Summer 2015

The “Wisconsin AHEC: On Location” quarterly newsletter highlights innovative programs and recognizes 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 Statewide Communications Coordinator (krobbins@wisc.edu) or Morgan Haefner, Communications Assistant (mhaefner@wisc.edu).

Stay connected with AHEC! Join us on

AHEC Welcomes Brenda Birringer to the Northeastern Wisconsin Region
By Morgan Haefner, Statewide Communications Assistant

MANITOWOC – Brenda Birringer has joined Northeastern WI AHEC as a Health Careers and Prevention Coordinator. She was previously employed for 26 years at Holy Family Memorial Hospital in Manitowoc, with 18 years as the Health Unit Coordinator of the same day surgery unit. Brenda describes her previous duties there as coordinating “the little things,” such as admitting patients, facilitating conversation between the O.R. and the same day surgery office, and entering lab work. Brenda's experience with all those “little things” will provide her an insightful perspective when discussing health profession careers with area high school students in her new position at AHEC. “I believe my background of working in the hospital and knowing the different areas will help with this position,” Brenda said.

In addition to traveling to local high schools to discuss health profession careers, Brenda assists with Northeastern AHEC’s Health Careers Summer Camps, which includes arranging job shadowing opportunities so students can discover new career interests in health fields. Brenda says her new job is different every day, and has introduced her to the range of services that AHEC offers across the state. “It’s a unique setting. I’m learning so much about what our organization does for our communities and our school districts,” she explains. “Every day I’m learning something new.”

Throughout her time in the health field, Brenda has witnessed how changes in the economy burden the community’s health. She observed that as more businesses left the area, more uninsured patients came into the hospital. “[The economy] is a big problem in Manitowoc County,” she said. “The hospital where I worked had a program to help patients without insurance. Many of them were on state assistance, and we were a nonprofit, so we were able to help them.” Brenda looks forward to continuing her service to the community in her new role with Northeastern Wisconsin AHEC. Welcome, Brenda!
Women’s Health in Wisconsin: AHEC Intern Develops Curriculum for January 2016 Program
Reflections by Meghan Sovey, UW-Madison undergraduate

I feel so fortunate to have the opportunity to develop a week-long Wisconsin Express trip focusing on women’s health in south central Wisconsin. I have spent the past 7 months working collaboratively with Wisconsin AHEC, the Gender and Women’s Studies Department at UW-Madison, and many regional partners of the South Central Wisconsin AHEC. Under the direction of AHEC’s community health program coordinator, Courtney Saxler, in developing the course, I have met many community members willing to volunteer their time and resources to ensure students become more aware of the specific health care issues women face locally and globally.

The dedication community members and organizations have to improving the health conditions of all women is truly inspiring to see and I look forward to other students learning from them as well.

The field experience course will be offered in January 2016. Students will study elements of women’s health from various perspectives and will have the chance to meet and learn from experts from academia, community service agencies and healthcare professionals in the region who are committed to addressing women’s health. The application deadline is October 12, 2015. To learn more about this course and find the online application link after September 1, please visit [http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/wisconsin-express](http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/wisconsin-express) or contact Courtney Saxler at csaxler@wisc.edu.

More recently, I have also been assisting our Scenic Rivers AHEC in launching an HPV initiative with the goal of providing greater access to educational resources and information on HPV and the HPV vaccine to primary care providers and families throughout Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. These efforts have complemented the work of planning the January women’s health field experience, and I am thrilled to be working on both of these important regional initiatives through AHEC.

Editor’s note: Meghan was recently accepted into the Wisconsin Women’s Policy Institute, a highly competitive program where she will form a team focused on women’s health, safety and security issues, and the legislative process. Her team will study the issues and develop a proposal for improvements. This is a seven-month program that begins in August 2015. Congratulations, Meghan!

Rural High School Students Explore Global Health in AHEC Workshop
By Traci Lindsey, South Central AHEC Executive Director

BELOIT – During the 2014-15 academic year, South Central AHEC partnered again with the UW-Madison student organization Globe Med, along with the Global Health Institute, to provide rural area high school students with the global health workshop hosted on campus at the UW-Madison in Dejope Residence Hall during November.

Teachers from five different high schools (Parkview, Janesville Craig, Wautoma, Watertown and Portage) brought 20 students for this free full day workshop. The annual event provides high school students from rural Wisconsin an understanding of global health and many issues impacting health outcomes in rural and urban communities. The high school students participate in activities focused on the determinants of health and disease with a global perspective.

This health workshop effectively connects what students have learned about global health issues with an understanding of how this knowledge applies in their own communities. Students have found these insights useful as they develop plans to pursue a health career.

South Central AHEC provided a stipend to participating high schools to assist with travel expenses and hopes to continue supporting this successful event in the future.
Partnership with UW-Marinette Brings Geriatric Mental Health in Focus: AHEC Sponsors Training Event in the North Woods

By Mark Scully, Northern Highland AHEC Center Director

MARINETTE – If we have come to understand anything at all over the recent years at Northern Highland AHEC, it is that rural health care needs to be addressed all along the continuum of life. Our outreach efforts for recruiting middle school and high school students into health care careers go on strong as ever. Our close participation with hospitals and FQHC centers continue to afford us an inside perspective, as well as a decision role in local health care policy and practice. Additionally, our ongoing support of college students with community-based projects and interprofessional field experiences keep us connected with the upcoming generation of providers as they enter health care professions.

Yet while all of our current activities for youth continue to be effective in their own right, we at Northern Highland also came to realize we had to pay more attention to the other end of the demographic spectrum. It was that realization which sparked Northern Highland’s partnership with UW-Marinette to invite a nationally renowned expert in the specialty of aging and geriatric mental health to inform the local community about challenges in that area.

Advance promotional efforts with local public health and ADRC officials resulted in a significant community turnout on the UW-Marinette campus for the April 10 seminar, conducted by Dr. Suzanna Waters Castillo, distinguished faculty associate from UW-Madison. Attendees engaged in educational exercises addressing senior depression, late life anxiety, delirium, substance abuse and much more over the course of the day. By all accounts, the attendees left the seminar energized, enlightened and better able to understand and address their responsibilities in elderly care.

A Facelift for InformedCaring.org

AHEC’s Web Portal for Health Resources

The lifecycle of a website’s design seems to get shorter and shorter, and last year we determined this popular site was due for some freshening up. We wanted to assure our stakeholders that the content is current and relevant, and undertook a graphic update for the site so that the site’s design would better reflect the up-to-date, high quality of the resources being provided. It was also important to adapt the design to become mobile-friendly.

InformedCaring.org is a portal of health-related resources for people working in health care and public health, especially those without access to academic resources in rural and underserved regions in Wisconsin. Maintained by the Wisconsin AHEC Program Office, the portal serves those working in local health departments, federally qualified community health centers and rural health service providers.

The newly redesigned and updated site continues to provide popular resources, data, information about library services and the ability to search for information by topic. This aggregation of information enhances access to health information, especially for those without free access to a medical library. In addition to these basic elements, InformedCaring.org highlights categories of easy-access resources, such as Wisconsin’s top 12 health topics, health literacy resources, teaching and mentoring information, and technology tutorials. The reach of InformedCaring.org goes beyond healthcare providers and public health professionals. InformedCaring.org establishes a cohesive link between public health, health professions and patient education. Resources for patients include how to correctly evaluate internet health resources, links to healthy household products and resources for specific populations and topics, like Native Americans or health information in multiple languages.

Be sure to check out the newly redesigned site at informedcaring.org.
Dimensions of Diversity: An AHEC Continuing Education Offering for Experienced Professionals

By Suzanne Matthew, North Central AHEC Executive Director

WAUSAU – North Central Wisconsin AHEC has led more than 600 healthcare providers, educators and executives in educational sessions called Dimensions of Diversity, taught by NC AHEC Executive Director Suzanne Matthew, PhD.

The trainings are designed to:
- Understand the importance and relevance of culturally and linguistically appropriate health care
- Understand how culture impacts healthcare delivery, illness, and health
- Define the concepts of diversity, culture and cultural competency
- Develop practical applications of the tools of cultural competency
- Develop self-awareness about ourselves and appreciation of how our cultural values, assumptions, and beliefs influence others
- Develop skills to become a more effective cultural competency trainer

North Central AHEC offers a variety of options for the training sessions. Fees vary according to the number of participants, length of training and type of organization requesting the training.

The activity is sponsored by the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, the Office of Continuing Professional Development in Medicine and Public Health and North Central Wisconsin Area Health Education Center. This activity has been approved for a maximum of 18.25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™ and for 1.825 continuing education units (CEUs) or 18.25 hours.

Sample One-Day Training Session Agenda
- 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. Guidelines for the Session: Introductions/Workshop goals and outcomes/Ground Rules
- 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Defining Diversity: Demographic changes; Exercise: Exploring the Individual
- 10:30 - 10:45 a.m. Break
- 10:45 a.m. - noon Principles of Cultural Competency: Understanding and Applying The Five Elements of Cultural Competency in the Work Setting
- 12 – 1 p.m. Lunch
- 1 – 2 p.m. Self Assessment
- 2 – 3 p.m. Understanding the Dynamics of Difference: The Range of Difference; Power and Ethnocentrism; Exploring The Power Model; Cultural Competency Continuum
- 3 – 3:15 p.m. Break
- 3:15 – 4:15 p.m. Understanding the Culture of Western Biomedicine: Diverse Cultures at Work; Norms, Values, and Expectations of Biomedicine; Models for Success; Case Studies
- 4:15 – 4:30 p.m. Evaluations and Closure: Focus Group Activity

For more information, visit https://sites.google.com/a/nahec-wi.org/dimensionsofdiversity/
CHIP Intern Engages State Legislators in Dialogue about Public Health

By Abbie Zellner, Summer 2015 AHEC Community Health Intern Program, Sauk County Health Department

BARABOO – Public health departments from southwest Wisconsin came to speak with state Sen. Howard Marklein and Reps. Ed Brooks and Todd Novak on June 26. Our main objective was to educate the legislators about our activities in public health and ask for their support. Our nurse from Sauk County gave a presentation on the Nurse-Family Partnership program, the Grant County health officer discussed the merger of DHS and DATCP, and the Juneau County health officer discussed our concerns about the amount of funding allocated toward disease outbreaks and concerns with public health funding in general.

One aspect representatives from Sauk County Health Department highlighted was the social determinants of health, specifically how education affects health outcomes. I gave a presentation explaining how funding education has many health benefits in the long run and generates a huge return on investment.

I also spoke about the rural medicine (WARM) program offered at UW-Madison's School of Medicine and Public Health. The WARM program is designed to offer medical students of all specialties opportunities to complete portions of their training in rural communities in hopes of eventually attracting more physicians to practice in rural Wisconsin. I explained that Sauk County is designated as a mental health service provider shortage area, and if the WARM training program is cut, the current provider shortage will be worsened.

Throughout our presentations, the legislators were very engaged and asked many questions. After our remarks, the legislators informed us they are open to the public health initiatives we discussed, especially since many of their constituents are located in rural areas. However, they told us the biggest barrier to legislative support of public health is most legislators don’t know the difference between public health and health care.

Essentially, I concluded that public health professionals need to do a better job of educating the public, including legislators, about what public health does and its importance. If nobody knows what is different and unique about public health, there will not be support for it!

Being present at this meeting gave me confidence to meet with legislators and discuss these issues. I found the legislators were open-minded, and I truly felt empowered and as if I was making a difference. I hope everyone has the chance to meet with his or her legislators and feel empowered to make change!

Special Event: AHEC Day at the Capitol: Friday, September 18

Wisconsin Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) staff and students will collaborate with state legislators, policy experts and leaders in the public health field to present the first “AHEC Day at the Capitol” on Friday, Sept. 18, 2015 in Madison. College and high school students who have completed AHEC programs; faculty preceptors; staff; and board members are invited.

This event will facilitate regional AHEC centers’ efforts to connect with legislators from their local districts, and enhance AHEC program visibility. The agenda features presentations about health policy and additional training sessions in the morning. Past participants of AHEC educational programs including Community Health Internship Program (CHIP), Wisconsin Express, Interprofessional Case Competition, summer camps, and other AHEC activities will participate along with AHEC regional staff in afternoon discussions with legislators, to provide examples and describe the value and benefits of AHEC programs.

For details about this event, contact Keri Robbins, AHEC Statewide Communications: keri.robbins@wisc.edu; 608-265-2442.
Announcements

**WREN event:**

** Developing a Road Map for Optimum Patient-Partnered Chronic Condition Management**
The Wisconsin Research and Education Network (WREN) is hosting a convocation October 14-16 at the Best Western Premier Waterfront Hotel & Convention Center in Oshkosh. This year’s theme is “Developing a Road Map for Optimum Patient-Partnered Chronic Condition Management.” Planners hope to draw a diverse group of medical professionals to the convocation. View agenda at: [http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/research/wren/meetings](http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/research/wren/meetings). For more details, contact Denise Grossman at Denise.Grossman@fammed.wisc.edu, (608) 262-1112.

**Newly available on AHEC Health Workforce web page**  ([http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/workforce](http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/workforce))

**Workforce Projections through 2025; Health Service Areas**
The Wisconsin AHEC website provides current data about health workforce issues. We invite you to explore the newly added content on the workforce page ([http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/workforce](http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/workforce)) for resources including:

**Data Briefs**

- **Wisconsin Physicians:** distribution by specialty, demographics, population to provider ratios, retirement
- **Primary Care Physicians:** distribution, demographics, hours of work, population to provider ratios
- **Primary Care Physicians:** retirement projection
- **Psychiatrists:** distribution, demographics, hours of work, projected retirement

**AHEC Presentations**

- **Projection of Physician Supply and Demand in Wisconsin through 2025.** Using the Wisconsin Health Service Areas framework and data from Wisconsin licensure records, this presentation uses information from the March 2015 AAMC Report, *Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand: Projections from 2013 to 2025*, to arrive at a range of possibilities for physician supply and demand in Wisconsin in 2025. The presentation explores the AAMC Report supply scenarios (including change in age of retirement, preference for shorter hours among “millenials”, and modest GME expansion) and demand scenarios (including expansion of insurance coverage, implementation of managed care, increased use of retail clinics, and increased use of physician assistants and advanced practice nurses). It concludes with a look at how the these changes may play out on the local level in terms of the need for new physician recruitment, and some suggestions for actions to mitigate the anticipated demand.

- **Wisconsin Primary Care Physicians: Current Distribution and Retirement Projection.** A two-part presentation using Wisconsin Health Services Area geography to analyze the current distribution of the physician workforce in Wisconsin, by region and by rural or urban service area type. The analysis is based on data on all licensed physicians in Wisconsin as of 3-15-2012 (from Department of Safety and Professional Services) augmented by data on work setting and hours of work in patient care from the 2012 Wisconsin Physician Workforce Report (October 2012).

- **Wisconsin Health Service Areas: Purpose, Description, and Potential Applications.** (Spring 2015) Wisconsin AHEC has recently completed a project to map health service areas in Wisconsin. The primary objective for developing this service area geography is to facilitate local health workforce analysis. The service areas also provide a useful framework for monitoring local program outcomes related to health workforce development and population health status. This presentation explains how the service areas were developed and how they might be used.

If you would like to use the Health Service Areas in your own research and have questions, please contact Nancy Sugden, Director of the Wisconsin AHEC Program, at nasugden@wisc.edu.