



# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

**MISSION: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF HEALTHCARE IN OUR REGION THROUGH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, AND RESOURCES**

**VISION: WE ENVISION A FUTURE IN WHICH OUR COMMUNITY IS SUPPORTED BY HIGH QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE HEALTH RESOURCES, AND A DIVERSE, EDUCATED AND COMPASSIONATE WORKFORCE**

**VALUES:**

**COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE  
INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP**



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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2025, WNY R-AHEC experienced another successful year focused on strengthening the rural health workforce and deepening regional collaboration. A key focus was the initial planning and development of a Rural Health Network within Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming counties, which unites healthcare providers, and public and behavioral health partners to improve access to quality healthcare, address workforce shortages, and coordinate essential services across our rural communities. The network aims to reduce health disparities, and enhance the overall health and well-being of rural residents.

WNY R-AHEC also expanded Health Career Pathways activities with a new K - 6 grade program called Discover Wellness, behavioral health career exposure, and additional Health Career Scholarships, increasing access to education and career opportunities for students pursuing high-need health professions.



**Melanie Rhodes**  
Executive Director

Looking ahead, WNY R-AHEC remains focused on building partnerships, expanding opportunity, and advancing innovative workforce solutions that ensure rural communities have access to high-quality healthcare now and into the future.

## WNY R-AHEC STAFF

STAFF AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2025

- Melanie Rhodes - Executive Director
- Sara Longhini - Associate Director
- Peter Appleton - Program Manager, RBHN
- Paula Bennett - Program Assistant
- Erin Brauen - Program Coordinator Pathways
- Brandy Burrell - Program Coordinator, Pathways
- Mark Byroads - CPT Case Manager
- Christine Chappel - Administrative Coordinator
- Jason Fulkerson - Program Manager, Rural Health Network and Workforce Development
- Holly Granger - Program Specialist, RBHN
- Emily Huff - CPT Case Manager
- Grace Huff - Program Assistant, RBHN
- Jeff Ottney - CPT Case Manager
- Liesl Schoonraad - Program Coordinator, Mental Health



2025 Staff Holiday Party

# WNY R-AHEC 2025 IMPACT

**4034**

Students participated in health career exploration programs

**687**

Individuals participated in healthcare-related professional development events

**913**

Nights provided to healthcare students, healthcare professionals, & community members

**939**

Individuals participated in OPEP Programs

**44**

Health professions college students received education & support through AHEC Scholars

**1699**

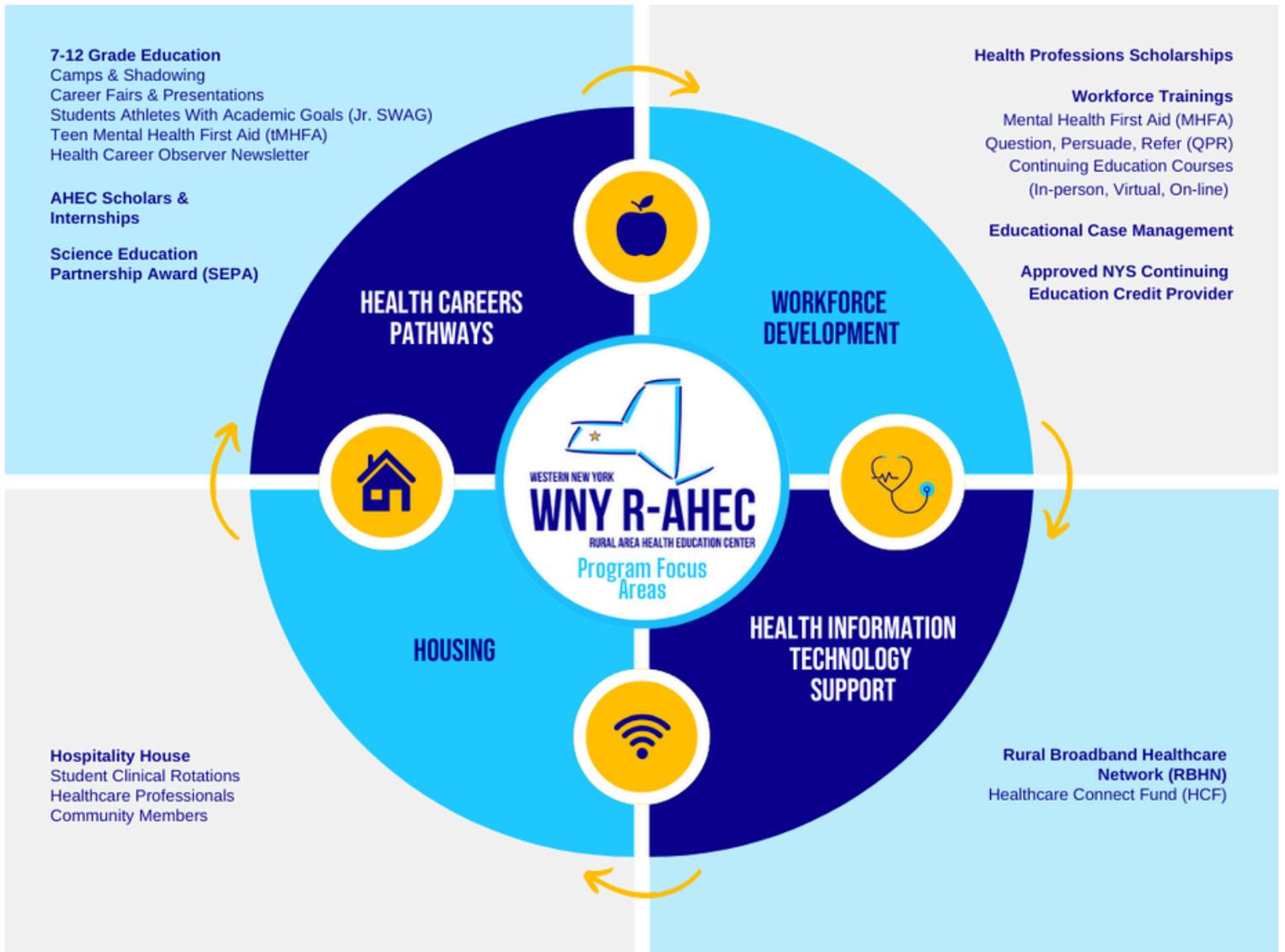
Individuals trained through the Mental Health Program (MHFA, QPR, & Resiliency)

**\$11,000**

Awarded in high school health careers scholarships

**241**

Active Rural Broadband Healthcare Network (RBHN) Sites





# WNY R-AHEC PROGRAMS

## PATHWAYS

- 4034** Students participated in pathways activities
- 10** Schools (public/private/BOCES), receive monthly Health Career Observer Newsletters
- 139** Health Career Observer newsletters distributed
- 1,652** Students reached through healthcare presentations or career fair events



## AHEC SCHOLARS

- Completed the 2-year program in August 2025, 480 training hours **6**
- Completed the 1st year of program in August 2025, 1,280 training hours **16**
- AHEC Scholars training hours **1,760**
- Recruited for year-one of program beginning in September 2025 **22**
- Partnering Colleges & Universities **12**
- AHEC Scholars stipends awarded in 2025 **\$25,817**



**AHEC SCHOLAR  
KIRK SWAN  
KEUKA COLLEGE  
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK**

## HEALTHCARE CAREERS EXPLORATION CAMPS



*"This program has furthered my interest in going into the medical field and has helped me learn what I need to do to get to med school and get the job I want. Thank you so much again for this opportunity!"*

**Jillian, Camp Participant**



## HEALTH CAREERS OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM (HCOP)



Five-year summer program (2024-2028), students spend six weeks onsite at R-AHEC and the D'Youville Campus. Students participate in a variety of programming through hands on learning experiences, shadowing opportunities, outings into the community, presentations from healthcare professionals, games and activities, CPR & FA, Stop the Bleed, tMHFA, and many others.



**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
D'YOUVILLE UNIVERSITY**

**6 WEEK CAMP,  
108 HOURS PER  
STUDENT**

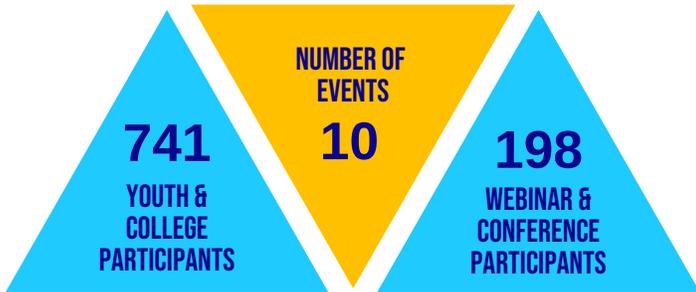
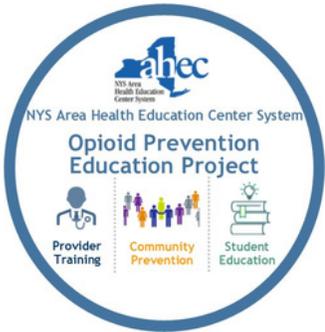
**25 STUDENTS  
FROM 8 COUNTIES**

**2,700 HOURS OF  
CAMP  
PROGRAMMING**



# WNY R-AHEC PROGRAMS

## OPIOID PREVENTION EDUCATION PROJECT (OPEP)



## SCHOOL PROGRAMS... SCIENCE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP AWARD (SEPA) & DISCOVER WELLNESS



**SEPA**  
Students and teachers partner with UB to learn how to use metagenomic data tools through The Metagenomics Education Partnership. Students learn about microbial genome sequencing through identifying organisms in local waterways.  
**Avon & Gananda CSD**  
**22 Participants**

**Discover Wellness**  
The Small Wellness Sustainability Grant allowed WNY R-AHEC to launch an initiative to reach a new demographic of K-6 students through hands-on education in disease prevention, healthy lifestyles, and health career exploration.  
**5 Presentations**  
**503 Participants**

## SIMULATION EDUCATION TRAINING (SET)

**245** Students participated in Simulation Education Training

Simulation Education Training immerses students in medical virtual reality scenarios, allowing for experiential learning in a virtual setting. Students choose between career scenarios such as Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Emergency Room, Pharmacy, Surgical Tech, or performing infection prevention, taking vitals, and assisting with a patient's ADL's or CPR.

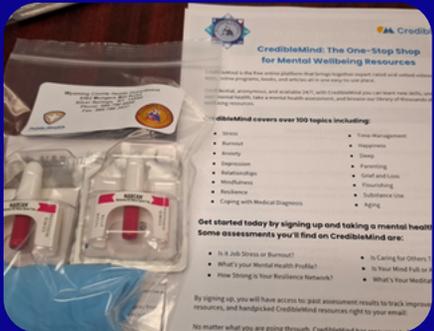


## HEALTHCARE CAREERS EXPLORATION CLUBS, JR. SWAG





# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS



## OPEP

Opioid Prevention Education Project



## After School Programs

Health Careers Exploration Clubs, Jr. SWAG



## Pathway Programs

Career Fairs & Tabling Events



## Mental Health First Aid

Youth & Adult MHFA



## Pathway Programs

Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP)



## Health Careers Exploration Camps

EMS Camp



## AHEC Scholars

Sophia M., St. Bonaventure Physician Assistant



## Pathway Programs

School Health Careers Presentations



## VR Health Exploration

Simulation Education Training (SET)



# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS



## Hospitality House

Housing for Medical Students & Healthcare Professionals



## NAO Biennial Conference 2025

Collaboration with sister AHECs in Louisville, KY



## OARS Program

"All The Lonely People" Documentary Screening



## Mental Health First Aid

Teen MHFA, Grades 9-12



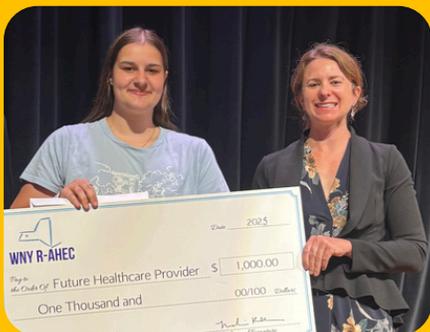
## Pathway Programs

Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP)



## Discover Wellness

K-6 Education, Prevention, & Health Career Exploration



## Health Careers Scholarship

Awarded Eleven \$1,000 Scholarships



## Pathway Programs

Hands-on & Engaging Youth Events



## Internships

Provided Healthcare & Workforce Experience



# WNY R-AHEC PROGRAMS

## MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING PROGRAM

R-AHEC utilizes Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) trainings, in addition to a Resiliency Training to provide high quality trainings to youth and adults. MHFA, through the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, is an international, evidence-based program that teaches people to identify, understand, and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges. Teen MHFA builds a powerful community of teens grades 9-12 by teaching them how to support a friend or classmate. QPR training, a product of QPR Institutes, is designed to teach community members how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to ask someone directly about their suicidal thoughts or intent.



*"I appreciate being able to learn more. My nephew committed suicide at 25 and I've questioned since what I would do if I was put in a position to help... now I know."*

Youth MHFA Participant

*"This was a very informative training that has opened my eyes about how important it is to recognize and acknowledge when someone is having a crisis and ways to help them."*

Adult MHFA Participant



*"This course helped me realize I had problems, and not many people helped. It was difficult to do this, but I think I am now ready to spread awareness and share my story. Thank you!"*

Teen MHFA Participant

## HEALTH CAREERS SCHOLARSHIP

\$11,000 in High School Scholarships Awarded

WNY R-AHEC awarded \$1,000 scholarships to eleven graduating seniors attending a college or certification program in a healthcare field in our 12-county catchment area. Congratulations to these promising future Healthcare Professionals!



Owen, Speech Pathology



Addison, Psychology



Annabelle, Nursing



Leah, Pharmacy



Hannah, OT



Jenna, Nursing



Carson, Biology



Jazmyne, Biomedical Science



Paola, Nursing



Ashley, Nursing



Willow, OT



# WNY R-AHEC PROGRAMS

## HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT RURAL BROADBAND HEALTHCARE NETWORK (RBHN)

**\$18,312,321.09 IN TOTAL COMMITMENTS SINCE FY2015**

A consortium of eligible healthcare providers (HCPs) in rural, urban, and medically underserved areas that qualify and participate in the FCC's Healthcare Connect Fund. Eligible facilities include Rural Health Clinics, Hospitals, FQHCs, Health Departments, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Teaching Hospitals, Community Mental Health Centers, Data Centers, and Admin Offices. These HCPs can save up to 65% off their broadband, fiber and equipment services.

**241 ACTIVE  
SITES**

**23 COUNTIES  
IN NY**

**37  
PARTICIPATING  
ORGANIZATIONS**

**3 STATES  
NY, PA, MA**

**\$1,658,647 IN COMMITMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 WITH \$608,677 STILL PENDING**

## HOSPITALITY HOUSE

**31** Medical Students  
& Vet Students

**41** Healthcare Professionals  
& Community Guests

**913** Nights Provided for  
Healthcare Students,  
Professionals, & Community  
Members

*\*350 additional nights provided to Airbnb guests*

“

*I had the pleasure of utilizing the Hospitality House during my emergency medicine rotation at WCCHS. My rotation was wonderful, and a large part of that was due to my stay at the Hospitality House! It is a quick walk down to the main doors of the hospital and provides everything you could need as a traveling student to the area. The Hospitality House is safe, clean, and, most importantly, affordable to students who commonly have many other financial burdens during schooling.*

*St. Bonaventure PA Student*

”

*Aziz Obidov, an AHEC Scholar and MSW candidate at Keuka College, described his 5-day stay at The Hospitality House as exceptional, highlighting the thoughtful design, comfortable layout, and peaceful rural setting. He especially appreciated the serene natural surroundings and convenient location between Buffalo, Rochester, Watkins Glen, and Corning. He highly recommends the house for students, professionals, or personal stays.*



*Aziz Obidov with Erin Brauen,  
AHEC Scholar Program Coordinator*



# WNY R-AHEC PROGRAMS

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**338 Individuals Trained  
938 Training Hours**

In the following courses and partnerships:

- Care Coordinator Certificate Program
- Person Centered Care
- Health-Related Social Needs
- Stress and Trauma

Partnered with:

- WNYICC, Social Care Network
- STWHWP & Riveon Mental Health, Care Coordinator
- University at Buffalo, SDOH
- Wyoming County Community Health System, Dementia Care

## CAREER PATHWAYS PROGRAM (CPT)

WNY R-AHEC contracted with the Finger Lakes Performing Provider System (FLPPS) to provide educational case management to students accepted into CPT. Case Managers support students from their enrollment to the program, through any classwork and tutoring issues, and assist with resume prep, interviewing skills, and job-hunting.

**14 Education & Training Programs at 50 Partner Institutions**

**More than \$12.3 Million in Tuition Paid to Partner Schools**

NYSED Approved Provider for Continuing Education in:  
Social Work, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Licensed Mental Health Professionals, Speech Language Pathology

**993 Credit Hours Awarded**

**777 Accepted Students from R-AHEC Catchment Area**

**140 Qualified Service Commitment Sites**

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The final year as a technical assistance provider for the Rural Public Health Workforce Training Program was completed. This was a unique partnership with the National AHEC Organization, offered by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, focused on expanding public health capacity by supporting health care job development, training and placement in rural and tribal communities.

**3 SITE VISITS**

- Southwest Georgia AHEC
- Oregon Health and Science University
- Health Care Coalition of Lafayette County, MO
- HRSA Program Meeting Rockville, MD



## AHEC WEBINAR SERIES

2024-24 Series  
Jan-Feb 2025

Partners:  
Erie Niagara, Central New York, Northern Area, Hudson Mohawk, Catskill Hudson AHECs

Topics:  
Health Literacy  
Reducing Stigma  
Cultural Humility  
Care for Older Adults  
Provider Burnout

2025-26 Series  
Sept-Dec 2025  
\*completing April 2026

Partners:  
All Nine  
NYS AHECs

Topics:  
Health Literacy  
Domestic Violence  
Dementia Care  
Impact of Stress & Trauma

**801 TOTAL TRAINED**

**118 PARTICIPANTS PARTICIPATED FROM THE WNY R-AHEC COUNTIES**



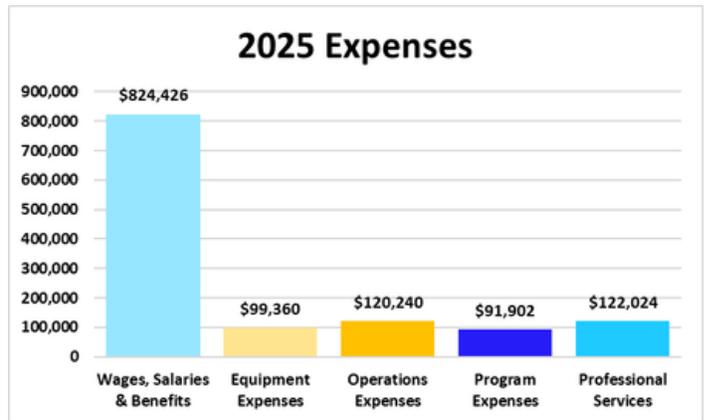
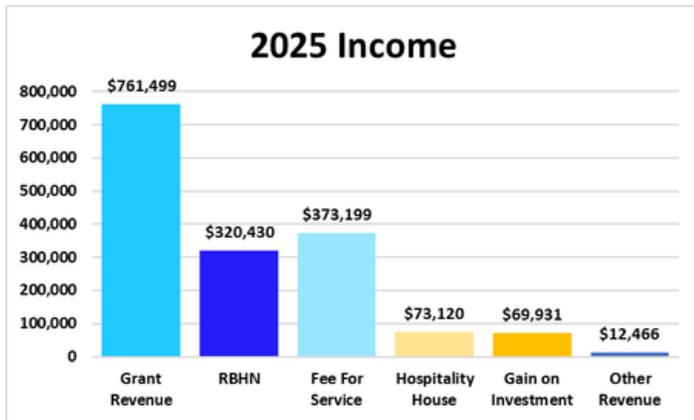
# 2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

## Income:

Grant Revenue	\$761,499
RBHN	\$320,430
Fee For Service	\$373,199
Hospitality House	\$73,120
Gain On Investment	\$69,931
Other Revenue	\$12,466
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,610,645</b>

## Expenses:

Wages, Salaries & Benefits	\$824,426
Equipment Expenses	\$99,360
Operations Expenses	\$120,240
Program Expenses	\$91,902
Professional Services	\$122,024
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,257,951</b>
Net Income *Unaudited Financials	<b>\$352,694</b>



**INVESTMENT AGENCY ACCOUNT AS OF 12/31/25**  
**\$563,431.87**

**SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNT AS OF 12/31/25**  
**\$66,475.82**

## FUNDERS

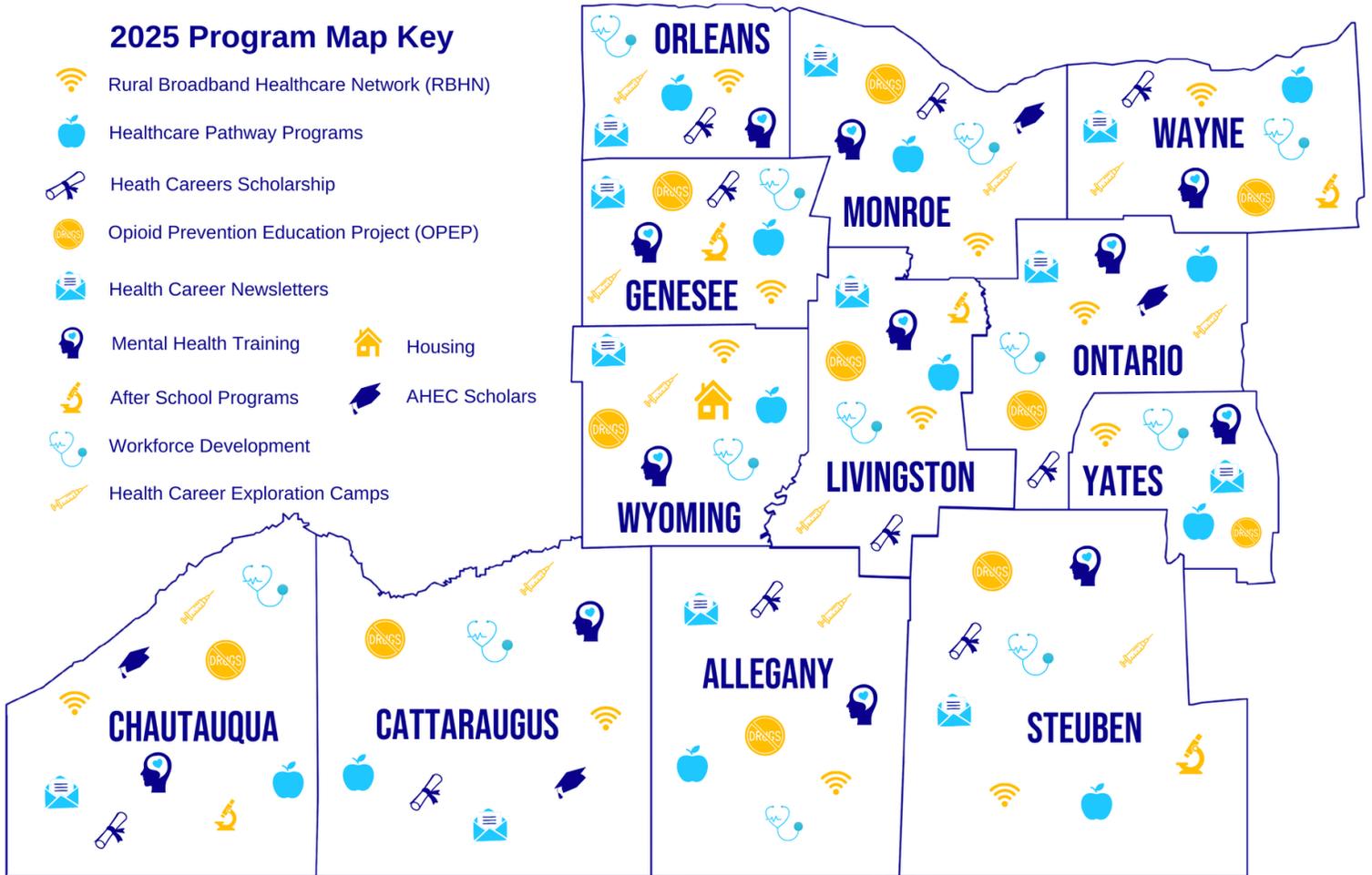
- Conable Family Foundation
- ESL Charitable Foundation
- Five Star Bank
- Garman Family Foundation administered by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo
- Greater Rochester Health Foundation
- HRI Small Wellness
- HRSA Federal AHEC
- HRSA Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) - Partner with D'Youville University
- Mother Cabrini Health Foundation
- National AHEC Organization, Rural Public Health Workforce Training Network Program
- National AHEC Organization, Pri-Med
- NYS Department of Health - Rural Health Network Development Program
- NYS Department of Health - State AHEC
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Mental Health Awareness Training Grant
- United Way of Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes - Pathways and Impact Funding
- University of Buffalo Research Foundation, Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA)
- Wayne County Community Endowment at Rochester Area Community Foundation
- Wyoming Foundation, CFGB



# PROGRAM MAP

## 2025 Program Map Key

- Rural Broadband Healthcare Network (RBHN)
- Healthcare Pathway Programs
- Health Careers Scholarship
- Opioid Prevention Education Project (OPEP)
- Health Career Newsletters
- Mental Health Training
- Housing
- After School Programs
- AHEC Scholars
- Workforce Development
- Health Career Exploration Camps



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**CONTACT US**



20 Duncan Street  
Warsaw, NY 14569

**585-786-6275**

[info@r-ahec.org](mailto:info@r-ahec.org)

[www.r-ahec.org](http://www.r-ahec.org)

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