

Area Health Education Centers (AHEC)

In September 2023, Wabash General Hospital became the host site for the Southeast Illinois Area Health Education Center (AHEC). Federally funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), AHEC offers programs and services to improve the supply, distribution, retention, and quality of healthcare in rural and underserved areas of the United States. Together, Wabash General Hospital and AHEC are working to increase the exposure of rural healthcare opportunities to these future professionals.

AHEC works to improve health care for the underserved by enriching learning environments for current students in the health profession, increasing access to learning, providing professional development opportunities for health professionals, and promoting health careers to students.

The Southeast Illinois Area Health Education Center services 19 counties: Alexander, Clay, Crawford, Edwards, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jasper, Johnson, Lawrence, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, Richland, Saline, Wabash, Wayne, White, and Williamson.

Pre-College Pipeline Activities

- Job Shadowing Experiences
- Seats to VirtualJobShadow.com
 - Access to self-assessments, career and life-skills videos, resume/cover letter builders
- Classroom-based health careers presentations
- Mentorship and Career Advising
- College preparation support

Community Immersion Experiences

- Rural/Underserved Health Experiences
 - A 3-5 day experience for college and graduate/professional students
- Community Education on core topics
- Mental Health First Aid classes
- Participation in Health Fairs and Expos
- Partnerships with Summer Health Camps

Health Professions Recruitment and Retention

- Job shadowing for current health professions students
- Field placements- assistance finding internships, apprenticeships, or community-based rotations required for school
- Continuing Education

AHEC Scholars Program

- An innovative program for undergrad and graduate students enrolled in a health professions degree or certificate program for the next 2 years.
- AHEC Scholars is comprised of the following elements:
 - Completion of community-based experiential training includes job shadowing, 3-5 day immersion experiences, or other experiences pre-approved by an AHEC director. Suppose your current program of study contains experiences or clinical practicums based in rural or underserved settings. In that case, these hours may count towards this element.
 - Completion of virtual, self-paced training modules covering key topic issues in underserved healthcare.
- In year 2, completion of a Community Service Learning Project (CSL) with other Scholars.
- There are opportunities for students to attend monthly speakers and various events, subscribe to virtual life-skills videos, and so much more.
- Conditional to funding, students will be offered a yearly stipend to help offset any costs to the student.
- Scholars receive a nationally recognized AHEC Scholars Certificate and graduation cords upon completion.

If you would like more information or have any questions about AHEC, please get in touch with the Southeast AHEC Director, **Heather Greenwood**, at **hgreenwood@wabashgeneral.com**