

California

AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER

SCHOLARS PROGRAM IN COMMUNITY HEALTH

The severe shortage of primary care health professionals is California's next big drought. Nearly half of all Californians live in regions with insufficient primary medical, dental and mental health services. We must ensure that the health care workforce is better prepared and committed to meeting the needs of our communities.

Launched in Fall 2018, the California Statewide Area Health Education Center (AHEC) recruited its inaugural class of AHEC Scholars in Community Health with 66 scholars completing the year's requirements. This program enables high-potential students in the health professions to explore primary care with an emphasis on community health and interdisciplinary practice in medically underserved communities. AHEC scholars and their degree-granting institutions will be connected to a local AHEC Center and an expansive network of clinics and resources spanning 13 regions in California. These clinics are affiliated with AHEC, the California Office of Rural Health and the California Primary Care Association and will serve as AHEC Scholar training sites.

CLINICAL EXPOSURE & IMPACTFUL MENTORSHIP

In conjunction with the student's own health professional program, AHEC scholars will enhance their clinical training with knowledge and skills development in community health. Guided by selected mentors and preceptors from the community, scholars will receive team-based clinical training and learn how a clinical setting responds to the health needs of an underserved or rural community. Scholars gain strong connections to professional networks, health service organizations and lifelong mentors.

The California AHEC Curriculum for Scholars in Community Health is a direct response to the growing need for clinicians capable of applying new models of care with underserved populations. The curriculum was designed in partnership with community leaders, vetted by clinical educators, and endorsed by state and professional agencies.

Curriculum modules present diverse learning opportunities that include webinars, case-based learning, self-guided research, interviews, direct skills development, and clinic and community exploration.



SCHOLARS PROGRAM

A two-year longitudinal, interdisciplinary curriculum divided into three components: community-oriented education, clinical training and community-based hands-on activities that supplement students' existing health training programs.*

*One-year option is available for medical assistants and community health workers

"AHEC gave me exposure to providing comprehensive care for the homeless and medically underserved. I felt empowered!"

- Student Participant



PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

	COMMUNITY-ORIENTED TRAINING	CLINICAL TRAINING	COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH PROJECT
HOURS	Minimum: 40 hours each year x 2 years = 80 hours total	Minimum: 40 hours each year x 2 years = 80 hours total (variable combination)	
RESOURCE	CA AHEC Scholars in Community Health Curriculum	Scholar's school clinical training site	AHEC-sponsored community clinic in underserved area
VENUE	Online	On-Site	

- 40 hours/year of online didactic training
- 40 hours/year of team-based, clinical and community-based experiences in an underserved site
- Student-created personalized learning plan that is self-paced and flexible

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & LASTING CONTRIBUTIONS

Scholars work with a mentor and complete a community-based health project that addresses a health need in a clinical setting. The local AHEC Center Director must approve the health project. Past student projects have influenced program development of teen clinics, informed clinicians on smoking habits and diabetes literacy levels of the local community, and increased patient access to language-appropriate health materials.

THREE-PART CURRICULUM

1. Ten modules: Curriculum modules present diverse learning opportunities that provide a community health immersive learning experience:

- Quality Improvement
- Leadership & Advocacy
- Patient Engagement
- Community Engagement
- Patient-Centered Medical Home
- Team-Based Care
- Work-Life Balance
- Health Care Reform
- Medical Neighborhood
- Community-Based Health Project

Modules include interdisciplinary case studies and online learning tools (webinars, podcasts, etc.). Six core topic areas and sample subtopics are integrated into the modules.

2. Clinical Training: Team-based clinical training in an underserved or rural area is facilitated by the scholar's preceptor and/or program faculty and local AHEC Center.

3. Community-Based Health Project: Facilitated by the local AHEC Center Director, scholar's preceptor and/or program faculty, the scholar will collaborate with a community clinic or other underserved site to help address a health need. The local AHEC Center Director must approve the health project.

CERTIFICATE IN COMMUNITY HEALTH

Upon completion of their health professions program graduation requirements and the supplemental AHEC Scholars Program learning tools and resources, scholars earn a Certificate in Community Health from the CA Statewide AHEC Program endorsed by the California Primary Care Association and the Rural Health Association.



PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Students are eligible to participate if they are (1) enrolled in a program with clinical training requirements that ends in a terminal degree/certificate, (2) interested in primary care and community health and (3) motivated to address health needs in underserved communities. Health professions students include but are not limited to medical, medical assistant, physician assistant, nursing, nurse practitioner, dental, clinical psychology, public health, allied health and community health worker students.

CONTACT

For more information, please contact your local AHEC Center Director or the CA Statewide AHEC Program Office at 559-499-6624, ahec@fresno.ucsf.edu or visit cal-ahec.org.

AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER

The California Statewide AHEC Program's mission is to improve access to and quality of health care for underserved populations of California using academic-community partnerships for health education and workforce training. For over 40 years, the CA AHEC Program, with its 13 centers throughout the state, has developed and enhanced education and training networks within communities, academic institutions and community-based organizations. The CA AHEC is part of a national program sponsored by the Health Resources and Services Administration. Today, 56 AHEC programs with more than 235 centers operate in 48 states and the District of Columbia.

