

WESTERN NEW YORK

WNY R-AHEC

RURAL AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Dear R-AHEC Partners and Supporters,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff, I want to thank you for your continued support this past year. This report reflects the programmatic aspects of our efforts throughout 2019.

This past year was a year of challenges and opportunities. On July 6th, 2019, we began celebrating a successful 20 years as an incorporated non-profit, part of the NYS AHEC system. In addition, we completed the work on the William F. Thiel Hospitality House and held an open house event to showcase the remodeled building. The design offers increased flexibility in space usage and meets community needs in a more efficient manner. We are very grateful for all of the assistance we received throughout this project including the financial support.

Our organizational goals and activities focused on building diversity, improving distribution of health professionals, and creating transformations in healthcare workforce practice. In that effort, we began implementing the AHEC Scholars program which supports current health professional students with community-learning opportunities in underserved and medically disadvantaged areas. Likewise, through the ATHOS Workforce division, we developed a new nine-module Care Coordinator training program. The program may be offered in-person, online or as a hybrid program.

In 2020 we are looking forward to another exciting and productive year. Please consider joining us on our social media sites to keep apprised of our new initiatives. Thank you for taking the time to review our annual report. We look forward to working with you in the year ahead!

Catherine P. Huff
Catherine P. Huff
CEO

ABOUT WNY R-AHEC



R-AHEC is a non-profit organization headquartered in Warsaw, New York. Our mission is *“to improve health and healthcare through education.”* Counties in our catchment include Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates. We work to achieve our mission by focusing on:

Pipeline Programming for Youth: Health career education and career path development for youth in grades 9-12. Activities include classroom presentations, field trips, shadowing experiences with local healthcare providers, all designed to encourage youth to consider health careers and encourage diversity.

Preceptor Development/Student Housing: Eligible medical and other health profession students are offered support to encourage clinical rotations through short-term housing and/or housing scholarships.

Health Workforce Development: Through various initiatives, the current healthcare workforce is offered a variety of on-going skills training, career ladder development, and professional skills development programs. Projects have continually changing components and are designed to build and retain a skilled healthcare workforce.

Rural Healthcare Technology Infrastructure Development: R-AHEC is the administrator of the Western New York Rural Broadband Healthcare Network (WNY RBHN). The WNY RBHN is a consortium of partners in rural, urban, and medically underserved areas of Western New York and surrounding regions, which focuses on increasing the utilization of Health Information Technology (HIT) among public and non-profit health care providers-making it easier for health care providers to connect with each other, access online educational programs, and expand their telemedicine initiatives.

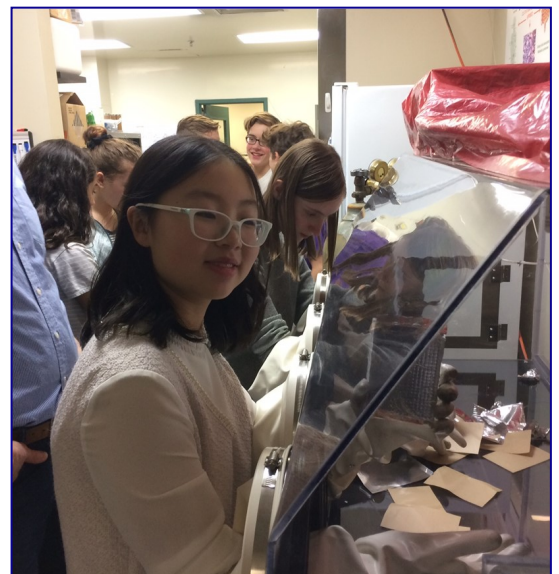
PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES

Summer Internship Program: During the summer of 2019, R-AHEC had the pleasure of offering internships to three outstanding students. Two of the interns worked with the program team on summer projects, and one worked with the RBHN project. In addition to the skills they learned in their day-to-day office activities, they had the opportunity to interview several rural healthcare providers as they worked on their culminating project entitled the "Fresh Air Healthcare Project." This initiative challenged students to create a visual presentation identifying the benefits for healthcare professionals to work and live in a rural environment.



Career Presentations: 653 students were introduced to a variety of healthcare careers such as phlebotomist, radiologist, and biotechnologist during career fairs presentations and tabling events. Programming staff also distributes the *Healthcare Highlights: The Rural AHEC Student Newsletter* to high school counselors in more than 36 school districts in 10 counties. Newsletters are enthusiastically shared with colleagues and demand for the newsletter increase monthly.

SEPA (Science Education Partnership Award) in Western New York Genetics in Health Care Partnership: SEPA provided 207 students in grades 9th – 12th in several districts with opportunities to explore bioinformatics and genetics through a hands-on cyber learning program. Through activities led by UB and R-AHEC Genetics in Research partners, students learned about the impact of genetic research on cancer treatments, medicines that target specific genes, bio-ethical issues, and career opportunities in biotechnology. Students completed learning modules in the GENI-ACT program that took them through a gene annotation process using investigative techniques and genuine on-line technical research tools.

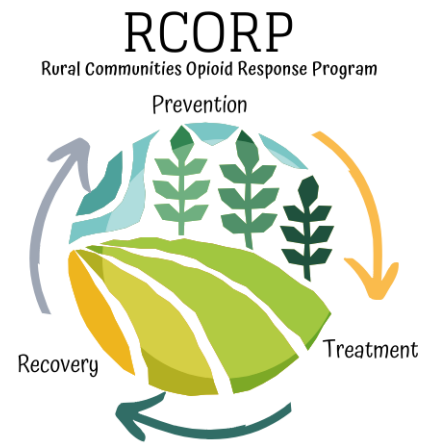


PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES

OPEP (Opioid Prevention Education Project): R-AHEC was able to reach 1,512 high school and college students through 14 tabling or informative sessions focusing on opioid misuse and abuse, stigma, prevention, and treatment. These sessions were designed to increase awareness about the opioid epidemic and to educate participants on current prevention efforts as well as on available treatment services in their community.



RCORP (Rural Communities Opioid Response Program): This new three-year program which began in the fall, aims to strengthen and expand SUD/ODU prevention, treatment, and recovery service delivery. R-AHEC has partnered with NYS AHEC and **Spectrum Human Services** to meet the objectives of this initiative. Activities that are being planned include Nalozone trainings, Substance Use, Treatments, Prevention, Destigmatization, Local related resources, and MAT training. R-AHEC staff intend to plan and successfully hold at least two conference days by August of 2020 in which several speakers/ organizations will address these topics.



AHEC Scholars Program: This two-year long academic program is designed to provide current health professional students with community-learning opportunities in underserved and medically disadvantaged areas. SUNY Fredonia has supported two cohorts and a total of four students through this experiential program. Students participated in practical experiences at the Chautauqua Center.

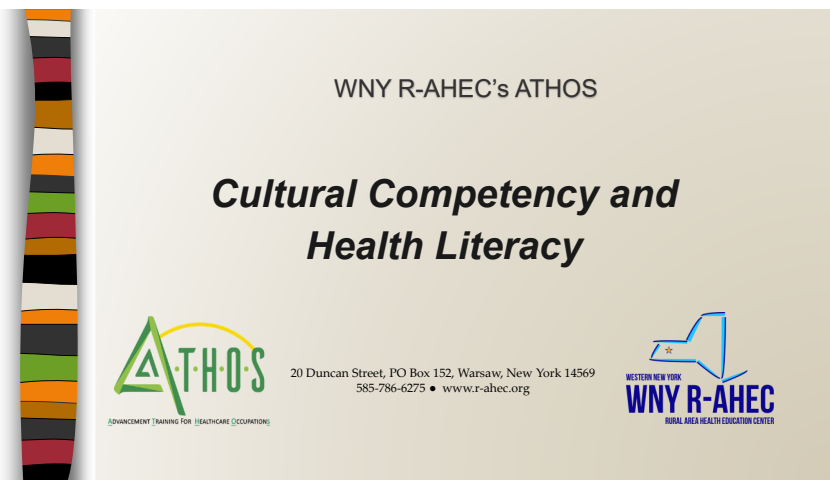
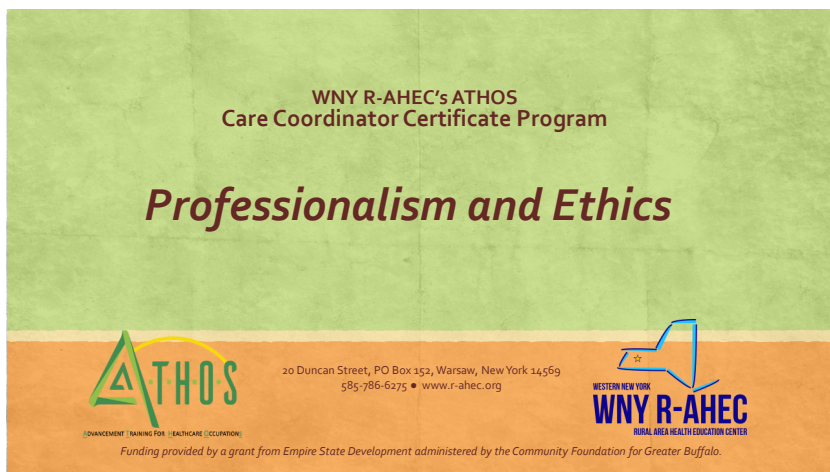


HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

ATHOS (Advancement Training for Healthcare Occupations):

Care Coordinator Certificate Program: Over the past year, staff developed a learning event for care coordinators which included nine educational modules in the following areas: new trends in healthcare, cultural competency and health literacy, professionalism, quality improvement, person-centered care, chronic diseases, interdisciplinary teams, health technology, and community orientation. The modules were designed for instructor-led presentations, hybrid classes, and solely on-line learning.

General offerings: Modules entitled *Professionalism in the Healthcare Workforce*, *Motivational Interviewing*, *Cultural Competency*, *Health Literacy*, and *LGBTQ Cultural Competence* continue to be offered as workshops, as does the *Community Health Worker* program. 118 participants have engaged in completion of one or more of these workshops. Several new modules are presently in production.



HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment Program (DSRIP): R-AHEC continued to support workforce initiatives for three Performing Provider Systems (PPS) in our area, Millennium Collaborative Care (Millennium), Community Partners on Western New York (CPWNY), and Finger Lakes Performing Provider System (FLPPS). During the last year we completed the following projects for these agencies:

Workforce Spending Collection: R-AHEC led the efforts to collect workforce spending information for CPWNY. Staff worked with partners to submit state-required information regarding spending efforts and staff-impact focused on the DSRIP project. The information was compiled and analyzed and presented to CPWNY and State auditors.

Training Tracking: The agency continued to work with CPWNY to track training efforts for multiple partners. R-AHEC staff collected information regarding trainings conducted on the following topics: cultural competency, patient-centered medical home, meaningful use, population health integration, and more.

Compensation and Benefit Survey: DSRIP Year 5 required that PPSs perform a third compensation and benefit survey. Since the team here had completed the Year 1 and Year 3 surveys, we were able to customize the survey for each partnering facility of both Millennium and CPWNY. This action saved staff at the facilities hours of extra research. Information was collected, aggregated, and is presently being aged.

Cultural Competency: FLPPS has engaged R-AHEC to support their partner organizations through the adaptation and implementation process of Cultural Competence and Health Literacy initiatives. Staff members worked with FLPPS partners to support the Cultural Competence workplans and to provide training to 405 participants on culture-related topics.

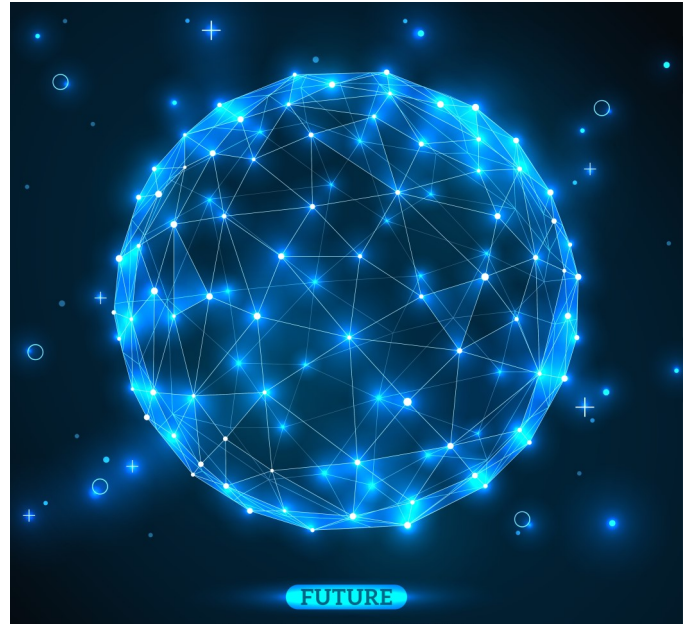


Igniting Healthcare Change in WNY



RURAL HEALTHCARE TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPMENT

R-AHEC, as the consortium lead and network administrator, has worked on behalf of network members since 2009 to obtain subsidies through FCC programs and to identify and develop other network member benefits such as equipment subsidies and education opportunities. The WNYRBHN (Western New York Rural Broadband Healthcare Network) was originally created through the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Rural Health Care Pilot Program (RHCPP). This program subsidized broadband services, equipment, and installation for eligible facilities. Through the network, members are able to utilize clinical mentoring, collaboration, education, and training over

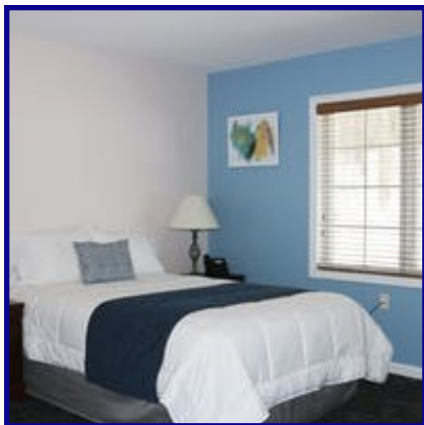


secure, high speed networks with scalable bandwidth to support communication, telemedicine and distance-learning applications. The Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) offers up to a 65% subsidy, and allows administrative offices and data centers to participate. We are continued to expand our network of 160 active sites across Upstate New York and Northern Pennsylvania to strengthen healthcare facilities and organizations by reducing their telecommunications costs by an average of \$1.2 million per year for the last four years.



PRECEPTOR DEVELOPMENT & STUDENT HOUSING

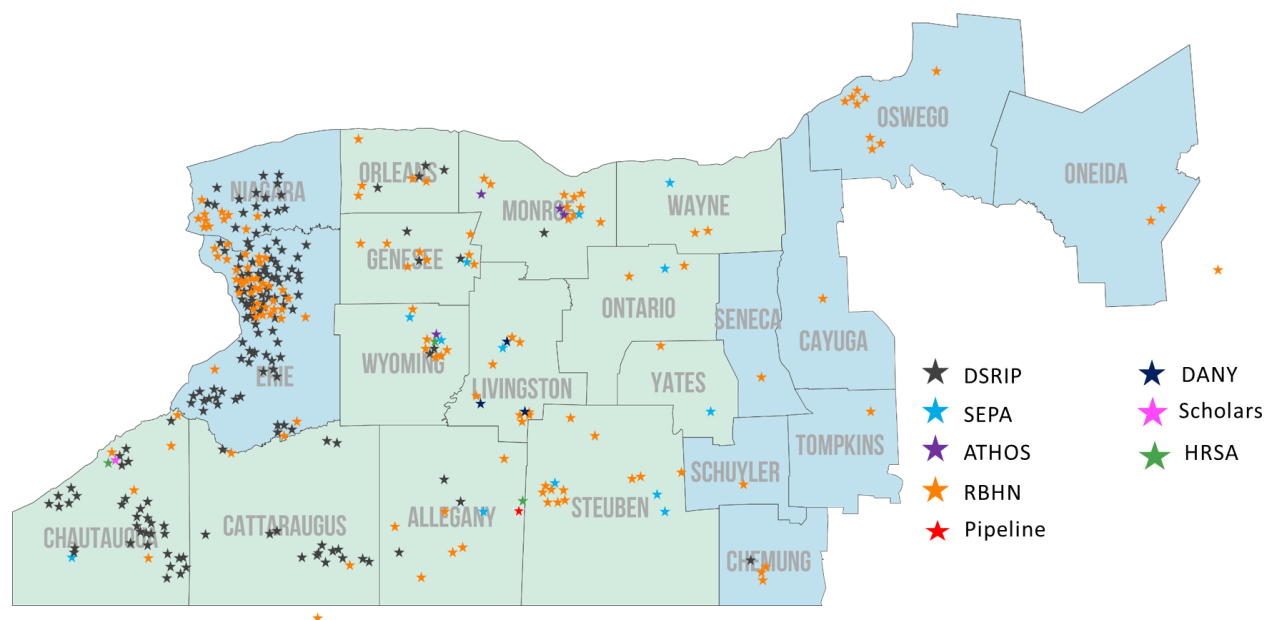
R-AHEC worked collaboratively with colleges and academic institutions to identify preceptor sites for their health professions students in rural communities throughout Western New York. R-AHEC's efforts included providing affordable housing for health professional students at the William F. Thiel Hospitality House in Warsaw (Wyoming County) and through our decentralized housing support program where we were able to provide nine scholarships/housing for students serving in clinical rotations in any of our twelve-county catchment area. In addition to housing health professions students, the housing site in Warsaw, also houses clinicians and medical professionals serving at Wyoming County Community Hospital. R-AHEC worked collaboratively with Wyoming County Community Hospital (WCCH) and Lake Erie College Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) to provide supportive housing to students completing rotations in Family Medicine, Emergency Medicine and Radiology. We are very grateful that the William F. Thiel Trust, a fund held by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, was able to make this project possible.



William F. Thiel Hospitality House Renovations & Upgrades: The William F. Thiel Hospitality House is a rural multi-purpose facility that is designed to provide support for the local community and healthcare delivery system. Supportive housing is provided for students completing rural clinical medical rotations, specialists, physicians, and families of community members experiencing a medical crisis in Wyoming County. In 2019, R-AHEC completed renovations and upgrades to the Hospitality House. We continue to offer suite-style rooms to house multiple healthcare students, and now we are able to provide private rooms for those professionals or community members who desire a more hotel-type experience.



WNY R-AHEC 2019 Programming MAP



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David Riddell—Center Director
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Cheryl Young—Administrative Assistant
Larry Hoyt—Bookkeeper
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Lisa Green—Program Coordinator
Nate Coogan—Program Coordinator
Kathleen Wood—Program Coordinator
Peter Appleton—Program Coordinator
Rustam Ushurov—Program Coordinator
Linda Franke—Program Coordinator

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This organization is supported in part by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under Grant number U77HP16459 and project title New York State Area Health Education Center System. The information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

R-AHEC is an equal opportunity employer and provider