The University of South Florida (USF) Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program connects students to careers, professionals to communities and communities to better health. We inspire, train, recruit and retain a diverse and broad range of health professionals to practice in communities where the need is greatest.

The USF AHEC Program began in 1993 and covers a nine-county area on the central west coast of the state. Community activities are carried out by our two local AHEC Centers, Gulfcoast North AHEC in Land O’ Lakes serving Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties and Gulfcoast South AHEC in Sarasota, which serves Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota counties.

The USF AHEC Program is part of a larger, statewide network, the Florida AHEC Network, including five AHEC programs at each of the state's five medical schools and 10 centers covering all 67 counties of the state. We are also an active member of the National AHEC Organization, which represents 50 AHEC programs with more than 200 centers that operate in almost every state and the District of Columbia.

AHEC Program Office
University of South Florida AHEC Program
College of Medicine, MDC 76
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(P) 813-974-3507 (F) 813-974-3605
www.health.usf.edu/ahec

AHEC Centers
Gulfcoast North AHEC, Inc.
17819 State Road 52
Land O’ Lakes, FL 34638
(P) 813-929-1000 (F) 813-929-1009
www.gnahec.org

Gulfcoast South AHEC, Inc.
2201 Cantu Ct. Suite 220
Sarasota, FL 34232
(P) 941-361-6602 (F) 941-361-6612
www.gsahec.org
The USF AHEC Program inspires youth to choose a career in the health professions with our health career camps, mentoring programs, college preparatory courses and more. We focus on recruiting more minority and disadvantaged youth into health careers because research and experience indicate they will be more likely to care for the medically underserved. As our population becomes more diverse, it is important that our health care workforce reflects that diversity.

- During 2006-2007, more than 26,000 hours of student enrichment programs to inspire youth to choose a health career were provided to students in grades K-12 as well as to students in technical schools, community colleges and universities. Student enrichment programs entail an intensive exploration into health careers including a 20-hour or more commitment by each student
- Of 536 students attending these programs, 72 percent were racially underrepresented or economically disadvantaged.

The USF AHEC Program and its centers coordinate clinical training opportunities at community-based sites for students who are enrolled in a health professions training program. The AHEC sites bring health disparities to life for students, who see first-hand the needs of uninsured and underinsured patients.

- During 2006-2007, more than 1,100 health professions students were trained throughout our nine counties.
- These students provided more than 213,000 hours of care to an estimated 334,000 patients, much of it in the state’s community/migrant health centers, health departments, rural health clinics and other sites serving the medically needy.
- The dollar amount placed on such care is valued at more than $7 million.

We recruit talented, dedicated health professionals who want to make a difference in the community and match them with positions in medically underserved communities. And we support local health care by providing resources such as continuing education programs, library services and technical assistance to meet health professionals’ needs in order to retain them in the communities who need them most.

- During 2006-2007, the USF AHEC Program and its two centers provided more than 52,600 hours of professional continuing education to health practitioners throughout the state. More than 86 percent of these hours were for practitioners in underserved sites.
- Gulfcoast North AHEC has provided more hours of continuing education than any other center in the Florida AHEC Network for the past three years. This past year GNAHEC provided 46,765 hours of continuing education programming to more than 4,800 participants.
- Library services including more than 280 requests for articles, printed materials or database searches were provided to partners throughout our nine-county area, and almost 10,000 items such as health career guides, patient education materials and resource guides were also distributed to community partners.

These activities are offered throughout the communities in our nine-county area, and many are conducted in collaboration with community partners. We specifically target members of underserved communities and those at risk for health disparities and provide them with the necessary information and resources to help them make better health decisions.

- During 2006-2007, the USF AHEC Program and its centers provided approximately 47,000 hours of community health education programs on topics such as child and adolescent health, nutrition and osteoporosis to more than 18,500 participants.
- Community Health Workers (CHWs), lay people who provide health promotion and disease prevention education for at-risk populations in medically underserved areas, provided more than 1,700 hours of education sessions. These presentations, 99 percent of which were provided in medically underserved areas, reached more than 4,800 participants.