



Area Health Education Center

Capital Connection

S U M M E R 2 0 0 8



Organization Introduction

Capital AHEC is one of nine centers throughout the east Texas region that partner with your community to improve population health, especially the underserved, by creating partnerships among community and academic organizations. Capital AHEC services 1.3 million people in a 7 county region surrounding Austin, Texas. Funding support for AHEC programs and centers combines federal, state, public, and/or private resources.



Four program areas have been created to promote healthcare workforce development within our service area. These program areas include Health Careers Promotion (HCP) which focuses on recruitment of potential students into healthcare professionals. Community-Based Education (CBE) places students in underserved communities to experience real-world primary care medicine. Health Literacy focuses on helping communities recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and teaches them how to help themselves. Practice Entry and Support (PE&S) is the newest program area and is designed to introduce all of our program areas into local communities. Through these initiatives, we assist communities to ensure all individuals are provided with quality healthcare as we meet the needs of individuals



Rural Health Trifecta

Don't miss this year's Rural Health Trifecta which combines the Texas Rural Health Association, Texas Hospital Association, and the Office of Rural Community Affairs. The conference will be held August 5-7 at the Hyatt Regency in Austin. You can register online at www.texashospitalonline.org/trifecta. You can also register on-site the day of the conference. For more information on the conference please contact Lynn Heimerl at lheimerl@capitalahec.org or by calling (512) 472-8921 ext. 305.

Program Updates

Health Literacy Ventanilla de Salud Project

The Ventanilla de Salud program was developed in 2004 as a way to address the health needs of the growing Hispanic population in the United States. It is a collaboration between the Mexican Consular network and local health advocacy and education organizations. By operating within a Consulate, the Ventanilla de Salud has direct access to an often hard-to-reach population. Through outreach, educational workshops, and referrals to health and human services, the Ventanilla de Salud is able to promote preventative healthcare in an extremely effective manner.

In late April 2008, the Consulate General of Mexico, Austin opened its doors to host the nation's 24th Ventanilla de Salud. Capital AHEC played a large role in steering the program into existence; recognizing its capacity for promoting health literacy and disease prevention among a vulnerable population. Since then,

Capital AHEC has acted as the local parent agency, providing logistical and operational support.

In the short time since its inception, the Ventanilla de Salud has had measurable success; providing health information and access to resources to over 1,300 people. Eight partner agencies contribute their time and efforts to help raise health literacy awareness among this population. Through this daily outreach to the Consular clientele, the Ventanilla de Salud is helping build a stronger, healthier community for everyone.

The Ventanilla de Salud is still expanding and welcomes all suggestions concerning outreach and possible funding sources. For suggestions or further information on the program, please contact Annie Crawford at acrawford@capitalahec.org.

Community Based Education

Since 1996, Capital AHEC has been working with the University of Texas Medical Branch to assist with the coordination of medical student community-based education. As a link between Texas medical schools and the Austin area community, Capital AHEC is called upon to locate volunteer physicians who will accept 3rd and 4th year medical students for one month periods within their clinic.

These rotations allow the medical student to work with a practicing physician from various specialties, though our main emphasis is on primary care. Capital AHEC has also coordinated the Austin-based UTMB student housing for over 10 years.

Currently, Capital AHEC works with approximately 150 Austin area physicians who act as mentors for UTMB medical students. During the 2007-2008 academic calendar, Capital AHEC worked to coordinate rotations and housing for over 100 medical students. These students worked predominantly in Travis, Hays and Williamson counties.

If you are a physician interested in volunteering your time to teach medical students, please contact Brian Sullivan at bsullivan@capitalahec.org. We will work with any medical school in Texas to ensure a quality educational experience for the students that come to the Austin area.

Program Updates

Practice Entry and Support

In September of 2007 Capital AHEC contacted the Giddings area leaders about incorporating our services in their community. With the help of the Giddings Economic Development Corporation, we went to work in their rural area.

First Capital AHEC took an economic snapshot of the community to assess the resources and needs. With that information the Economic Development Corporation created a plan of action that included many of Capital AHEC's services.

Introducing our different program areas to the community has proven to be a success. Through Health Careers Promotions we have given four classroom presentations to the sixth grade students as well as partnered with the Giddings ISD to offer a free five day summer camp for middle school students.

Our Health Literacy efforts have included teaching students about sunscreen prevention, geriatric sensitivity, and proper hand washing. We are also working with the community School Health Advisory Council (SHAC).

The Community Based Education group has also contacted local physicians to set the frame work to eventually place 3rd and 4th year medical students in the underserved area.

Capital AHEC would like to congratulate the Giddings Economic Development Corporation for their continued work in promoting better health in their community. Based on their efforts they recently were awarded the Texas Rural Health Association's Communities that Care Award.

Health Career Promotions

This year Capital AHEC hosted two Health Career Summer Camps. The first was held June 9th-13th in Giddings for 7th and 8th grade Giddings ISD students. During the week students toured an eye care facility, ambulance, veterinary clinic, and St. Mark's Hospital. Hands-on activities were also held throughout the week to teach students about the different careers in healthcare.

Our second summer camp was held June 16th-20th at the University of Texas for high school students in the Capital AHEC service area. This overnight camp gave students the opportunity to explore the many careers in healthcare while building team skills they can use in the future. Throughout the week students toured the UT School of Nursing, the Dell Children's Hospital, participated in the University Medical Center—Brackenridge Simulation Lab, spoke to local health professionals about their careers, and shadowed St. David's staff in their career interest.

Both camps were a huge success due to the strong support from local area businesses and healthcare facilities. We look forward to offering the camp again next year in order to encourage more students to consider a career in healthcare. For more information on our summer camp please visit our website at www.capitalahec.org.



Top Photo: Giddings Health Careers Summer Camp participants at the Giddings Eye Care Center. Bottom Photo: AHEC Health Careers Summer Camp participants.

Message From the Director

I hope you have enjoyed our inaugural edition of the Capital Connection. This e-newsletter is designed to be a quick, convenient and worthwhile reading experience for our community partners.

The AHEC program was developed by Congress in 1971 to recruit, train and retain a health professions workforce committed to underserved populations. The AHEC program helps bring the resources of academic medicine to address local community health needs. The strength of the AHEC Network is its ability to creatively adapt national initiatives to help address local and regional healthcare issues.

As was mentioned in the organizational introduction, Capital AHEC is part of a larger East Texas AHEC program out of the University of Texas Medical Branch. And ETAHEC is part of a larger statewide AHEC network that also includes West Texas AHEC out of Texas Tech Health Science Center in Lubbock and South Texas AHEC out of the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio. We are also part of a national network.

Today, 54 AHEC programs with more than 200 centers operate in almost every state and the District of Columbia. Approximately 120 medical schools and 600 nursing and allied health schools partner with AHECs to improve health for underserved and under-represented populations.

Capital AHEC is committed to serving our service area which consists of a seven county region including Bastrop, Blanco, Caldwell, Hays, Lee, Travis and Williamson Counties, in a community driven fashion. In addition, the state and national AHEC network provide rich resources and vast experience for local grassroots efforts.

As a Capital AHEC partner we thank you for your continued support and look forward to building on our successes together in the future. If you have any comments or recommendations we would be glad to hear from you.

Upcoming Events

Rural Health Trifecta
Aug. 5-7
Available On-Site Registration

Counselor Breakfast
TBD

**Capital AHEC Advisory
Board Meeting**
Oct. 8

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