THE FLORIDA AHEC NETWORK

The Florida Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Network is pleased to present this Annual Report for 2008 highlighting some of the accomplishments of our extensive, statewide system for health professional education and support.

As the economic climate in Florida suffered from the downturn in the housing and financial markets, additional strain has been placed on the state’s healthcare safety net system. The number of Floridians under age 65 without health insurance rose to 3.8 million—almost one of every four—and an additional 4 million Floridians had inadequate access to healthcare due to lack of insurance or the shortage of primary care providers.

The Florida AHEC Network is the workforce development, training and education mechanism for the state’s healthcare safety net programs. Established by Section 381.0402 of the Florida Statutes, it is a nationally recognized, statewide system of five AHEC Programs administered by the medical schools of Florida State University, Nova Southeastern University, University of Florida, University of Miami and University of South Florida. These programs oversee 10 regional, community-based AHEC Centers that work closely with local healthcare and educational partners in all 67 counties to address the needs of rural and medically underserved communities.

With a focus on improving the quality, geographic distribution and diversity of the primary care healthcare workforce, AHEC facilitates the delivery of healthcare to underserved communities by placing health professions students, residents and faculty in community health centers, public sector medical clinics and other medical safety net sites. AHEC works to reduce the burden of health disparities by providing preventative health services, screenings and information to minority, immigrant and hard-to-reach communities. AHEC improves the distribution of healthcare providers working in safety net sites by recruiting providers to work in these areas and supporting them with programs that help them stay current with best practices. And with a focus toward the future needs of Florida’s health professions workforce, AHEC nurtures a new generation of health care providers through its youth recruitment and enrichment programs. These programs attract a diverse and talented cross section of youth interested in healthcare and provide them with the guidance to become successful professionals.

The Florida AHEC Network invites you to review this snapshot of our innovative programs, enthusiastic students and dedicated health practitioners as we work to impact the lives of almost 8 million of the state’s neediest residents.
In FY 2008, the Florida AHEC Network received $11.8 million in funds from the legislature to implement local programs and services for rural and medically underserved communities throughout the state.

In turn, the Florida AHEC Network amplified the state’s investment by 78%, providing a total return of $21.1 million in the value of actual services delivered. AHEC accomplished this through a variety of activities highlighted in this annual report.

Almost $6 million of state funds supported direct patient care services by AHEC preceptors, residents, and students who provided healthcare to an estimated 1,613,000 Floridians. In fact, more than 7,400 health professions students and residents were mobilized to provide 1,114,522 hours of healthcare to Floridians last year. AHEC also allocated almost $1.4 million to conduct 32,700 blood pressure, body mass, cholesterol, diabetes and depression screenings, and provide health promotion programs to more than 95,000 individuals.

The dollar amount placed on such care is valued at almost $19.5 million.

Direct patient care services must be linked with recruitment, training and retention programs in order to produce a lasting impact on the healthcare system. AHEC allocated over $1.1 million of state funds to conduct community-based programs for health professionals to enhance the quality of patient care and safety. For example, AHEC provided almost 76,000 hours of continuing education programs on topics such as cardiovascular health, mental illness and minority health to more than 10,000 practitioners who care for the underserved.

The dollar amount of these and other services is estimated at over $1.5 million.

Finally, AHEC allocated $1.7 million to address the state’s worsening healthcare workforce shortage. AHEC’s intensive health careers enrichment and recruitment activities are designed to engage students who are pursuing health careers and retain professionals in medically underserved communities and safety net sites. Last year, AHEC delivered almost 350,000 hours of health careers programs to more than 1,100 primary, community college, technical and university undergraduate students around the state.

The Florida AHEC Network’s partnership with local health departments, community health centers, universities, colleges and non-profit organizations throughout the state create unique opportunities to address the special needs of medically underserved individuals. This report contains examples of the many innovative approaches the Florida AHEC Network uses to reach, serve and care for many of Florida’s most vulnerable citizens.
Providing Care for Children

Spotlight: Dr. Christie Sain

“TALK the TALK:”

SERVICE/LEARNING combines the experience of community service with the benefits of academic study and personal reflection. By exposing students to real-life issues and solutions, students gain valuable insight into their future careers.

With ten centers strategically located throughout Florida and program offices at each of the state’s five medical schools, the Florida AHEC Network is able to promote community health and serve as a vehicle for matching the educational needs of health professions faculty and students with the healthcare needs of local communities.

Service/Learning is extensively used by AHECs as a means to accomplish educational objectives for health professions students while delivering services to underserved populations.

CLINICAL TRAINING is learning that takes place in community-based healthcare settings where residents and students from medicine, nursing, dentistry and other health professions apply the knowledge gained in the classroom to caring for patients.

Dr. Christie Sain

“I feel that I have come full circle”, said Dr. Christie Sain when asked about her roles teaching medical students at the FSU College of Medicine Clinical Learning Center and practicing medicine at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital.

As a graduate of the medical school’s inaugural class, Dr. Sain completed her residency with Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare Family Medicine Residency Program this past June and accepted a position at Patient’s First, a primary care clinic in Tallahassee. Before being accepted to medical school at FSU, the aspiring doctor worked as a medical assistant at Patient’s First to gain clinical experience to become an even more competitive applicant.

Dr. Sain became familiar with AHEC as a first year medical student when she was selected to work with Big Bend AHEC on a cardiovascular community health education project. Wanting to provide accurate information to those in need, Dr. Sain found herself presenting to audiences at hospitals, gyms, supermarkets, and county fairs. These sometimes unique venues not only taught her methods of effectively educating people about heart health but also honed her skills in event planning, public speaking and thinking on her feet.

“Working in rural underserved communities teaching people how to stay healthy was most rewarding for me.”

Dr. Sain also coordinates Tar Wars, a tobacco prevention program for elementary children conducted by the Florida Academy of Family Physicians. She hopes to partner with AHEC to reach even more children with the anti-tobacco message.

“I am not sure where the future will take me,” says Dr. Sain, “but I am forever grateful for my experiences at FSU and with AHEC. They were invaluable to me.”
Nadaje Waters, a fourth-grader at George W. Monroe Elementary School in Quincy, actually looks forward to her annual physical at the school’s clinic. Nadaje lives in Gadsden County where rates of teen pregnancy, infant mortality, heart disease, obesity and diabetes are the highest in Florida. Gadsden has no hospital, few primary care physicians and alarming health statistics. Eighty percent of the children at Monroe Elementary receive free or reduced lunches. For Nadaje and many of her classmates, this might be the only preventive healthcare they receive all year.

Preventive healthcare isn’t likely to be a priority in a town with a large migrant population and one of the highest poverty rates in Florida. Twenty percent of the county’s residents live below the poverty level, a third of the adults don’t have high school diplomas, and the county’s graduation rate is just 54 percent. But even fourth-grader Nadaje is aware of the precarious state of healthcare in Gadsden County.

“It’s kind of weird,” she said, “because if you get hurt really bad and the clinic can’t help you, there’s nothing. Anything can happen to you. There’s no hospital, so you’ve got to go all the way to a different place. It’s really bad.” That different place is neighboring Leon County, home to the area’s nearest hospital. It’s a 45 minute drive well known to Quincy’s residents but reserved for true emergencies.

“It’s a hardship on a lot of the parents or guardians to get their children to Leon County for health services,” said Doris Drake, coordinator of Gadsden County school health programs.

FSU College of Medicine faculty members Maggie Blackburn, MD and Elena Reyes, PhD began looking for ways to help expand school-based health clinics. Working with the local health department and the school district, they established full-service primary care and mental health clinics at Monroe Elementary and James A. Shanks Middle School. “School-based health clinics have been shown to provide a healthcare safety net for school-aged children,” Dr. Blackburn said. “We believe this project will have a real impact.”

Services offered in the clinics include annual physical exams and immunizations, behavioral risk assessments, diagnosis and treatment of major illnesses, chronic disease prevention and management, group and individual counseling and crisis intervention. The project is funded by the FSU Dance Marathon and the FSU AHEC Program.

In addition to services provided by Dr. Blackburn and Dr. Reyes, FSU AHEC supports Susan LaJoie, ARNP, a full-time nurse practitioner in the school clinics. On a typical day, she treats about 35 students in grades K-8. Most have minor ailments — ear infections, stomach aches, bumps and bruises. She makes sure these conditions don’t evolve into something more serious, and more costly.

Nadaje isn’t thinking about such outcomes the morning of her checkup. Her exam goes well and she is given a clean bill of health. As she scurries off to join her class for lunch, more students are lined up outside Ms. LaJoie’s door. Fortunately for these children, the FSU AHEC Program has helped create a line of defense between them and illness.

BY the NUMBERS:

1,114,522: Last year, the Florida AHEC Network provided over 1,114,00 hours of clinical training to health professions students and residents at community-based settings in order to expose them to the needs, challenges and practice opportunities that exist in these locations.

68% of these hours took place in medically underserved sites.

25% increase: Since 2000, the Florida AHEC Network has increased its community-based clinical training hours for health professions students by 25%. This is the result of AHEC’s efforts to increase community-based training in existing health professions programs throughout the state and the creation of an additional medical school.

8 Million: The number of Floridians with inadequate access to medical care because of a lack of insurance or the shortage of healthcare providers.

4 Million: The number of Floridians of all ages without health insurance (a 38% increase over the past eight years).
Illie Grayer is a regular at the Valparaiso Senior Center (VSC) near Fort Walton Beach. There, the sixty-five year old grandmother and other elders from this largely rural community receive nutritious lunches each day and participate in a variety of programs to help maintain their physical and emotional well being. Diagnosed with diabetes over 30 years ago, proper nutrition is extremely important to Mrs. Grayer. She is one of many seniors with chronic disease who also struggle with the challenges of rural life.

One out of every four Americans will be age 65 or older by 2030. To address the growing needs of elders living in rural communities, the University of Florida AHEC Program and its centers have collaborated with the Area Agency on Aging to conduct a series of health and wellness programs tailored to older adults. Conducted at senior centers and other rural community sites, the programs provide older adults with current information on topics such as diabetes treatment, osteoporosis, heart disease, depression, nutrition, fitness and medication management.

Mrs. Grayer says she has learned “many things to help me control my diabetes” after attending a diabetes education program conducted by West Florida AHEC. Likewise, Ellen Feacher, who participated in Big Bend AHEC’s 12-week evidence-based nutrition and exercise program Eat Better, Move More, says she not only makes better food choices but realizes that exercise is something to enjoy, “not a chore.” She’s dropped two dress sizes as a result!

The health and wellness programs conducted by UF AHEC also screen for conditions such as elevated blood glucose, low bone density and hypertension. These screenings help seniors identify risks, make changes to prevent disease onset or get treatment when problems exist. Seniors can also take advantage of medication reviews, depression assessments, and bone...
They are often transformed by the process. “They leave feeling enlightened, educated, empowered, hopeful, and little more in control. You can see it in their eyes, not to mention the glow and smile on their faces.”

Such successful education and screening programs have enabled seniors like Mrs. Feacher & Mrs. Grayer to learn from health professionals and obtain the necessary skills to prevent or manage chronic disease. VCS Assistant Manager Jessie Craft, herself a diabetic, says she appreciates the fact that participants are able to ask questions and “get very informative answers.” To date, Big Bend, North-east Florida, Suwannee River and West Florida AHECs have screened and educated nearly 11,000 seniors across 37 counties.

density screenings to determine the risk of developing osteoporosis. According to Pat Colvin, Senior Program Coordinator of Northeast Florida AHEC, many screening programs identify elders who are surprised to learn they have a problem. “We found two women with severe osteoporosis, completely unknown to them” she says.

The partnerships the UF AHEC Program has with local providers and agencies are vital for the expansion of services to the aging population. Helen Curtis, a Certified Diabetes Educator and Registered Dietician, collaborates with Suwannee River AHEC to provide their diabetes self-management classes. She empowers older adults to take control of their health through education. “Folks come in feeling defeated, failed, victimized, and hopeless,” she says.

Above: Moving more and eating better, participants at the Valparaiso Senior Center stay active and healthy with help from West Florida AHEC.

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The Florida AHEC Network would like to note the passing and contributions of one of its members, Mr. Don Keaton. Don worked at Big Bend AHEC and was known throughout the network for his melodious phone voice and the patience to resolve any issue or handle whatever need prompted a call to the Big Bend office. During his career with AHEC, Don also created a Disabilities Awareness program for adolescents to inspire them to overcome obstacles they might face along the path to health careers. His dedication, kindness and warmth will be greatly missed.
Start Motherhood with a Healthy Mouth

In Sarasota County, less than half of pregnant women visit a dentist during pregnancy. Two-thirds rarely or never floss. Why does this matter? It matters because an estimated 18% of pre-term births can be linked to maternal periodontal disease (PD), a chronic bacterial infection in the mouth. Infection from a mother’s mouth can travel through the bloodstream to the uterus and result in a pre-term or low birth weight baby.

In 2006, Gulfcoast South AHEC assigned a team of Interdisciplinary Community Health Scholars to work with the Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota County to create presentations and educational materials about the importance of good prenatal oral health.

This year, Healthy Start continued this program by training six AHEC Community Health Workers (CHWs) to present “Start Motherhood with a Healthy Mouth” to community members and providers in homes, churches and health fairs throughout Sarasota. Equipped with mouth models and supplies from the Sarasota Dental Association, the CHWs have educated almost 120 people to date about the relationship between pregnancy, PD and preterm birth.

BY the NUMBERS:

46%: The percentage of Florida medical school graduates selecting primary care who were placed in residency programs in the state from 2000-2008.

43rd Place: According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, Florida ranks near the bottom in terms of residency slots.

54%: The percentage of Florida medical students that chose primary care residency programs from 2000-2008. The national average is 38%

Medical Students Entering Primary Care and those Staying to Practice in Florida

While factors such as potential income, malpractice insurance fees, and student loan debt have led the number of Florida medical graduates selecting primary care to decrease, the percent of those electing primary care who choose to remain in Florida has been steady.
Ivette Del Castillo began her experience with Gulfcoast South AHEC in January 2008. At the time, she was beginning her last semester in the Florida Gulf Coast University Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program. After taking part in the Gulfcoast South AHEC Student Orientation, she completed her community rotations in Arcadia, Florida.

Arcadia is located in DeSoto County and the population is approximately 6,604 (2000 US Census). The population below the poverty level is 25.9% (2000 US Census). DeSoto County is considered to be a medically underserved area as well as a primary care, dental and mental health professional shortage area.

In April 2008, Ivette applied for and was chosen to participate in the Projects Addressing Community Topics (PACT) Service-Learning project which took place during a six-week period in May and June 2008. This year’s PACT Program took place in Arcadia, Florida and utilized the “Be Wise About Your Portion Size” curriculum created by the Florida Interagency Food and Nutrition Committee.

Her goal was to present the “Be Wise About Your Portion Size” curriculum a minimum of eight times to reach a minimum total of 150 attendees. In total, Ivette completed eleven presentations with over 200 total attendees. Ivette was able to reach a variety of age groups (from ages 2-8 at the Imagination Station Day Care to 65+ at the Senior Friendship Center of DeSoto County). Because Ivette is bilingual in English and Spanish, she was able to reach the Mexican-American community through Catholic Charities of DeSoto County and she also translated the lesson plans into Spanish for future use.

Ivette’s work will have a lasting impact on the Arcadia community. One of the participants from the Senior Friendship Center mentioned that she has a niece that runs a daycare program. She said that she would give her niece the information from the presentation to make sure the children at her daycare are being served the correct portion sizes. Another participant from the Senior Friendship Center, Edna Reitmore, said that the presentation made her want to “eat better and lose weight so that I can be more healthy to live longer to be with my family since they are my life.”

After PACT concluded, Ivette said that “I really enjoyed the internship and I liked the challenge of educating the community on nutrition, something I hadn’t done before. I felt a great sense of satisfaction educating and reaching an underserved population and hopefully making a positive difference in their health practices.”

In July 2008, Ivette passed her Nursing Boards and accepted a position as a Registered Nurse on the Medical-Surgical floor with Orthopedics at Doctors Hospital in Miami, Florida. In the future, she plans to complete her Master’s degree and pursue a career as an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner or a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist.
Since graduating from Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine (NSU-COM) in 1987, Michael Gervasi, D.O. has carved out a noteworthy career that encompasses a myriad of professional achievements and civic contributions. Along the way, the NSU AHEC Program has been instrumental in influencing many of the decisions which have shaped his career.

As a medical student, his training included an AHEC primary care rotation at a community health center serving the medically needy of Broward County. From this experience, Dr. Gervasi quickly recognized the great need and many rewards of caring for the underserved. After graduation, Dr. Gervasi went into private practice full-time as a board certified family medicine physician, but due to his ongoing commitment for the medically underserved, he also continued to volunteer his time seeing patients at the same community health center where he trained as a medical student. As time passed, it became clear to him that working in the community health center setting was the thing that he found most fulfilling.

In 1998, Dr. Gervasi sold his practice and accepted a position with Florida Community Health Centers, Inc. (FCHC) at their Fort Pierce clinic. In less than a year, he was appointed chief medical officer and vice president of clinical operations. For nearly a decade, he has been responsible for overseeing the provision of medical services at nine clinics that annually serve over 35,000 patients from the predominantly rural and underserved communities of Okeechobee, Port St. Lucie, Clewiston, Indiantown, and Fort Pierce. He has also contributed to the training of future physicians at these sites through a faculty appointment at NSU-COM. Dr. Gervasi sums up his early AHEC sponsored clinical rotations as having made “all the difference in the world” in influencing the decisions which have shaped his career.

Dr. Gervasi’s passion for delivering medical care to the underserved became so engrained into his professional fiber that his daughter, Heather Lutz, D.O., decided to follow in his footsteps. Dr. Lutz is a 2001 graduate of NSU-COM, where she also completed a three-month AHEC clinical rotation at Central Florida Health Care, Inc., a community health center organization providing comprehensive primary care services through five centers located in rural Highlands, Hardee and Polk Counties. After completing her residency training in family medicine, Dr. Lutz returned to Central Florida Health Care, Inc. where she is now Assistant Medical Director.

Like her father, Dr. Lutz is also influencing the next generation of physicians by mentoring undergraduate medical students from NSU-COM training at her center. “I have no doubt that my AHEC rotations here were a major factor in my becoming a rural physician” says Dr. Lutz, “I have enjoyed every second of being able to care for so many people that really need me.”
Pursuing the Path to Healthcare

Spirit in Caring for the Underserved

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT:

- Florida has the oldest physician workforce in the nation (26% over the age of 65).
- Only 9% of Florida’s physicians are age 35 or younger.
- Forty percent of registered nurses will be 50 years of age or older by 2010.
- Florida continues to be one of the fastest growing states in the country and is projected to grow 60% between 2000 and 2030.
- With 26% of Florida physicians over the age of 65, the Sunshine State has the oldest physician workforce in the nation.

BY the NUMBERS

350,000: Almost 350,000 hours of health enrichment programs were provide to students in grades K-12, as well as to students in technical schools, community colleges and universities. Of 1,104 students attending these programs, 75% were racially underrepresented or economically disadvantaged.

143%: Increase in number of youth involved in AHEC enrichment programs since 2000.

TALK the TALK:

CULTURALLY REFLECTIVE HEALTHCARE allows patients an opportunity to be treated by health care providers who are similar to their own racial/ethnic backgrounds. Patients rate their physicians’ decision-making styles as more participatory.

HEALTH CAREERS PIPELINE recruits young people, especially underrepresented minorities and disadvantaged youth, from elementary school to college, into health professions training programs and follows them through their professional training with the goal of having them practice in rural and underserved areas.

STUDENT ENRICHMENT programs such as health career camps, mentoring programs and academic preparatory courses are designed to generate interest in health careers particularly among disadvantaged and underrepresented youth.
Miami Edison High School’s student body is mainly Haitian in origin. Located in the Little Haiti section of Miami-Dade County, many of its students are recent immigrants to the United States struggling to learn English and assimilate into a new culture. For these students, access to healthcare is often limited by finances, cultural and linguistic barriers and unfamiliarity with the U.S. healthcare system. The University of Miami AHEC Program designed two important initiatives to bridge the gap between the disadvantaged students of Miami Edison High School and their essential healthcare needs.

The relationship with the high school began almost 3 years ago. Miami-Dade AHEC, in collaboration with a coalition of educational partners from Miami-Dade County, developed an intensive mentorship program that paired AHEC staff with a select group of Haitian American students keenly interested in health careers. Through their AHEC mentors, the students received monthly individualized career counseling, learned about topics such as hypertension, first aid/sports medicine, breast cancer, nutrition and fitness, and visited healthcare facilities throughout the region. AHEC also provided sessions on life skills, health careers exploration and test preparation to create and sustain strong foundations for pursuing post secondary education. AHEC will continue to mentor the students through each stage of their education and continue to provide them with a continuum of programs to help them achieve their ultimate career goals.

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BY the NUMBERS

33,000: Last year, AHEC conducted almost 33,000 screenings to detect the presence of disease or identify individuals at risk.

9,300: Over 300 trained AHEC community health workers (CHWs) provided health education on topics such as breastfeeding, child health, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes to more than 9,300 at-risk Floridians.

95%: Almost all of these individuals were in medically underserved communities.
support of the Economic Opportunity Family Health Center to expand the school’s existing nursing clinic to include the services of a physician. Last year, Dr. Marie Denise Gervais, a Haitian American faculty member from the UM Miller School of Medicine fluent in French, Creole, Spanish and English, was chosen to staff the clinic. In addition to providing medical care for the high school students, Dr. Gervais also served as a preceptor and provided supervision to third year medical students assigned to the clinic as part of the Primary Care Clerkship. The clinic experienced tremendous success under Dr. Gervais, who quickly earned the respect and trust of both her young patients and their families. Based on that success, plans are underway to increase the number of medical students under her guidance and expand services to the surrounding community.

Through these interventions, the UM AHEC Program has impacted healthcare on several fronts: Haitian American youth interested in health careers have support to help them accomplish their goals; one of the most medically under-served communities in the region has greater access to healthcare; and future physicians gain expertise in providing culturally relevant healthcare to their future patients.

Above: Haitian American students aspiring to be health professionals receive support and guidance from Miami-Dade AHEC

FKAHEC: CHAMPions of Children’s Health

The Florida Keys Area Health Education Center (FKAHEC) is committed to the health and wellbeing of children in our community. In collaboration with Monroe County Government and the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, FKAHEC formed the Children’s Health Assessment and Medical Program (CHAMP) to provide medical services to children birth to five years of age from low income/working poor families, families transitioning from TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), or families with children in protective services.

Through CHAMP, a team of clinicians visits over forty sites throughout Monroe County including early education programs, day care centers and private homes. For some families, this is the only way their children can access much needed care. The team conducts comprehensive health assessments and evaluations of the children including:

- Medical history
- Skin, scalp and hygiene exams
- Asthma/respiratory assessments
- Ear/nose/throat exams
- Injury review
- Vaccine/immunization updates
- Vision, hearing, and dental screenings
- Nutrition, height/weight assessments

Children found to be in good health are encouraged to continue their healthy behaviors and their parents are advised to keep up the good work. Parents of children with abnormal findings are given referrals for follow-up. For instance, CHAMP has arranged many pediatric dental visits for children who have never visited a dentist. Children requiring immediate medical or dental treatment are directly linked to care. FKAHEC provides financial assistance to families that document they cannot afford care, are uninsured or underinsured or require specialty care. CHAMP team members follow-up on all children identified with abnormalities with a second visit.

CHAMP screenings have led to 114 vision referrals, 189 left ear/174 right ear hearing referrals, and 47 dental referrals. In total, 494 children have been screened and 210 re-screened. FKAHEC is proud to be a part of CHAMP and is committed to helping children receive the quality care they need.

Community Health Screenings
Number of Participants by Screening Service, 2007–2008

- Blood Pressure (9,266)
- Bone Density (1,760)
- Cholesterol (3,489)
- Depression (885)
- Glucose (5,366)
- Body Mass Index (5,342)
- Children’s Health (1,120)
- Hearing (1,206)
- Oral Health (1,120)
- Other Screenings (2,072)
- Vision (2,064)
- Women’s Health (193)
OUR RETURN ON INVESTMENT

This report has highlighted the strategies used by the Florida AHEC Network to deliver valuable services and extend the resources of Florida’s health professions training programs to communities around the state. The Florida AHEC Network succeeds in accomplishing these activities while significantly amplifying the state’s original investment. In fact, the Florida AHEC Network has yielded a consistently high return on the state’s investment.

BY the NUMBERS:

45th place: With 21% of the population uninsured, an inadequate number of primary care physicians and high variation in health outcomes from county to county, Florida ranks 45th in a national assessment of health indicators (down from 41st last year).

48th place: The number of Floridians without health insurance is approaching 4 million, placing it near the bottom of national rankings (only New Mexico and Texas fare worse).

24.4%: Almost 1 in 4 Floridians under the age of 65 is uninsured.

26.4%: Of adults between the ages of 19-64, more than 1 in 4 Floridians is uninsured.

The importance of providing access to health care cannot be overstated. In the United Health Foundation annual survey of health indicators, Florida has consistently ranked near the bottom. The state has struggled to make and sustain improvements in health while in many cases health disparities and access issues persist or worsen.

The Florida AHEC Network’s longstanding commitment to improving health access and caring for those in need would not be possible without the support of our partners. Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to working with you for the health of underserved communities.
www.flahec.org

Connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, & communities to better health.

The Florida AHEC Network

AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTERS

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