North Central AHEC Welcomes
Christina Patrin, Executive Director

Christina Patrin, M.Ed, joined Wisconsin AHEC in January as the new Executive Director of North Central AHEC. Before this role, Christina served 15 years as a professional educator for the Adams-Friendship Area School District in rural Adams County, where she taught several Health Science and Life Science education courses for students in grades 8 - 12. She also advised the career and technical student organization HOSA: Future Health Professionals, where she supported students entering the healthcare workforce. She is skilled in working with special populations, particularly those with disabilities and socio-economic barriers.

Christina’s previous experience working with North Central AHEC led to her interest in the Executive Director role. For the past two summers, Christina directed the North Central AHEC Health Careers Camp. She also facilitated the UW Primary Care Clerkship community projects for the NC AHEC region. Her extensive experience working with community partners to engage students in health careers awareness and preparedness also extends beyond Wisconsin AHEC.

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Christina developed a highly reputable nursing assistant program in her high school, as well as three transcripted course credit agreements for high school students with Mid-State Technical College. Through her years of service at Adams-Friendship School District, she was responsible for mentoring new educators, leading school and district improvement initiatives, providing professional development training to colleagues and managing the Career and Technical Education and Science Education departments.

“Having a background as an Allied Health Professional and Health Sciences Educator allows me to look at programming from a multi-faceted lens,” Christina said. “I feel this will help me approach initiatives with each participant’s specific needs in mind, from secondary education up through continuing education.”

Christina received her Master of Education with an emphasis on Teaching and Learning from St. Mary’s University in 2009. She brings to North Central AHEC a healthcare background, with experience working as a certified Athletic Trainer. She earned her Bachelor of Science from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

As she anticipates her new role within North Central AHEC’s 11 county region, Christina said she hopes to “deepen the collaborative efforts between currently established partners of North Central AHEC, along with cultivating new relationships in my region. It is important to me that our presence is known, distributed, and valued throughout our region.”

Christina says she is excited and honored to continue to be part of the statewide Wisconsin AHEC team, and to serve communities in the northern part of the state. She looks forward to “collaborating with local community partners and stakeholders to maintain and develop successful initiatives and programs to build a stronger healthcare pipeline, decrease health professional shortage areas and build healthier communities in the North Central region.”

South Central AHEC Welcomes Chris Percy, Health Careers Educator

Chris Percy joined the South Central AHEC team as a Health Career Educator in summer 2015 to expand our reach to the northern counties in this region. Chris has increased our capacity to respond to requests from schools for AHEC health careers presentations.

Chris has a strong background as an educator. She recently worked as a substitute teacher at multiple high schools in the South Central AHEC region. Chris also has experience teaching high school biology and biotechnology at Monona Grove High School.

“I really enjoy the energy of high school students. I like to help them learn about themselves and to think about their futures. I am especially excited to promote healthcare careers through my presentations to the northern counties of the South Central region,” Chris said.

Chris graduated from UW-Madison with a Bachelor of Science in biochemistry. She worked as a research and development lab scientist at pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies before going back to school for her science teaching certificate.

Chris and her husband Greg, who teaches art at Madison East High School, have three sons. She says she and Greg are enjoying being empty nesters after all the years of their kids’ sports activities.

In her free time, Chris enjoys being with family and friends. She loves to travel, ski, bike, garden, and sew.

Welcome to South Central AHEC, Chris!
Wisconsin AHEC held the statewide Interprofessional Healthcare Case Competition January 7–8, 2016, at the Kalahari Resort in the Wisconsin Dells. This is the third annual occurrence of this signature Wisconsin AHEC program, which earned a national award from the NAO (National AHEC Organization) at its last national convention.

During the fall 2015 semester, a total of 18 teams participated in the case analysis and submitted an entry (executive summary and a budget). From those entries, 8 teams were selected to compete at the next level and present their analysis in front of judges. Each team included students from multiple healthcare disciplines. The top 8 teams represented four AHEC regions (Milwaukee AHEC - 2 teams; Northeastern AHEC - 1 team; Scenic Rivers AHEC - 2 teams, South Central AHEC - 3 teams).

This year’s case study involved stroke prevention and care in a rural setting. Student teams analyzed the patient’s situation at the individual, community, and health system levels, with a particular focus on interprofessional teamwork and opportunities.

The judges panel welcomed leaders from multiple disciplines within Wisconsin healthcare programs: Roger Rego; Stephanie Stewart PhD, RN; Kathy Loppnow, PhD, RN; Richard Dart MD; and Trevor Cooper (past competition participant).

Concurrent with the case competition, an interprofessional resource fair (the “I.P. Village”) was conducted in an adjoining ballroom, with stations for multiple health professions. The hosts of the I.P. Village stations included registered nurses, physicians, a physician assistant, nurse practitioner, medical interpreter, simulation specialist, genetic counselor, and representatives from the public health, pharmacy, and research fields. Touring the I.P. Village gave students an opportunity to explore roles and responsibilities through the perspective of different healthcare professionals.

Cash prizes were awarded to three teams. First place ($3,000) went to a team representing Northeastern AHEC. Second place ($2,000) and third place ($1,000) teams represented South Central AHEC.

Thank you to all who participated and made this program possible and another success!

Additional photos are posted and publicly available on the Wisconsin AHEC Facebook page (see photo albums).
"Day at the Capitol" event facilitates dialogue between AHEC alumni, Wisconsin legislators

The Wisconsin AHEC “Day at the Capitol” event was held in Madison on September 18, 2015. This day-long event was hosted by the AHEC Program Office, with 85 participants registered including AHEC alumni (current high school and college students), staff, board members, past and current Primary Care Clerkship medical students, and state legislators. The goal was to establish connections with state legislators and deliver first-hand testimonials about AHEC programs and health professions education. During the event, 48 meetings were conducted in the offices of 46 legislators, and six legislators came in person to address the entire group.

The day began with current policy experts discussing their experiences in healthcare policy. Participants listened to talks by Department of Health Service Secretary Kitty Rhoades; Jan Klawitter, MA, of the Wisconsin Public Health Association Public Affairs Committee; Liz Feder, PhD, of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute; and John Eich of the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health. According to post-event evaluations, attendees found the presentations very valuable. These experts set the tone for the day. Thoughtful remarks followed from six state legislators, who described their legislative journeys. The participating State Representatives and State Senators included Rep. Gary Hebl; Rep. Chris Taylor; Sen. Jennifer Shilling; Sen. Luther Olsen; Rep. John Nygren; and Sen. Mark Miller. Several legislators discussed their work in public health advocacy, while others spoke about their rural upbringing and how it influences their outlook.

AHEC Alumni brought different levels of experience with them when they met with legislators. Several had prior experience in legislative advocacy, including former CHIP intern and current medical student in the UW WARM program Jon Fricke, and former CHIP intern Abbie Zellner. For Abbie, creating dialogue with legislators was something she experienced during her CHIP internship with AHEC. While in Sauk County, she met with local representatives and senators to talk about her work at the health department.

“This event gave me confidence to meet with legislators and discuss these issues,” Abbie said. “I found the legislators were open-minded, and I truly felt empowered, as if I was making a difference.”

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Abbie expressed these sentiments during the training session directly following the state representatives and senators. She emphasized the importance of public health advocates speaking with their local legislators. Many students mentioned the value of hearing encouragement from someone their own age. One student commented: “Abbie’s speech made me feel relaxed about talking with legislators and helped me realize it’s not meant to be scary.”

After Abbie’s remarks about her summer experience, Dr. Dipesh Navsaria, MPH, MSLIS, MD, shared advice about how to discuss public health and education with legislators. One respondent noted, “Dr. Navsaria provided a lot of very helpful and useful tips, and he was very engaging!”

The encouragement from experienced advocates helped participants facilitate dialogue later that day during face-to-face meetings with legislators and staff representing the students’ hometowns at the state Capitol building. Many participants expressed this was their favorite part of the day.

Morgan Haefner, statewide communications assistant intern in the AHEC Program Office, attended meetings with legislators representing her hometown of Appleton. It was the first time she spoke with legislative staff, and she found it to be a positive experience. “I enjoyed talking about what I do at AHEC,” Morgan said, “but what was even more inspiring was listening to the high school campers from my AHEC region discuss how the program influenced their academic and professional decisions. Their inspiration didn’t affect just me – the legislative staffers were visibly influenced, too.”

The day of learning, advocating and communicating concluded with debriefing about the outcomes. Participants recognized that AHEC Day at the Capitol achieved its goals of initiating dialogue and empowering students to engage in future advocacy work. Wisconsin AHEC looks forward to sustaining these new relationships throughout the year.

By the Numbers:

48 meetings were conducted with
46 different legislators
**Community Health Internship Program (CHIP) — Spotlights**

During summer 2015, the AHEC Community Health Internship Program placed 59 students in statewide internships and an additional 26 students at 19 Milwaukee-area sites **(85 total)**. Below are two featured examples of intern experiences.

**Intern:** Samantha Wong  
**Placement:** Marshfield Clinic: Marshfield Dental Center  
**AHEC Region:** North Central

Samantha Wong, a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison pursuing degrees in biology and a pre-dental track, worked on an oral health literacy pilot study at the Marshfield Clinic, and also created and gave presentations on health innovation topics for the research foundation, informing community members about the progressive integration of health care and technology in our world today.

“This internship provided several opportunities to develop skills that will be helpful in my future,” Samantha said. “Since I want to become a pediatric dentist, I tremendously benefited from the job shadowing experiences I had.”

Originally from the Chicago area, Samantha learned a lot from her rural placement. She was surprised to hear some of the reasons patients gave as to why their teeth or overall health was in poor condition.

“Growing up in a well-developed area, I learned early on that oral health and going to the dentist and doctor is very important for being healthy. Therefore, going to Marshfield and learning about how some people don’t care about their health was a little bit of culture shock to me. But it provided me a new perspective on the community and allowed me to experience things I probably wouldn't have had without this internship.”

Samantha also enjoyed working with her mentor, who she said offered invaluable lessons.

“Being able to work with a mentor was one of the highlights of the internship because not only did he play on my current strengths, but he also taught me something new every day, strengthened my weaknesses and valued my opinion on some of his research. In addition, he also stated that mentorship with him does not stop after the internship, which is a great feeling to have since he taught me so much in so little time.”

After CHIP, Samantha plans on pursuing dental school and specializing in pediatric dentistry.

“Being able to job shadow at the Marshfield Clinic: Marshfield Dental Center influenced me on where I plan on working in the future. With so much variety in the patients and cases the dentists and hygienists see each day (due to the rural-ness of the area), I would love to work in that kind of atmosphere.”

**Intern:** Amanda Ross  
**Placement:** Juneau County Health Department  
**AHEC Region:** Scenic Rivers

Amanda, a recent graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, spent her summer diving into public health near her hometown of Wilson, Wisconsin, at the Juneau County Health Department.

“I am originally from a rural area in southwestern Wisconsin, so it was nice to intern in my hometown area because I was personally aware of the struggles community members faced,” Amanda said. “Returning to my hometown as an intern was eye opening because I got to help improve health and wellness through various interventions that I didn't even know existed. It was nice to have the ability to give back to my community in some way.”

As an intern, Amanda led informative events about the local WIC clinic, and car seat check and tobacco compliance check initiatives. Amanda said the projects the department was working on also helped her decide where to intern.

“What attracted me to the site was the option of creating a Health and Safety Resource Guide,” Amanda said. “It sounded like a project with a lot of community involvement and outreach, which fit my outgoing personality perfectly.”

Amanda acquired many skills throughout her internship, such as organizing and implementing community events, communication, creativity, taking initiative and working closely with a supervisor.

“I was extremely lucky to have MacKensie Pampuch as my mentor. She was personable, flexible, and very knowledgeable about the field. The staff at the Juneau County Health Department was just as enjoyable to work with as MacKensie.”

After CHIP, Amanda accepted a Farm to School AmeriCorps Service position at the Winnebago County Health Department, where she continues her public health career.

“In public health, community involvement and strong communication is essential. It’s important to maintain strong, positive relationships with stakeholders, and remember the goals at task. These goals are important so the group and coalition does not become stagnant. It’s also equally important to reflect on past goals, and recognize the successes and learn from the failures.”
AHEC Alum Amanda Lam Wins Monato Rural Health Prize for her Essay about Wisconsin Express

The 23rd Annual $2,500 rural health prize was awarded to Amanda Lam, a second-year student in the UW School of Medicine and Public Health, for her essay “Māēhnowesēkiyah: We Will all Be Well.” Amanda is a 2015 Wisconsin Express alum. She experienced a week-long immersion into the Menominee Native American tribe during Wisconsin Express.

The Hermes Monato, Jr. Prize is awarded yearly to the writer of the best rural health paper. The competition is open to all students of the UW System, including recent graduates. According to prize requirements, winning essays like Amanda’s contain the following attributes: relevant to rural communities, innovative, practical, multi-disciplinary, improves quality of care, team/relationship oriented, applicability to networking and cooperatives.

The Menominee/Shawano placement provided Amanda a historical perspective of termination and restoration of the tribe, with visits to the tribal clinic, College of the Menominee Nation, Māēhnowesēkiyah Treatment Center and other community organizations. Goals of the trip include learning about health disparities affecting the community and exploring resident engagement, both of which were highlighted in her essay.

“As a medical student who just completed her first year, joined with students in pre-med, pre-PA, nursing, psychology and public health programs, I became attuned to the importance of culture; of physical, mental, and spiritual healing; and of interdisciplinary approaches to restoring the health of this rural community,” Amanda wrote.

Her essay described the sociological, political and religious history of the Menominee. The Menominee tribe was a federally recognized tribe in 1973 and later returned to reservation status in 1975. Amanda wrote about the historical presence of poverty, familial disruption, abuse, neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse, incarceration and racism in the tribe.

As a result, she wondered where people ground themselves amidst these tragedies. While “Western science often places humans at the top of the biological hierarchy,” Amanda writes, “Indigenous science places humans no more or less than any other organism. Perhaps it is in the spirit of Netāēnawemâkanak that … suggests we remove our shoes to remove the barrier between us and Mother Earth.”

Ultimately, Amanda determined healing in the community was found in reconnecting with tradition, while taking time to make new traditions. From her experience, she garnered an idea of integrating health with cultural norms, especially health care not easily accepted by the community.

“Māēhnowesēkiyah means “we will all be well,” alluding to how achieving wellness takes a community effort,” Amanda wrote. “Although my student days are filled with learning the science of the human body, I now see a bigger picture and the connection of culture and spirit to healing, especially at Māēhnowesēkiyah [Treatment Center].”
Courtney Saxler completes year-long MARPHLI Fellowship

Courtney Saxler, MPH, the Community Health Programs Coordinator at the Wisconsin Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program Office, recently completed a year-long fellowship with the MidAmerica Center for Public Health Practice (MCPHP) located at the University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Public Health. The MidAmerica Regional Public Health Leadership Institute (MARPHLI) is a fellowship program for public health professionals who demonstrate dedication to leadership improvement. MARPHLI emphasizes personal, organizational, and community development.

As a MARPHLI fellow, Courtney participated in three retreats with national speakers, webinars and a year-long project. The mission of MCPHP is based on the Healthy People 2020 health objectives (Health Resources and Services Administration) and strives to create prepared leaders for today’s public health world. Courtney’s project as a MARPHLI fellow involved enhancing the leadership development in the already existing Community Health Internship Program (CHIP). She worked with MCPHP and UW-Madison’s Center for Leadership Initiative (CLI) to offer a new leadership workshop and facilitate leadership skills. Moving forward, Courtney hopes to develop a more structured leadership toolkit in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Masters in Public Health Program.

AHEC Summer Programs

Wisconsin Express

College students from across the state attend a week-long immersion experience that places them in a host community that is medically underserved. Participants interact with local health care professionals and participate in interactive learning exercises, group projects and community activities.

2016 Dates: May 15 - May 20

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.

2016 Dates: June 6 - July 29

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, visit: www.ahec.wisc.edu/health-careers-summer-camps.

2016 Camp Dates:

1. Fox Valley Area Camp - Oshkosh (Northeast AHEC)
   June 26 - 30, 2016

2. Lakeshore Camp - Manitowoc (Northeast AHEC)
   July 10 - 14, 20146

3. La Crosse Camp (Scenic Rivers AHEC)
   June 26 - 29, 2016

4. Platteville Camp (Scenic Rivers AHEC)
   June 12-15, 2016

5. Madison Camp (South Central AHEC)
   June 19 - 23, 2016

6. Stevens Point Camp (North Central AHEC)
   July 10- 13, 2016