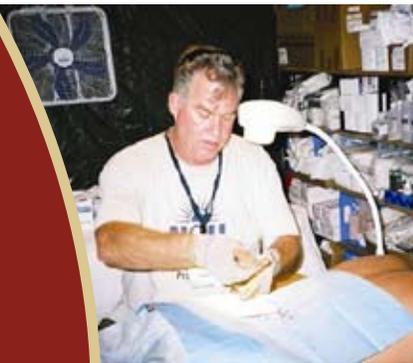


# Florida AHEC Network



**AHEC** *The Florida AHEC Network*

AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTERS

## Annual Report 2006

# FROM THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH



**F**or more than 20 years the Department of Health and the Florida AHEC Network have worked together to address a variety of public health concerns throughout Florida. Our joint efforts to promote health in Florida's communities in the areas of osteoporosis, cardiovascular health, obesity, tobacco, diabetes and access to care are notable. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the AHEC Network for these and the many other contributions it has made towards achieving a healthier Florida.

The following Annual Report for fiscal year 2005-2006 provides a variety of examples of the contributions the Florida AHEC Network has made toward improving the public's health including preparing for and responding to disasters; developing new strategies for improving access to health care; maintaining a quality healthcare workforce; and eliminating disparities in access to services in rural and underserved communities.

As a proven partner, the department values the Florida AHEC Network and will need its resources in the future to help insure success in promoting wellness and healthy lifestyles for all Floridians. I fully anticipate future collaborations between the department and the Florida AHEC Network to achieve these goals.

M. Rony Francois, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.  
Secretary, Department of Health

## ON THE COVER:

Community-based clinical training usually takes place in brick & mortar clinics. That wasn't the case for AHEC students and preceptors who treated thousands of individuals following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

Above: Florida Secretary of Health, Dr. Rony Francois (standing, center) and Deputy Secretary for Health, Nancy Humbert (seated, far right) are joined by representatives of the Florida AHEC Network.

## The Florida AHEC Network Mission:

*To create community and academic partnerships for the health of underserved communities.*

## CONTENTS

From the Secretary of Health . . . . .	2
FLAHEC: Maximizing Impact. . . . .	3
UM: Caring for Communities . . . . .	4
NSU: Connecting Communities with Resources . . . . .	6
FSU: Pursuing the Path to Health Care . . . . .	8
UF: Serving While Learning . . . . .	10
USF: Sharing our Skills, Knowledge & Expertise . . . . .	12
Our Return on Investment . . . . .	14
Florida AHEC Directory. . . . .	15

# FLAHEC: MAXIMIZING IMPACT

In FY 2006, the Florida AHEC Network received **\$11.8 million** in funds from the legislature to implement local programs and services in medically underserved communities throughout the state.

The Florida AHEC Network amplified the state's investment by almost **62%**, providing a total return of more than **\$19.1 million** in actual service delivery. AHEC accomplished this through a variety of activities described in this annual report.

Over **\$6.1 million** of state funds supported direct patient care by AHEC preceptors, residents and students who provided health care services to an estimated **1,640,000** Floridians. In fact, more than **7,300** health professions students and residents provided **1,118,410** hours of care to Floridians last year.

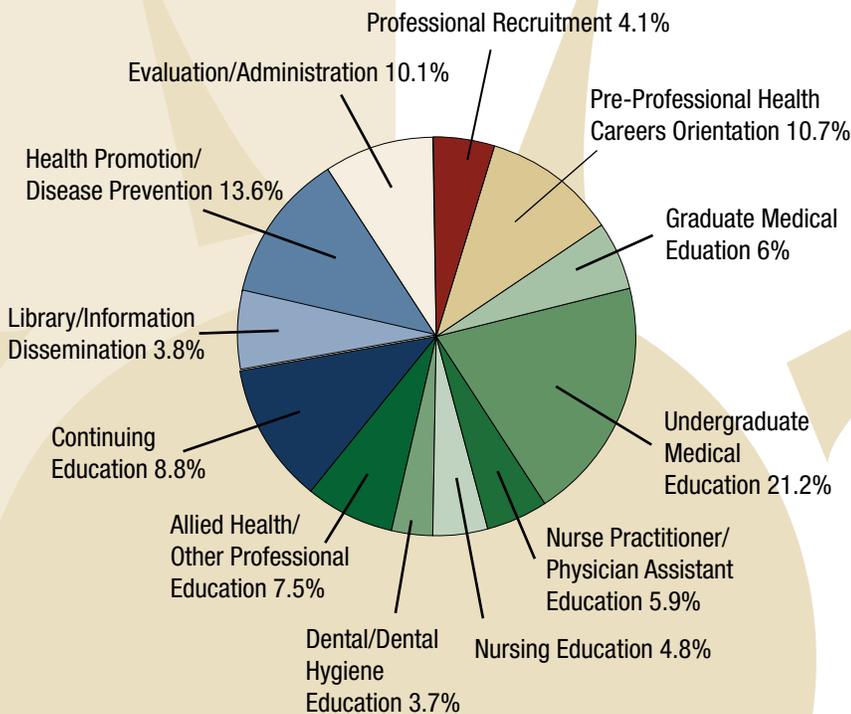
**The dollar amount placed on such care is valued at over \$17.5 million.**

**Direct patient care** services must also be linked with **recruitment, training, retention and health promotion programs** in order to have a lasting effect. AHEC allocated over **\$1.4 million** of state funds to provide community-based services to enhance the quality of patient care and safety, provide health promotion/disease prevention services and attract and retain primary care providers to underserved communities and safety net sites. For example, AHEC provided over **84,450** hours of continuing education programs on topics such as cardiovascular health, tobacco related disease and minority health to more than **16,800** practitioners who care for the underserved. And last year, AHEC delivered more than **56,000** hours of intensive health careers enrichment activities to **1,000** primary school, community college, technical and university students around the state.

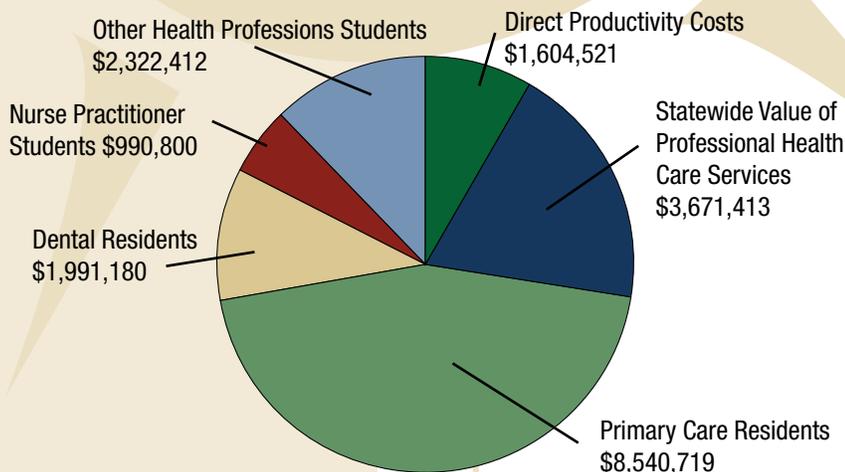
**The dollar amount of these and other services is over \$1.6 million.**

The Florida AHEC Network's partnerships with academic training programs and community organizations throughout the state create unique opportunities to address the special needs of underserved populations. 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.

**2005-2006 Allocation of State AHEC Funds (\$11,808,910)**



**2005-2006 Value of Actual Services Delivered (\$19,121,045)**



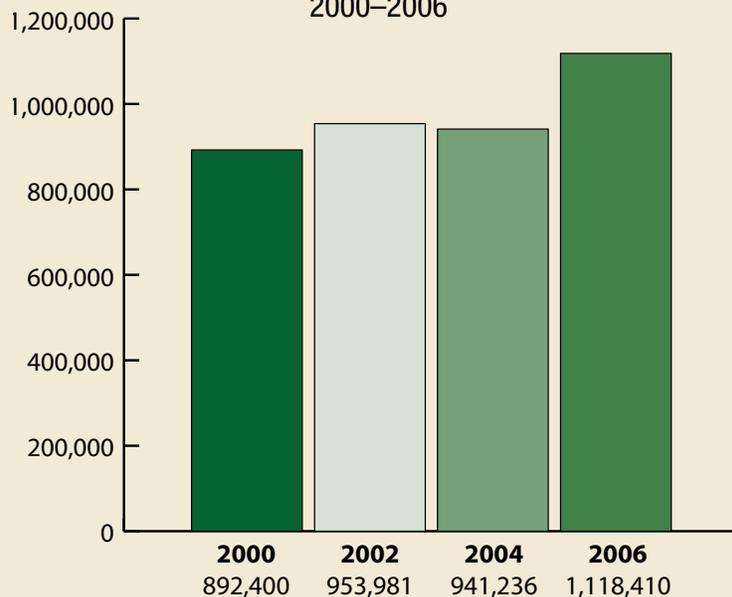
## BY the NUMBERS:

**1,118,000:** Last year, the Florida AHEC Network provided over **1,118,00** 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.

Almost **70%** of these hours took place in medically underserved sites.

Since 2000, the Florida AHEC Network has increased community-based clinical training for health professions students by more than **226,000** hours. 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.

Florida AHEC Network Clinical Training Hours  
2000–2006



## 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 health care settings where residents and students from medicine, nursing, dentistry and other health professions apply the knowledge gained in the classroom to caring for patients.

**PRECEPTORS** teach and mentor students and residents in an office, clinic or hospital setting.

# hurricane disaster relief efforts

After Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in August of 2005 with such devastating fury, the University of Miami AHEC program led the School of Medicine's participation in relief efforts. They were called upon because of their experience responding to prior hurricanes that hit Florida. UM AHEC used the national AHEC network to connect with colleagues in Mississippi who were able to provide the right contacts in the Mississippi Governor's Office and the state Health Professions Board. In short order, temporary licenses and sovereign immunity were granted, and the first team of medical and nursing faculty headed to Long Beach, Mississippi to begin providing assistance at a makeshift clinic located at the Coast Episcopal School.

At the same time, UM AHEC worked with school officials to allow for fourth-year UM medical students to participate in the relief efforts through an existing AHEC-sponsored community health elective. Eight UM medical students took advantage of this exceptional learning experience. The students spent two week rotations providing medical care as part of an interdisciplinary team of health care practitioners that generally included two physicians, two mental health professionals (psychiatrists and psychologists), five nurses and nurse practitioners, and one pharmacist.

UM AHEC collaborated with colleagues at the Nova Southeastern University AHEC Program to assist them in mobilizing their own volunteer efforts in neighboring communities on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. The UM and NSU volunteers reported scenes of incredible destruction and the complete disintegration of the medical infrastructure in the area. Collectively, around 85 UM and NSU medical, pharmacy, nursing, and mental health professionals (including 16 medical, pharmacy and physician assistant students) found that tending to the needs of people with chronic diseases was a major role for the health care teams. They saw hundreds of patients each day suffering from hypertension, diabetes and heart disease and in need of medication. "The devastation we witnessed along the gulf coast was sobering," said Dr. Michel Dodard, the medical director of UM AHEC. "We were rewarded by the grateful response of our patients to the most basic of medical interventions." Overall, the AHEC team provided health services to an estimated 6,000 patients over a 4 week period in various small communities along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. "In the end, we all agreed that we received more than we gave."



UM AHEC Medical Director Dr. Michel Dodard (second from left) leads an interdisciplinary health care team to provide relief in hurricane ravaged Mississippi.

Ironically, the medical teams were recalled home to prepare their own homes for the imminent arrival of Hurricane Wilma in South Florida on October 24th. Once again, UM AHEC played a vital role, this time helping to arrange medical services for the Special Needs shelter for evacuating residents of the Florida Keys. Working in partnership, the Florida Keys AHEC, the Monroe County Health Department, and UM medical faculty/student teams were able to plan for and meet the specific medical needs of patients that were sent to this shelter. For three days, this dedicated, compassionate and now all-too-experienced group of individuals provided exceptional medical care and managed many patients with serious health concerns in less than ideal conditions.

Because this collaborative effort proved so successful during Hurricane Wilma, UM Doctors of Community Service (DOCS) and Florida Keys AHEC are now established partners in emergency planning preparations for this shelter.

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

Nationally, the shortage of primary care providers is expected to continue and worsen. By 2020, approximately 90,000 more doctors will be needed than will be available. Rural and underserved communities will be especially hard hit by this shortfall.

# Enhancing care for the unders

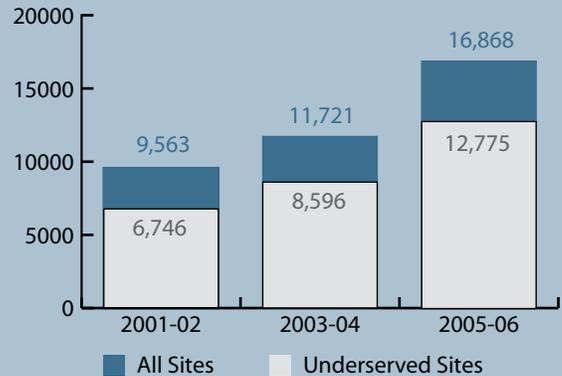
Big Bend AHEC collaborated with Big Bend Hospice, American Home Patient, and Capital Regional Medical Center to offer the Third Annual Wound Care Conference. Approximately 100 attendees, primarily nurses, attended the event. The keynote address was presented by Dr. Courtney Lyder, Professor of Nursing at the University of Virginia. Dr. Lyder, a Senior Consultant with the U.S.



Cynthia Kirschoff, Big Bend AHEC; Robbie Sharp, American Home Patient; and Dr. Courtney Lyder, keynote presenter.

Department of Health and Human Services, is the first black male nurse to hold a named professorship in nursing.

Continuing Education Participants from All Sites and Underserved Sites from 2001–2006



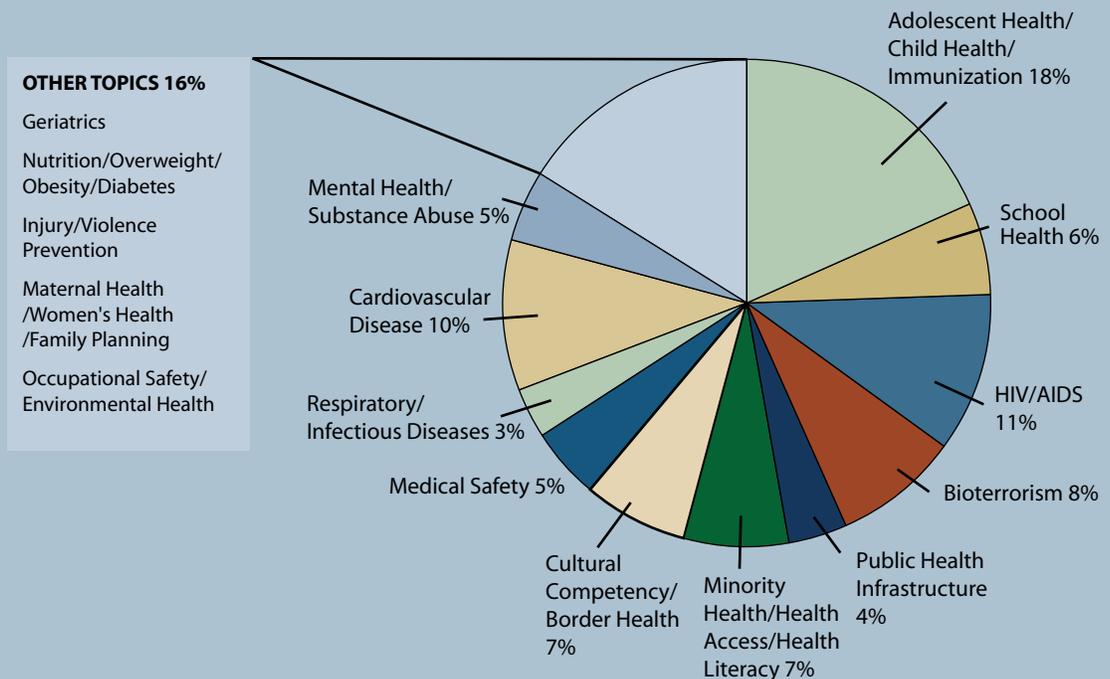
## BY the NUMBERS:

**84,451:** The Florida AHEC Network provided 84,451 hours of professional continuing education to practitioners throughout the state. Over 61,900 of these hours were for practitioners in underserved sites.

**16,868:** A total of 16,868 individuals received continuing education from the Florida AHEC Network. Almost 13,000 of these individuals were from underserved sites.

**8,100:** Florida AHEC Network staff provided over 8,100 hours of technical assistance to partners in community clinics, schools, health departments, community health centers, social service agencies and other organizations.

Professional Continuing Education Programs  
(Percentage of 84,451 Participant Hours)



# Connecting Communities with Resources served through continuing education

The Nova Southeastern University AHEC Program has been a major provider of continuing education programming for health providers throughout South and Central Florida for two decades. Beneficiaries of these programs have included physicians, clinical support staff, and administrators from primary care clinics, county health departments, rural hospitals, private practices and many other safety net sites located in predominantly rural and inner-city communities.

During the past year, the NSU AHEC community-based Everglades AHEC and Central Florida AHEC Centers sponsored or co-sponsored well over 100 continuing education programs in 18 counties of the state, reaching over 6,200 participants. In our effort to be responsive to the educational needs of community providers, both on-site and distance learning continuing education programs focus on a wide range of priority primary care and public health topics vital to enhancing the quality of care, ensuring patient safety, and reducing provider isolation in many of the region's medically underserved areas.

Each year, AHEC delivers a significant proportion of continuing education programs to health providers at Florida's federally qualified community and migrant health centers. According to Andrew Behrman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Florida Association of Community Health Centers (FACHC), "these AHEC programs have benefited our community health center partners in very tangible ways. Programmatically, AHEC has provided thousands of hours of continuing medical education, along with in-house training. These programs not only keep our providers up-to-date in their respective fields but also serve as a vital tool to help us retain providers in some of the most remote communities of the state where they would otherwise not be able to access this type of educational programming without driving countless miles and taking valuable time away from their patients."

One clear example of the value of AHEC delivering continuing education is the over one-thousand participant-hours of programming received during the past year by the staff of Florida Community Health Centers, Inc., (FCHC) which operate clinics in the communities of Clewiston, Okeechobee, Indiantown, Fort Pierce, and Port St. Lucie. Working in close collaboration with FCHC, the Everglades AHEC has consistently provided regular in-service programs for FCHC's staff for several years. Edwin Brown, CEO of FCHC remarked on the value of these AHEC services: "With over 235 employees, most needing professional updates, it would indeed be difficult to obtain the necessary training required to stay proficient, especially given that most of our sites are in isolated rural townships. These AHEC in-services have provided the avenue to keep



Each year, AHEC delivers a significant proportion of continuing education programs to health providers at Florida's federally qualified community and migrant health centers.

abreast of the latest protocols in HIV/AIDS, pesticide poisoning, diabetes and hypertension, to name a few. Also, without the collaboration and service programs AHEC has provided FCHC, I believe our retention rate for our professional staff would be dismal because of the professional isolation one would endure."

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

There are many parts of Florida in which access to quality continuing education programs or information services performed by trained librarians is not readily available. Rural and underserved providers can't afford to hire their own trained health information specialists, support a professional medical library or travel to attend continuing education programs. However, the need for quality education and information services is growing and the impact of such services on health care outcomes has been demonstrated.

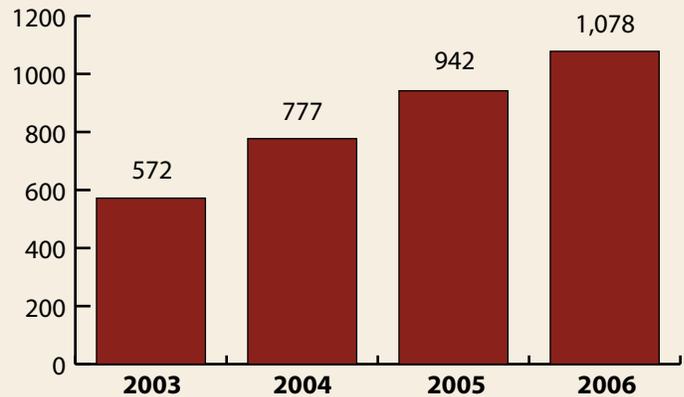
# Students of rural medicine find

## By the Numbers

**56,000:** Over 56,000 hours of enrichment programs were provided to students in grades K-12 as well as to students in technical schools, community colleges and universities. Of **1,078** students attending these programs, **77%** were racially underrepresented or economically disadvantaged.

**88.5%:** Increase in number of AHEC enrichment program participants from 2003 to 2006.

Florida AHEC Network  
Enrichment Program Participants 2003–2006



## 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 designed to generate interest in health careers particularly among disadvantaged and underrepresented youth.

### AHEC Network Highlights

Mr. Danny Collins, district representative for Congressman Allen F. Boyd, Jr., has his blood glucose level checked by high school student Krystal Umphenour, as part of the North Florida Community College/ Big Bend AHEC Health Scholars summer enrichment program.



## Pursuing the Path to Healthcare

# small towns offer big opportunities

Some students might hesitate to spend an entire year of medical school in a rural setting out of concern there's not much to do in a small town. But when it comes to educational opportunities, Dr. Daniel Van Durme, chair of the department of family medicine and rural health at the Florida State University College of Medicine, thinks the opposite may be true.

The FSU College of Medicine's mission has a principal focus on recruiting and training medical professionals to meet the primary health care needs of the state, especially the needs of the state's elderly, rural, minority, and other underserved citizens. To fulfill the mission, FSU offers an inclusive rural medical education program that includes a comprehensive outreach effort to introduce students to rural medicine as early as the seventh grade and continues through the completion of medical school.

One of the newest additions is the AHEC-sponsored rural track in Marianna which specifically targets medical students committed to serving rural communities. Students complete a comprehensive review process before being selected for this track. Once accepted, they spend their entire third year of medical school doing rotations with area physicians, both in private practices and at Jackson Hospital.

Current fourth-year student Josef Plum was the first to complete the rural track. Third-year students Murray Baker and Patrick Hawkins started in July.

Mr. Plum is also one of four students currently attending, or having graduated from, the FSU College of Medicine by way of scholarships provided by rural hospitals. Mr. Plum, Dr. Shannon Price (Class of 2006, completing an OB/GYN residency) and Dr. Joda Lynn (Class of 2005, completing a family medicine residency in Florida) each received scholarships from Doctors' Memorial Hospital in Perry and will return there to practice upon completion of their residency training programs. Fourth year medical student Robin Albritton (Class of 2007) has a similar agreement with Jackson Hospital in Marianna.

The rural track introduces students to the experience of practicing in a rural environment but also offers some advantages perhaps more difficult to come by for students training in metropolitan areas.

"One of the big pluses is the breadth of experience that's spread out over the course of the entire year," Dr. Van Durme said. The variety of cases medical students are exposed to during the rural track in Marianna is not limited to a particular rotation they may be completing. For instance, students in traditional, non-rural medical programs see pediatric cases only during their pediatric rotations, while "the student in



FSU AHEC's ongoing commitment to rural medicine is reflected in its rural medicine track for third year students.

Marianna might be doing a surgery rotation, but get called in to participate in an interesting pediatrics case."

Jackson Hospital CEO Dave Hample said the medical community in Marianna is committed to giving FSU medical students an in-depth look at rural health care.

"It's easy to be drawn to the glitz of the big medical center in the big city, but you get to do a lot more in the rural setting and I think students who come here will walk away with a greater understanding of what it means to practice rural medicine," Mr. Hample said.

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

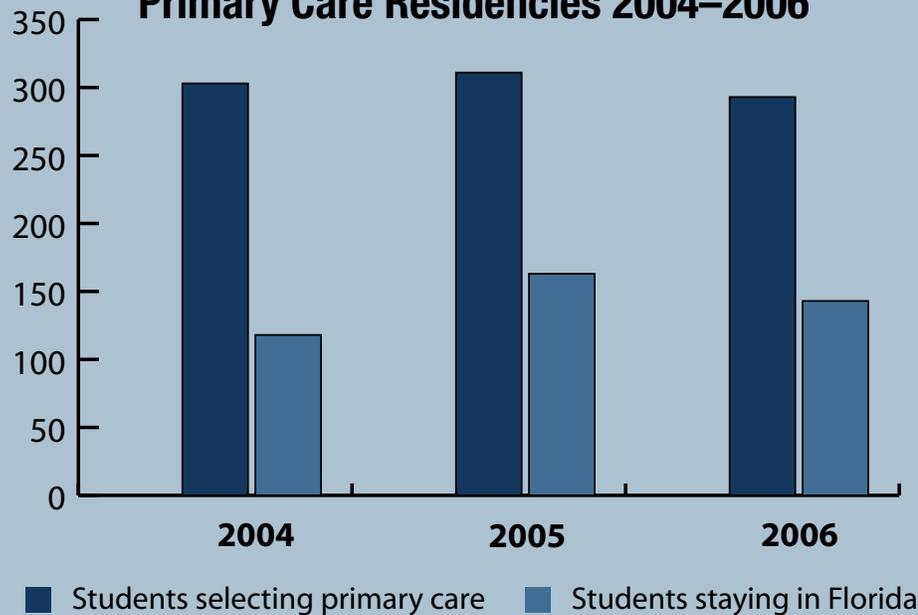
- Florida has the oldest physician workforce in the nation (26% over the age of 65).
- Only 9% of Florida's physicians are age 35 or younger.
- Forty percent of registered nurses will be 50 years of age or older by 2010.
- Florida continues to be one of the fastest growing states in the country and is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

# Changing de

By placing teams of dental students and faculty in targeted areas around the state, AHEC delivers much needed dental services to Florida's underserved. Dr. Tony Chicola (left) is a team member of the Escambia Dental Cooperative.



**Florida Medical Students Selecting Primary Care Residencies 2004–2006**



# lives one smile at a time: UF AHEC dental services for the underserved

“We couldn’t do all that we do without the students; we simply don’t have enough staff,” explains Dr. Mary Robinson, Medical Director at the I.M. Sulzbacher Clinic in Jacksonville. “Our students learn while providing direct health services – it’s a win-win for everyone involved.”

Through a partnership with Northeast Florida AHEC, dental students, residents and faculty help fill the gap for homeless clients whose health needs are often overlooked. Racial and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and those whose families are economically disadvantaged often have difficulty in accessing dental services and suffer a disproportionate share of dental disease. Delays in treatment increase dental costs over time often leading to prolonged discomfort, low self-esteem, and disfigurement. Through community and academic partnerships, AHEC responds to the state’s oral health crisis while also enhancing the quality of dental education.

The UF AHEC Dental Health Initiative provides University of Florida dental residents and students as well as dental hygiene and dental assistant students from Pensacola Junior College, Santa Fe Community College and Florida Community College Jacksonville training opportunities to increase their skills while providing a valuable service. They also learn to work with patients from a range of different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. In the Florida panhandle, West Florida AHEC, Pensacola Junior College, and Sacred Heart Hospital created the Escambia Dental Health

Collaborative, an academic based dental clinic serving Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. Within the first 6 months of operation in 2006, over \$200,000 in services were provided to 526 patients while 14 dental hygiene students completed nearly 800 hours of training.

Suwannee River AHEC addresses dental health of north Florida’s rural poor at the Alachua County Organization on Rural Needs Clinic in Brooker by providing a full-time dentist from the UF College of Dentistry to deliver dental services four days each week while supervising 2-4 dental students. In 2005-2006, their services included 2,661 patient encounters for adults and 623 for children.

Over 3,100 dental student and 960 dental resident hours were logged at the clinic.

In addition to direct dental services delivered by

faculty and students, AHEC also provides oral health literacy initiatives that reach out to children. Through Suwannee River AHEC’s Tooth Fairy Program, 3,100 school-aged children learned how to care for their teeth. AHEC’s dental initiatives are truly win-win situations for the underserved populations and for the students in training. Along with its community and academic partners, UF AHEC is changing lives one smile at a time.

Within the first six months of operation in 2006, over \$200,000 in services were provided to 526 patients while 14 dental hygiene students completed nearly 800 hours of training.

## BY the NUMBERS:

**2.3 million:** The number of Floridians living in health professions shortage areas. An additional 608 primary care physicians are needed to meet their basic health care needs.

**61,000:** By 2020, Florida will need 61,000 more nurses than are currently projected to be available.

**56%:** The percentage of Florida medical students that chose primary care residency programs from 2004-2006. The national average is 38%.

**61%:** The percentage of residents that remained in Florida after completing their residency programs.

**20%:** The percentage of Florida MDs who graduated from Florida medical schools.

# Sharing o



The Florida AHEC Network strives to share our special skills, knowledge and expertise with the communities we serve. Over the past year, the Florida AHEC Network has been involved in programs to address:

## Health Literacy

Half of all Floridians have poor health literacy skills. These individuals may be able to read, but lack the ability to fully process, understand and act on basic health information. The Florida AHEC Network, in partnership with the Florida Department of Health, developed a comprehensive health literacy curriculum to increase awareness and educate health care professionals and health professions students throughout the state. Each of Florida's 10 regional Area Health Education Centers use "Health Literacy: A Prescription for Clarity" to train health care providers and health professions students. The curriculum has been presented to 367 health professionals around the state with 97% of program recipients reporting it provided them with knowledge and/or skills that would lead to better patient care.

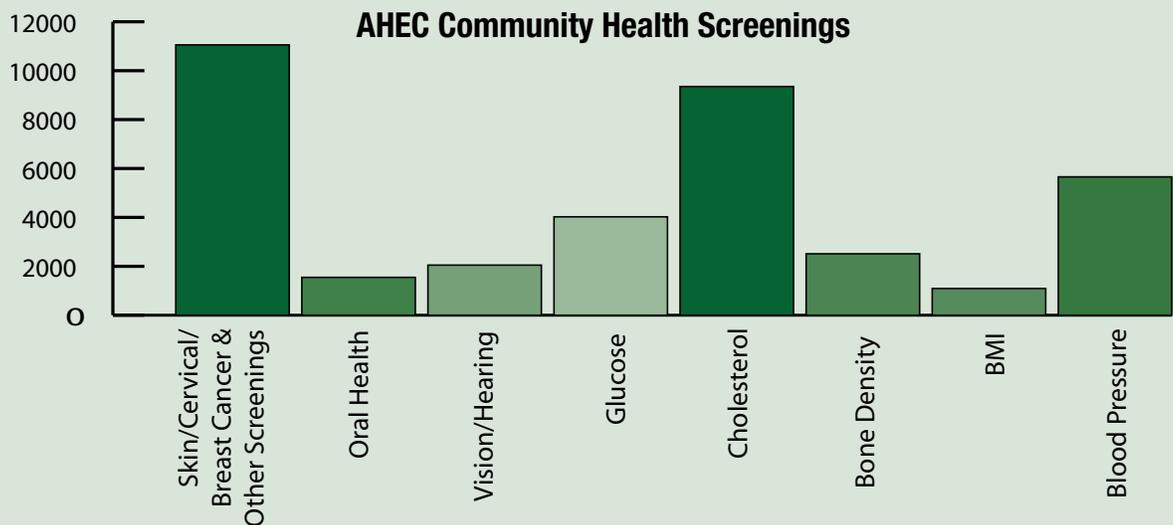
Gulfcoast South AHEC, which took the lead in developing the curriculum, was awarded the 2006 AHEC Center Award for Excellence in Continuing Education by the National AHEC Organization. A revised edition of the curriculum is underway.

## Bullying

Last year, Florida public schools recorded almost 6,600 instances of bullying, 10,550 cases of battery, and over 2,200 incidents of sexual harassment. Alarming numbers like these lead to the state's First Annual Bullying Prevention Conference held April 27th and 28th in Orlando. Gulfcoast North AHEC provided expertise in conference planning and coordinated the registration for the inaugural event which attracted more than 680 educators, police officers, counselors and parents. Conference planners included the Florida Department of Education, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and the Florida Institute of Education at the University of North Florida.

## Health Disparities

Statewide, the Florida AHEC Network relies on Community Health Workers (CHW) to help bridge linguistic and cultural gaps between health professionals and the ethnically and culturally diverse patients they serve. AHECs provide training to CHWs on a variety of topics including cardiovascular health, breast/cervical health, diabetes prevention, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, breastfeeding and prenatal care. The CHWs in turn carry this vital information to hard-to-reach communities. Last year, 180 CHWs reached more than 11,000 individuals with health and human services information.



# ur skills, knowledge and expertise

## Tobacco Abuse: The Florida AHEC Network as a Vehicle for Tobacco Prevention Education

Since 2000, The Florida AHEC Network has conducted a tobacco prevention and cessation program known as PIPSA - Partners in Prevention of Substance Abuse. Now in its sixth year of operation, the AHEC PIPSA program has trained over 7,300 health professions students to intervene with patients who smoke and has utilized these same health professions students to educate over 263,000 vulnerable youth on the dangers of tobacco.

Built upon an interdisciplinary educational initiative established at the University of Florida, the Florida AHEC Network designed a curriculum for health professions students that addressed both basic tobacco education and provided future health care providers with the skills necessary to help patients quit. AHEC PIPSA brings together faculty and students from medicine, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy and other health professions training programs to focus on tobacco cessation. University faculty join national figures such as Jeffrey Wigand of "Insider" fame and Mississippi Attorney-General Mike Moore along with local experts to engage the health professions students on topics such as the pharmacology of addiction, the politics of tobacco, and the challenges faced by those attempting to quite using tobacco. The students also learn behavior modification techniques for use with addicted patients as well as health promotion strategies targeted at youth.

The AHEC PIPSA program has trained over 7,200 health professions students to intervene with patients who smoke and has utilized these same health professions students to educate over 263,000 vulnerable youth on the dangers of tobacco.

The trained health professions students are then placed in classrooms on a Day of Service/Applied Learning to teach children in grades 6 through 12 about the dangers of tobacco. The children readily relate to young health professions students

who serve as both educators and role models for health promotion.

The success of PIPSA heavily relies on the partnerships AHEC has established with teachers in over 200 schools in 26 counties throughout the state. An average of 1,214 health professions students have reached 44,202 Florida school children each year since 2000.

The PIPSA process of bringing interdisciplinary groups of students together to learn about a health promotion/disease-prevention challenge, developing a framework of cooperation in communities, and then having students provide the health

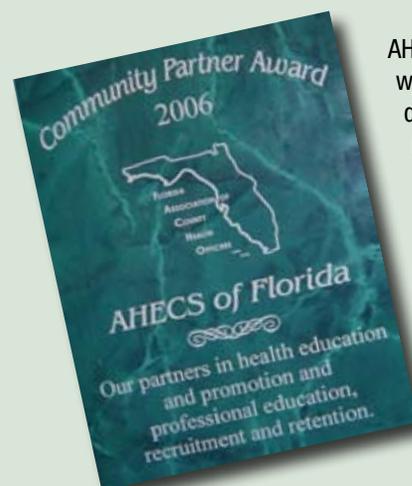
education with creative teaching tools is a proven success. The Florida AHEC Network has enhanced the education of health professional students, modeled the role of health professionals in community-based health promotion, delivered age-appropriate tobacco prevention messages to middle school and high school students, and provided health-careers role models to school children through the PIPSA program. The Florida AHEC Network is proud to serve as the champion of PIPSA and as the vehicle to take these efforts statewide for the health of all Floridians.

## By the Numbers

**37,300:** Last year, AHEC conducted 37,300 screenings to detect the presence of disease or to identify individuals at risk.

**11,000:** Over 180 trained AHEC community health workers (CHWs) provided health education to more than 11,000 at-risk Floridians.

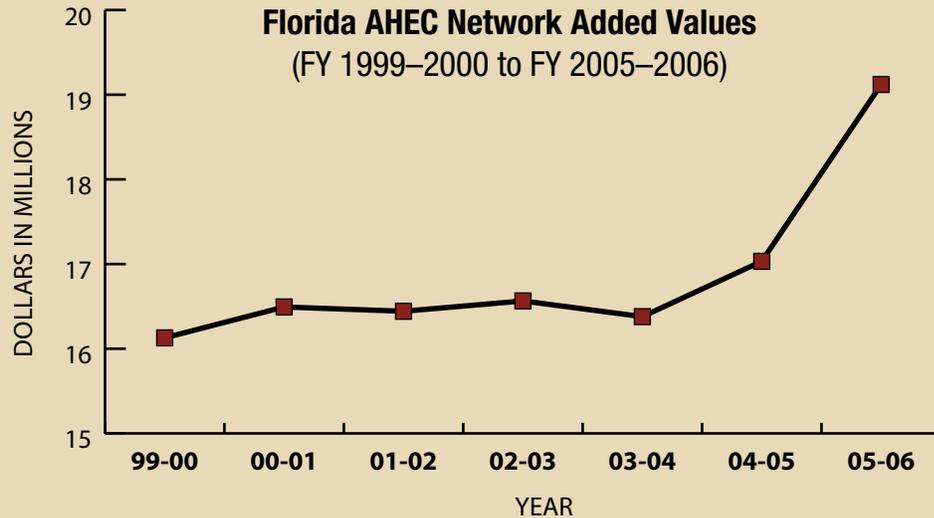
**30:** Almost half the time, CHWs spent 30 minutes or more educating individuals on topics such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.



AHEC's partnership with county health departments was recognized with the 2006 Community Partner Award.

# 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.



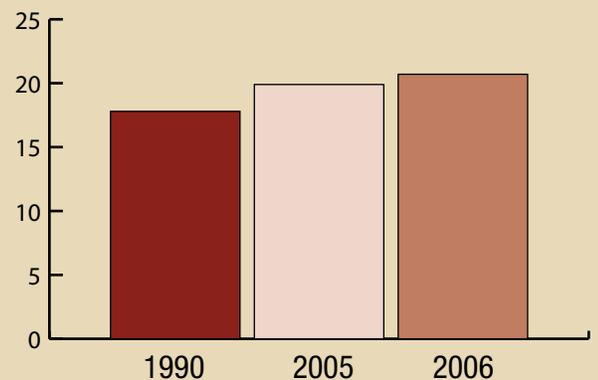
## BY the NUMBERS:

- 41:** Florida ranks 41st in a national assessment of health indicators (down from 40th last year).
- 49:** Florida is next-to-last in the nation in terms of the number of adults with health insurance.
- 16%:** The number of uninsured Floridians has increased over 16% since 1990.

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.

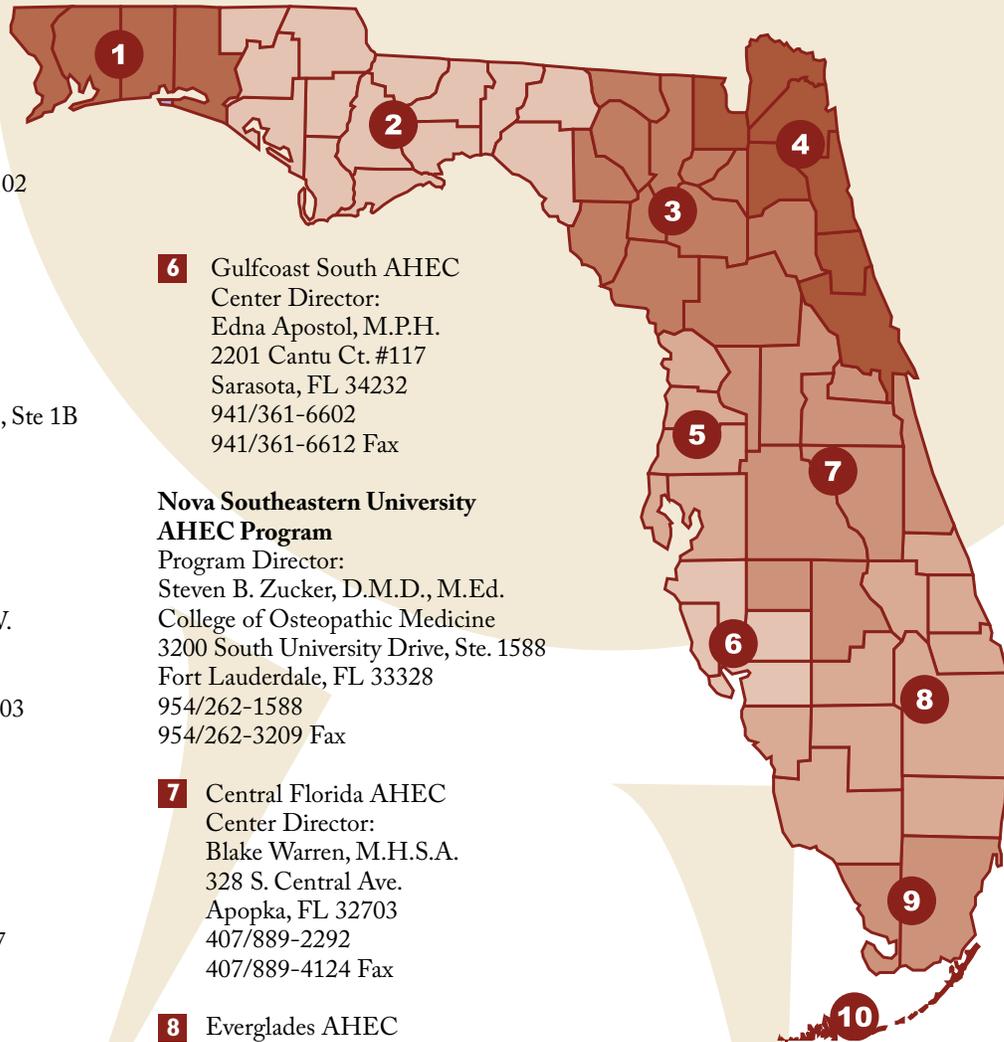
The Florida AHEC Network's longstanding commitment to improving health access and caring for those in need would not be possible without the support of our partners. Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to working with you for the health of underserved communities.

### Percent Floridians Without Health Insurance



Source: *America's Health Rankings 2006*—United Health Foundation

# FLORIDA AHEC DIRECTORY



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