Fall 2014

“Wisconsin AHEC: On Location” presents highlights of programs and people who bring teaching and learning to life in communities across the state.

Suggestions for future articles are welcome; please send ideas to Keri Robbins, AHEC Communications Coordinator (krobbins@wisc.edu) or Megan Hakes, Communications Assistant (mhakes@wisc.edu).

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TRIVIA CONTEST:
Identify the location pictured in the masthead and win a gift! Send your entry to: krobbins@wisc.edu Be sure to include your U.S. Mailing address.

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WELCOME Traci R. Lindsey, MPA, Executive Director, South Central AHEC
By: Megan Hakes, Statewide Communications Assistant

BELOIT – Traci R. Lindsey, MPA, became Executive Director of South Central AHEC in July.

Traci most recently served as Director of Administration and Finance for Community Action Inc, of Rock and Walworth Counties, which operates more than 40 programs to fight poverty. In her position, Traci was responsible for the preparation and management of a $10 million budget. She also oversaw human resource management, compliance, building and grounds, and strategic planning. Prior to that role, Traci was Executive Director of HealthNet, a free clinic in Rock County, where she was responsible for overall operations of the clinic, including human resource management, budgeting, fundraising, grant writing, compliance, program development, public relations and strategic planning. Under her leadership, HealthNet opened a free health clinic and renovated the medical clinic for a 40% increase in clinic space.

Traci received her Master of Public Administration with a concentration in Non-Profit Management from Roosevelt University. She also holds a Bachelor of Science in Communication Studies from UW-La Crosse.

“What I like most about my new position is the potential for South Central AHEC,” Traci says. “This is an organization that has a very broad reach, and there are so many opportunities to develop community partnerships that will continue our mission and enhance the access and quality of healthcare in the counties that we serve. I’m very excited to be a part of such a great network of dedicated professionals that strive to improve the overall health outcomes in their communities.”

On October 1, the South Central AHEC office moved to Beloit. “Rock County ranks 62 out of 72 counties in Wisconsin for overall health outcomes,” Traci says. “Beloit is considered a health profession shortage area, so there’s a great need for an AHEC office to be located in this community. In addition, I have worked within non-profit organizations and developed many community partnerships for the past eight years here in Rock County, so I’m looking forward to opportunities of expanding our programming in this county and throughout the South Central region.”

New Address:
South Central AHEC
136 W. Grand Ave, Suite 100
Beloit, WI 53511
Summer 2014 Community Health Internship Program (CHIP)

The Wisconsin AHEC Community Health Internship Program (CHIP) links undergraduate and graduate student interns with health departments, community health centers, tribal health centers and community service agents to address a variety of public health issues. Projects vary widely to suit interns’ interest and abilities, as well as local program needs. During summer 2014, the CHIP program placed 59 interns across the state and an additional 29 in the Milwaukee region.

Intern Ross Johnson Educated Community Members about Risky Behaviors
Grant County / Scenic Rivers AHEC region

I was interested in my CHIP site (S.A.F.E. Grant County Coalition based out of the Grant County Health Department) because of the variety of projects they offered to help make Grant County a safer place to live. I was able to work directly with around 350 youths in the area to educate them on the risks of substance abuse though the Youth Leadership Conference and Rural Safety Days. I also helped to organize, promote and present suicide prevention trainings to residents of Grant and Lafayette counties. I compiled the Grant County Community Assessment, which is a comprehensive report looking at the trends in illicit drug use and risky behaviors in the county. Working at the health department, I shadowed an environmental health coordinator, WIC (Women, Infants and Children) nutritionist, county jail nurse and hospice nurse. I worked directly with community members to prevent/reduce substance abuse and other risky behaviors.

I worked alongside my mentor Kathy Marty, the projects director for the S.A.F.E. Grant County Coalition. She really took me under her wing and let me be a part of all the great projects that the S.A.F.E. Coalition is working on. I was able to attend coalition and oversight meetings with members and partners of the coalition.

Our online assignments helped me take advantage of all of the opportunities that this wonderful internship offered. It was especially helpful to learn what the other interns were doing around the state!

My goal for the future is to become a primary care physician in a rural setting. The S.A.F.E. Grant County Coalition exposed me to the variety of drug abuse problems in this rural area and how in the future I will be able to help treat the disease of addiction. I was fortunate to attend educational conferences on synthetic drugs and the effect of opioids on infants. I am so enthusiastic about my public health experience that I have continued to volunteer at the S.A.F.E. Grant County Coalition this fall by assisting at events like additional Suicide Prevention Trainings and Oh SNAP at UW-Platteville. My CHIP internship showed me the vastness of the public health field and how in my future career I can work as part of the team to improve the health of rural communities.

Intern Allison Arvey Provided Wellness Education in Green Bay
Brown County / Northeastern WI AHEC region

I was interested in CHIP because I wanted to expand my knowledge of public health and gain real-world experience in the process. I came in with minimal expectations and left with more experience than I could have imagined.

I gained numerous skills over the eight weeks that better prepared me for my future endeavors. Foremost, I gained a wealth of knowledge in public health including the role that social determinants, policy and education play in the community.

My first-hand experience came from conducting research with the low-income population in Green Bay and providing wellness education. I saw a whole new side to the community I plan to later serve. In addition, I had the opportunity to meet and work with outstanding individuals from Live54218, local health agencies and area businesses who I hope will help support me when I enter the workforce.

The experience of conducting research during my CHIP internship will better prepare me for my future academic studies. My role as an intern included being an educator, a researcher, a project manager and a wellness advocate. As a future nurse, I will need to play each of these roles to provide the highest-quality care for my patients.

It is astounding how much you can learn about a community while working in public health. Despite growing up in Green Bay, I discovered a whole new side to the community I love. I witnessed multiple areas of need but I also saw wonderful initiatives in progress to improve the area.
Intern Anna Steil Promoted Healthy Lifestyles within an Indian Reservation
Bayfield County / Northwest WI AHEC region

As a nursing student, I was very interested in participating in CHIP because it would provide me with a solid foundation for what the role of a public health nurse is.

I wanted to work with the community on the Red Cliff Reservation because I enjoy promoting health in different cultural settings. Specifically with Red Cliff, I wanted to better understand the challenges this Ojibwe community faces in attaining healthy food options. In just eight weeks, I was able to gain understanding that in order to make healthy lifestyle changes in a community, many components are necessary. Local businesses, schools and governments all work together alongside the health clinic to make a more prominent impact.

My plan for the next few years is to work in a hospital setting. Through my experience, I became more familiar with the resources available in a community that I can share with patients in need of help. I also appreciate the need to address healthy lifestyles and any barriers a person might have in achieving that. One of the most important points I took away from this internship is that to be successful as health care professionals and make the most effective changes, we must be respectful and remember to incorporate the culture of a community.

Call for Proposals: Summer 2015 Host Sites

Interested in hosting a CHIP intern through Wisconsin AHEC?

Program Dates: June 8 - July 31, 2015 (8-week placement)
Program orientation day in Madison: Friday, June 5, 2015

Host site applications received by December 3, 2014 will be given priority consideration.

For more information, contact Courtney Saxler, MPH, CHIP Coordinator:

internships@ahec.wisc.edu  608-265-6323
http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/chip

Mentor Linda Conlon Explains the Benefits of Hosting Interns

Oneida County Health Department / Northern Highland AHEC region

Oneida County Health Department values hosting CHIP interns for several reasons:

1. To foster an environment and learning experience that promotes population-based health care through promotion and education initiatives and behavior-change programs in a variety of settings for the diverse populations represented in Oneida County.
2. To offer opportunities for the intern to grow professionally. Specifically including the areas of developing, implementing, and evaluating programs and public health initiatives; establishing, leading and maintaining community partnerships; and managing work plans and timelines.
3. To pique the interest of the next generation in public health.
4. To educate the intern about the dynamic nature of public health and to learn how to respond to the ever-changing environment.

Health Departments benefit from interns in many ways:

1. Interns bring a new perspective to our projects, environment and staff. Their ideas and energy are awesome!
2. Public Health in general benefits from these young adults, soon to be out in the healthcare workforce, learning and living public health for a summer.
3. We develop lasting relationships with interns and take pride in providing references and assisting them in obtaining jobs. Many times, I have given references years later!

I think what I have found the most rewarding is knowing we are a part of our interns’ professional growth. We are so happy to provide great experiences for our interns—to assist in growing their professional skills and their view of public health.

Sponsorship Opportunities

Are you able to provide financial support for the CHIP program?

Your assistance can support an intern stipend, sponsor CHIP orientation or offset costs that make the program the incredible success it is! Contributions may be sent to:
Wisconsin AHEC Program
HSLC, 750 Highland Ave.
Madison, WI 53705

For information, contact Michael Jacob, MPA:
mbjacob@wisc.edu or 608-262-7237
Medical Student Advises Youth Health Service Corps Project
By Suzanne Letellier, Milwaukee AHEC

MILWAUKEE -- Mary Evans, a medical student from the Medical College of Wisconsin, led three of Milwaukee AHEC’s Youth Health Service Corps (YHSC) members in a five-week service learning project. YHSC is a Milwaukee AHEC program for high school students interested in exploring health care careers by volunteering in the community.

Milwaukee AHEC places high value on the involvement of medical students with YHSC service learning projects. Valuable mentoring happens naturally and informally throughout the project planning process. Mary served as a wonderful role model and mentor during her time with Milwaukee AHEC’s YHSC program.

Service learning acts as a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with academic study and reflection. Through teaching and learning, participants are allowed to apply academic, social and personal skills to improve their community. An alternative to community service and volunteer work, service learning highlights the student’s knowledge and growth as they design and implement their own service project.

The YHSC service learning team chose to research the effects of self-esteem on social, mental and physical health in teenage girls. The group titled their project “Uplift Yourself: Self-Esteem & Confidence.” The team members, led by Mary, developed a work plan, identified community partners, organized the project, came up with a list of materials and budget and designed ways to evaluate the project. The students also identified barriers and developed plans to overcome them.

The team partnered with a local non-profit, City on a Hill, specifically its youth summer program. On July 23, 2014, the YHSC members presented a self-esteem presentation to nine girls ages 11-17. The YHSC team also facilitated three self-esteem building activities. When asked if the teens opinions of themselves were more important than others opinions, 88% said their opinions of themselves were most important. After the hour and fifteen minute self-esteem presentation and activities, the post survey results showed that 100% of the girls thought their opinions about themselves were more important than their peers’.

YHSC participants engaged in ongoing reflection writing activities that allowed them to connect the service experience to learning objectives and consider their role in community change. While writing in their reflection notebooks after each of their bi-weekly meetings with Mary, students reflected on things that worked and did not work, what surprised them, what made them proud and how they were personally affected by the project.

Other positive impacts occurred during the project. When asked in a pre-program survey, YHSC members all replied neutral on a scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree to the statement, “I am comfortable with my body.” At the culmination of the project, the students who completed the post-program survey stated that they agree or strongly agree.

The YHSC members on the service-learning team were able to assess their leadership skills, gain an increased responsibility toward their communities and become confident in their presentation skills. According to Mary, “Their (the YHSC Service-Learning Team) participation helped create a positive attitude towards self-esteem and health and provided them an incredible opportunity to sharpen their leadership skills and continue to develop confidence when working with a team of peers. Because the participants were involved in the entire development process, they took direct ownership and pride in the project, providing improved and more successful results.”

Milwaukee AHEC started its YHSC program in 2007. Since then, more than 2,000 volunteer hours have been completed by high school students.
MARINETTE -- In recent years, Northern Highland AHEC (NH-AHEC) has partnered with Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC) on multiple efforts to recruit American Indian students into health care careers and support them along their academic path. This latest GLITC project entitled “Increasing Cultural Congruency (ICC) among Nurses in Wisconsin” stands out as a particularly innovative approach for advancing the cause of Native American health care.

The initial ICC objective is to improve the quality of nursing care for American Indian patients by promoting culturally congruent nursing practice. Toward that end, GLITC staff and UW-Madison academic partners scheduled talking circles at each of the four project sites: Lac du Flambeau reservation, Bad River reservation, St. Croix tribal community, and Milwaukee. Participating in the talking circles were nurses, tribal elders and patients from the tribal community. Members of the talking circles were encouraged to share their beliefs, views, concerns, experiences, and stories about the health care system in an atmosphere of open communication.

Nurses were able to see the system through the eyes of patients and vice versa. The participating nurses came from the Peter Christensen Health Center, Marshfield Clinic of Minocqua, Howard Young Medical Center in Woodruff, Bad River Tribal Health Center, Ashland Memorial Medical Center, St. Croix Tribal Health Center, Spooner Healthcare System, Gerald Ignace Indian Health Center and Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare System of Milwaukee.

The second ICC objective is to attract middle school and high school students to careers in health care, most especially nursing. Staff members Kara Schurman (from ICC) and Larry Bergum (NH-AHEC) teamed up to deliver health career presentations (emphasizing nursing) to area middle school and high school classes. These school presentations were tailored to appeal to American Indian students. The ICC and NH-AHEC project partners also forged relationships with elementary school staff members, school counselors, the Lac du Flambeau Education Department and Nicolet Area Technical College to foster nursing career awareness as well as programs and courses for students interested in a nursing career.

There is little doubt that the ICC has been achieving its aim of sowing the seeds for improved communication, understanding and trust between American Indian patients and the nurses who care for them. It is fervently hoped that the nursing career recruitment piece of the project succeeds in attracting more young people to the profession.

These are considerable achievements. In addition, there is a longer-term, strategic value to be realized out of the extensive collaboration that this project has caused for its numerous stakeholders. And so, while the ICC might not resolve every significant health care challenge that faces our Wisconsin tribal communities today, it is surely a step in the right direction.

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AHEC Alumni Association Hosted Urban Health Event

The AHEC Alumni Association held an event September 11 in Milwaukee. Paul Florsheim, PhD; Brenda Gray, PhD, MPH; Melissa Lemke, MA; Lilian Paine, Geoff Swain, MD; Lynette Weathers and Erin Lee presented at the event. Topics included: urban health, social determinants of health, health disparities, important components of writing a grant and green cleaning.

Join us for the next AHEC Alumni event:
Thursday, December 4, 5:30 - 9 p.m
Health Sciences Learning Center, UW-Madison

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23rd Annual $2,500 Rural Health Prize: Call for Papers

The Hermes Monato, Jr. Prize of $2,500 is awarded annually for the best rural health paper. It is open to all students of the University of Wisconsin (any campus) as well as those who will be recent graduates at the time of submission.

Students are encouraged to write on a rural health topic for a regular class and then to submit a copy to the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative as an entry by June 1st.

Previous award winners as well as judging criteria and submission information are available at:
Northeastern Wisconsin AHEC: NAO Center of Excellence Award

Northeastern Wisconsin Area Health Education Center (NEWAHEC) was one of four organizations to receive a Center of Excellence Award from the National AHEC Organization (NAO) at NAO’s biennial conference held in Charlotte, North Carolina. The award was given in recognition of the Interprofessional Healthcare Case Competition led by NEWAHEC from September 2013 - January 2014.

The program brought together health care students from colleges and technical schools located throughout the state. Eight interprofessional teams of students competed. Interprofessional education is defined as students from more than one health care degree program learning about, from and with each other. Each of the eight teams was represented by at least three different types of students, such as nursing, medicine and pharmacy.

Each team was assigned the same case study scenario to examine interprofessional aspects of patient care and outcomes. The teams’ job was to determine the causes of what went wrong in the care of the patient and to recommend solutions.

The teams worked together for two months and then presented their findings and recommendations to a panel of judges comprised of leaders from health care organizations and academic institutions.

The program was recognized for its innovation and quality. Congratulations, NEWAHEC!

Courtney Saxler Selected for Public Health Leadership Institute

Wisconsin AHEC Community Health Program Coordinator Courtney Saxler, MPH, was appointed as a Fellow to the 22nd Annual MidAmerica Regional Public Health Leadership Institute for the 2014-15 academic year. The program will focus on “Capacity Building for Population Health Improvement.” Congratulations, Courtney!

Dr. Cynthia Haq Wins AAMC Humanism in Medicine Award

Cynthia Haq, MD, Professor of Family Medicine and Population Health Sciences and Director of the TRIUMPH (Training in Urban Medicine and Public Health) Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, received the 2014 Arnold P. Gold Foundation Humanism in Medicine Award from the Association of American Medical Colleges.

This annual award honors a medical school faculty physician who exemplifies the qualities of a caring and compassionate mentor in the teaching and advising of medical students. The nominee must also demonstrate personal ethics, empathy and service, which are essential to the practice of patient-centered medicine. Congratulations, Dr. Haq!