukee, medicine), John Weissert (UW-Milwaukee, medicine), Tara Ragatz (UW-Milwaukee, pharmacy), and Elliot Ignasiak (UW-Milwaukee, physical therapy). Patricia Cobb was the team advisor.

- The second place ($2,000) team represented Northern Highland AHEC: Timothy Zietz (UW-Green Bay, medicine), Sarah Sodemann (UW-Green Bay, dietitian), and Lydia Ambrosius (UW-Green Bay, registered nurse). Janet Reilly was the team advisor.

- Third place ($1,000) went to a team representing North Central AHEC: Ashley Stangel (UW-Stevens Point, health care administration), Kayla Schultz (UW-Stevens Point, registered nurse), Carissa Robertson (UW-Stevens Point, physical therapy), and Julia VandeHei (UW-Stevens Point, physical therapy). Carole Paulson was the team advisor.

Continued...
Mary Bumann, emeritus academic staff from UW-Madison, hosted Transforming Case Competition Skills into Strategies for Effective Interprofessional Practice, a reflection session, following the Interprofessional Healthcare Case Competition for the students to discuss their thoughts on participating in the case analysis throughout the fall semester. All of the teams attended this optional meeting and reported constructive feedback on their experiences working with their teammates which will be valuable in their future health care teams and employment settings.

Students’ comments on the case competition

“I enjoyed getting to hear the different perspectives of my group members the most throughout our preparation. Even though we had taken many of the same classes together, we had different majors and different approaches to problem solving. It was a good experience that I will continue to refer back to as I continue on in school and in my professional career.”

“I enjoyed having the opportunity to complete an IP root-cause analysis. This is not an opportunity I would have had in school, so it was very beneficial.”

“Working together in a team allowed for us to build relationships, improve our weaknesses and use each other’s strengths.”

“I liked the challenge of the case and even more importantly, the ambiguity of the expectations. This open box approach helped push creativity.”

“I liked the critical thinking that was necessary when looking at the case study and enjoyed the opportunity to improve my public speaking techniques for the presentation.”

“I have increased my confidence in working with individuals that I don’t know. As well, I am more likely to seek outside opinions when determining ‘best’ practice solutions.”

Mary Bumann’s reflection session: Transforming Case Competition Skills into Strategies for Effective Interprofessional Practice

Students’ comments on the IP Village

“It was great to be able to network with many different professionals while learning more about how our professions overlap in the clinical setting.”

“All of the professionals were very friendly. I really enjoyed meeting them, learning about their professions and goals, and having a conversation.”

“I enjoyed the opportunity to learn why these individuals were passionate about what they do, how they got there, what hopes they have for the future of their profession, and learning more about how their profession interacts with other health care professionals.”

“I gained experience that will help me communicate with other students who are in different professions than me. This opportunity helped me gain a sense of understanding about what other professionals do.”

“This was a valuable experience and any health care student would benefit.”
AWARD: Michael Brenner, 2013 AHEC counselor, wins Brillman Scholar Award

Michael Brenner’s personal statement:

In 2012, a third year medical student had an idea about starting a health care camp for a community of children from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota where he had taught years earlier. When that idea was joined and supported by Scenic Rivers Area Health Education Center (AHEC), a creative partnership was formed and an extraordinary new camp experience was created that grew to include children from the Ho Chunk Nation of Wisconsin.

Inspired as a bystander in 2012, I watched as kids from extraordinarily disadvantaged communities were exposed to new opportunities, settings and possibilities related to education after high school as well as exciting careers in health care. I was moved by conversations about “life paths” and encouraged that the campers walked away with a sense of enthusiasm and, for many, a new sense of possibility. In 2013 I had the honor of planning and directing this incredible camp experience and continuing in this important partnership between the Wisconsin Academy of Rural Medicine (WARM) and AHEC.

This health careers camp became much more to me than my third year WARM community project. As I greeted the campers at the entry of the UW LA Crosse dormitory building there was no way that I could have known what a powerful journey we were all about to embark on together. As we settled in to the week we immediately began to learn and share about one another’s lives and more about the communities we grew up in. I could feel the momentum of my medical education coming full swing as I placed my energy into the camp planning and I became empowered when I paused to consider the possibility that these kids may be inspired by the opportunities within healthcare just as I was.

For me, taking a leadership role in this camp, in many ways, rejuvenated my passions for community involvement and the possibilities related to making a difference. Coming from a small rural Wisconsin town, being a contributing member of my community was instilled in me at a young age and its importance to my life has only grown stronger. A sense of community is something that I believe I shared with many of the campers and I believe that this may have been the connecting foundation that allowed us to grow together as a group last summer in such a short period of time. It’s difficult to fully understand how much of an impact the week’s experiences had on my fellow campers, but I believe that it has the possibility to be profound. Perhaps one of the days, or sessions, or even moments of the camp has planted something new within one of the students, something that can grow. I hope that it will be something that can positively affect their lives, and dream that it may be something that will impact their own communities.

Brillman Scholar Award qualifications:

- The award recognizes a graduating 4th year medical student at UWSMPH
- Planning a career in Family Medicine
- Demonstrates excitement and involvement in the specialty
- Criteria: Serves as role model for peers, exhibits academic and clinical excellence, maintains high levels of professional behavior
- Up to five Brillman Scholar Awards are bestowed annually

AWARD: Nikki Klucas, 2013 CHIP intern, wins research scholarship

Nikki was recently offered a $4,000 summer research scholarship towards Minnesota Dental School. She was also accepted into all five dental schools that she applied to: Minnesota, Marquette, Iowa, Louisville and Case Western.

Nikki’s involvement with AHEC:

Nikki was accepted into the 2013 summer Community Health Internship Program (CHIP) through AHEC and placed at the Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation.

“After exposure to dental care for underserved and low-income individuals during my CHIP experience, it has not only opened my eyes to the importance of improving dental access in our nation, but it has influenced the type of practice and patient population I would like to engage in and care for as I pursue a career in dentistry.”

Nikki is originally from Crystal, Minn., and studied Pharmacology – Toxicology & Biology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
In December of 2013, the Youth Health Service Corps (YHSC) at Rufus King and Riverside High Schools had the opportunity to host a Healthcare Career Mixer. The mixer was led by two UWSMPH Training in Urban Medicine and Public Health (TRIUMPH) students, Heather Nennig and Joanna Zurko, and the YHSC members had the chance to meet and mingle with healthcare professionals. Parents of the YHSC members were also invited to learn about finances and applying to college.

The career mixer served as part of the TRIUMPH students’ required community project.

Healthcare professionals including Sharon Abston-Coleman, Medical Technologist and Associate Dean of Health Sciences at the Milwaukee Area Technical College, Evelyn Merriett from the Milwaukee Chapter of the National Black Nurses Association and a Laboratory Technician by the name of David J. Petsch were in attendance. Alongside many other healthcare experts, they were able to answer the questions that YHSC members and their parents had.

While our Rufus King & Riverside members were mixing and mingling with the professionals, the YHSC members at James Madison Academic Campus had the opportunity to visit the Medical College of Wisconsin’s STAR Center. The STAR Center is a resource center that provides a controlled environment where students, residents, physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals can practice their clinical skills using mechanical simulation manikins and other medical simulators.

The members saw the medical students practice their skills and techniques during various scenarios involving the mechanical simulation manikins. “This was a GREAT hands-on experience!” said Shamauri Hodges, a JMAC YHSC member. After the tour and simulation, the JMAC members had lunch with the medical students and were able to ask other questions.

What is the TRIUMPH program?

The Training in Urban Medicine and Public Health (TRIUMPH) program is a focus within the MD Program curriculum at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health in Madison.

The Training in Urban Medicine and Public Health program seeks medical students who are committed to providing health care for urban populations and to reducing health disparities. TRIUMPH is in its eighth year of existence, and including the students who started in January 2014, 69 students have participated in the program.

The program combines existing Milwaukee-based third-year primary care, obstetrics and gynecology, internal medicine rotations, the fourth-year preceptorship and electives with community and public health experiences. The program integrates clinical medicine and community and public health in a combined third- and fourth-year curriculum.

TRIUMPH, like the Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine (WARM), is a program within the school, designed to address the health needs of Wisconsin and beyond. Both programs embody the Wisconsin Idea for the 21st century - to share and apply advances in knowledge for the common good in collaboration with the state, its many constituents and communities and its partners around the world.

TRIUMPH, established in 2008, is led and coordinated by an enthusiastic team of UW School of Medicine and Public Health faculty and staff located in Madison and Milwaukee. The program is an important component of our transformation into a school of medicine and public health.

The UW School of Medicine and Public Health is also working with University of Wisconsin System and community partners to develop a Rural and Urban Scholars in Community Health (RUSCH) pipeline program designed to recruit and prepare motivated students who wish to serve rural and urban communities.

University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health medical students in the Training in Urban Medicine and Public Health program will learn about:

- Challenges and rewards of providing health care in an urban setting
- Health disparities
- Accessing community resources
- Enhancing cultural skills
- Engaging with communities
- Developing and implementing population-based health promotion projects
- Mindful practice and the physician

"TRIUMPH students are thrilled to work with the Milwaukee AHEC and members of the Youth Health Service Corps. Medical students have experienced the joys of working with young people to motivate them to pursue health careers; they have served as role models and teachers to help high school students see that becoming a doctor is fun, hard work and doable. We're delighted that AHEC staff, TRIUMPH students, high school teachers, parents and college advisors are collaborating to provide students and their parents with inspiration and clear pathways to health careers."

-Cynthia Haq, MD, Professor of Family Medicine and Population Health Sciences

Statewide AHEC Summer Programs

**Wisconsin Express**

Students from across the state are invited to attend a weeklong immersion experience that places them in a host community that is medically underserved. The students interact with local health care professionals and participate in interactive learning exercises, group projects and community activities.

**2014 Dates:** May 18 - May 23

We were pleased to have received over 180 applications and were able to place 90 students in our 11 program sites. The 2015 student application period will begin in December 2014 and run through February 2015. Please visit [http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/wisconsin-express](http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/wisconsin-express) to learn more about the sites and application process for WI Express.

**Community Health Internship Program (CHIP)**

This intensive eight-week summer internship program pairs each student with a health department and mentor. Programs vary across the state and each student receives the opportunity to develop a research project and assist their assigned health department. For summer 2014, we anticipate placing 60 students into the statewide program and 35 students into the Milwaukee program.

**2014 Dates:** June 2 - July 25, 2014

The 2014 student applications and site proposals for CHIP are now closed. The 2015 CHIP applications and proposals will begin in October and run through March 2015. Please visit [http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/chip](http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/chip) to learn more about AHEC’s CHIP program.

**Health Careers Camps for high school students**

These five-day camps are held around the state of Wisconsin and allow the students to experience first-hand the challenge, opportunities and rewards of health professions.

Applications are now open for the AHEC Health Careers Camps. Students should apply to the camp in their own region. To apply or learn more about the AHEC Health Careers Camps, visit [http://ahec/health-careers-summer-camps](http://ahec/health-careers-summer-camps).

**2014 Site Dates and Application Deadlines:**

1. **Fox Valley Area Camp - Oshkosh (Northeast)**
   - June 22 - 26, 2014
   - Applications due May 9
2. **Lakeshore Camp - Sheboygan (Northeast)**
   - July 6 - 10, 2014
   - Applications due May 16
3. **La Crosse Camp (Scenic Rivers)**
   - June 15 - 19, 2014
   - Applications due May 2
4. **Madison Camp (South Central)**
   - June 22-26, 2014
   - Applications due May 9
5. **Northwest WI Camp - Ladysmith and Rice Lake**
   - June 15 - 19, 2014
   - Applications due May 7
6. **North Central Camp - Wausau, Marshfield, Stevens Point**
   - June 22 - 26, 2014
   - Applications due May 1
7. **Health Camp for Native Students - Ho-Chunk and Oglala (Scenic Rivers)**
   - July 13-17, 2014
   - Applications due June 6