



WESTERN NEW YORK

WNY R-AHEC

RURAL AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

"To improve health and healthcare through education"

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 2017.

This past year was again a year of continual change. As part of the NYS AHEC system, we have participated in the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) required redesign of the National AHEC system. This has been both a challenge and a great opportunity. Organizational goals and activities are focused on building diversity, improving distribution of health professionals and healthcare workforce practice transformation. We have been able to begin planning of the new AHEC Scholars program, provide workforce trainings, and focused efforts of building and strengthening community and regional partnerships.

In addition to the HRSA changes we have listened to our community partners and completed a feasibility study of the William F. Thiel Hospitality House to determine if we can provide more flexibility in space usage, increase occupancy and meet community needs in a more efficient manner. We have been seeking funding to support these efforts and are hopeful that in 2018, we will be able to complete the project.

In 2018 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 RURAL 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.

PIPELINE PROGRAMMING FOR YOUTH

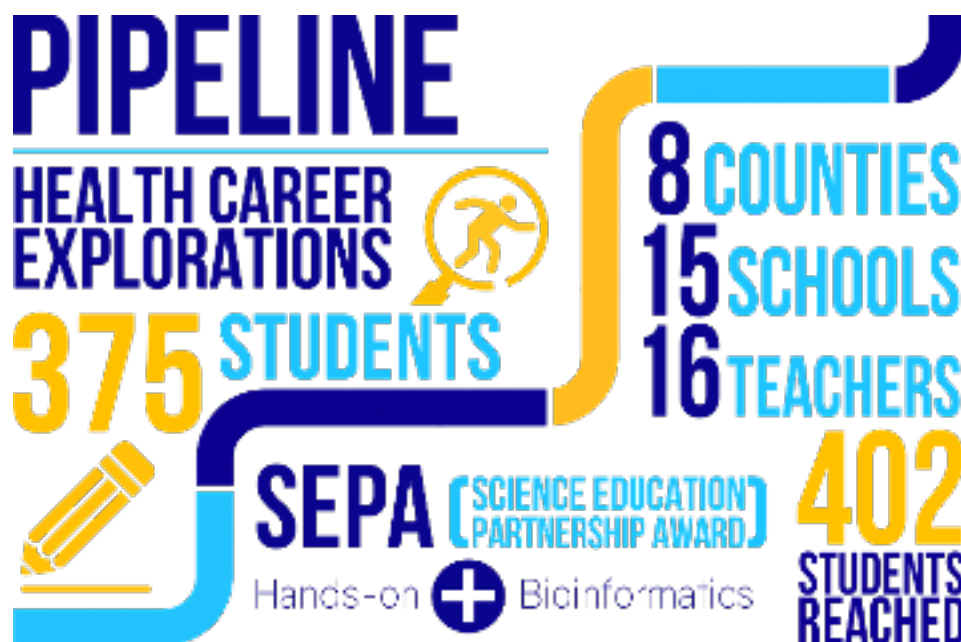


Summer Internship Program:

R-AHEC launched a new and exciting internship program this year for students 17 years or older who were entering their senior year of high school or who were enrolled in higher education. Five students successfully completed the program. This experience included a project entitled the "Fresh Air Healthcare Project" which challenged students to create a visual presentation identifying the benefits for healthcare professionals to work and live in a rural environment.

Career Presentations:

Students were introduced to a variety of healthcare careers such as phlebotomist, radiologist, and biotechnologist using short videos, activities, handouts, and games. 395 students were asked to complete pre and post surveys to measure personal change of interest and to challenge them to think critically about a career in the field. After the presentations, students were able to start formulating a career path with the presenters.



SEPA (Science Education Partnership Award) in Western New York Genetics in Health Care Partnership: SEPA

provided 9th – 12th grade students 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.



"I enjoyed the one-on-one interaction we were able to have with the hospital staff. It was cool to be separate from the rest of the group during the shadowing, so the experience was more realistic."

- Annabelle, Junior at Attica Central School

P.U.L.S.E. (Providing Unique Learning and Shadowing Experiences) Academy:

This past year, students from select Wyoming County school districts (Attica, Letchworth, Perry, Pioneer and Warsaw) were introduced to various healthcare careers through introductory activities at their high school. Through the PULSE program over 574 students had the opportunity to: attend a healthcare career overview, interact with practicing healthcare professionals, attend field trips and experience healthcare careers first-hand through job

shadowing experiences at Wyoming County Community Hospital. Speakers included individuals from the following fields: Chiropractic, Physical Therapy, Nursing, Registered Respiratory Therapy, Licensed Emergency Medical Technician and paramedic from Mercy Flight. Presenters delivered a brief introduction of their job responsibilities and the level of education required to practice in their profession. Field trips were coordinated for students to Genesee Community College where they toured the campus, interviewed on-the-job healthcare employees and met with instructors from all healthcare programs.

The PULSE Academy is funded through the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, William F. Thiel Trust and is designed to foster interest in healthcare employment and encourage students to pursue local opportunities as future Wyoming County healthcare professionals.

HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



We support the efforts of the three Performing Provider Systems (PPS) in our area:



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 both Millennium and CPWNY. Staff worked with partners to submit state-required information regarding spending efforts and staff-impact focused on the DSRIP project. This included managing the HWapps platform and generating user-friendly forms for finance and human resource departments to easily respond to the request for information.

Training Tracking: The agency also worked 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 3 required that PPSs perform a second compensation and benefit survey. Since the team here had completed the Year 1 survey, 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. Activities centered around this project will include supporting the partners as they develop and implement strategic plans and work plans which will transform present practices.



Health Workforce Retraining Initiative

Program (HWRI): In 2017, through this program R-AHEC coordinated training for 832 individuals in the areas of Healthcare Leadership and Computer Skills. Additionally, 32 students received LPN tuition assistance. This program offers training and assistance to healthcare employees from across a 23-county region and is funded by a grant from the DOH and DOL.



PRECEPTOR DEVELOPMENT & STUDENT HOUSING

"Everyone in the hospital and clinic was incredibly kind and friendly. I learned a lot from all of the clinicians I worked with. The housing was excellent and provided everything I needed. I hope many students can continue to have this experience."

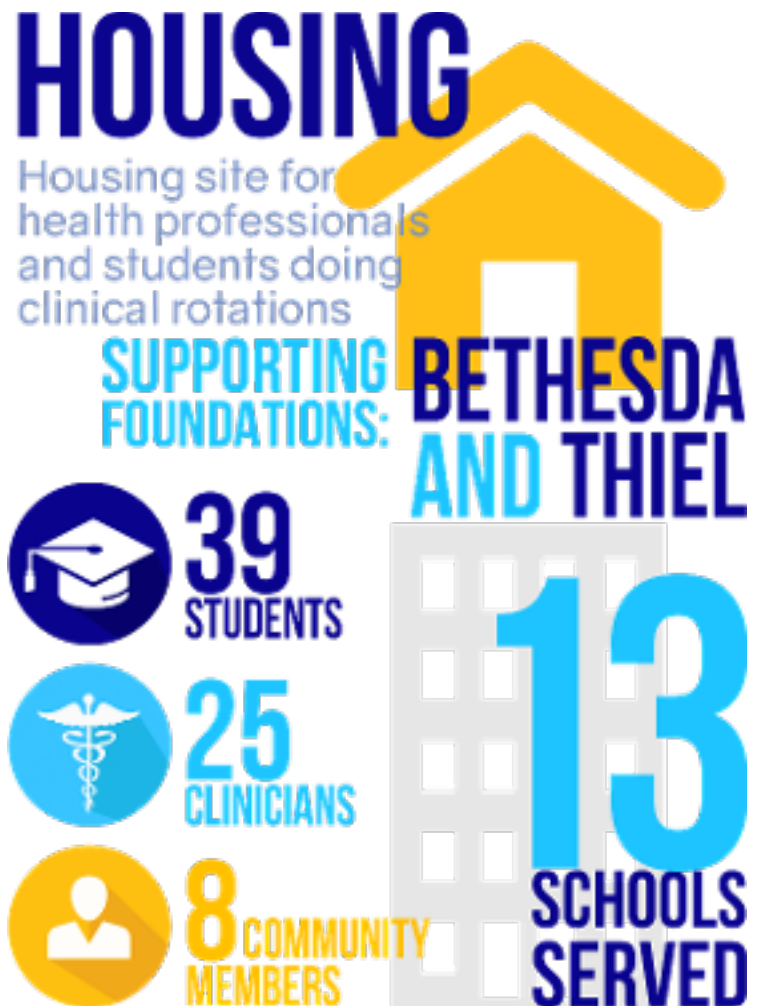
- Lindsay, DO Student



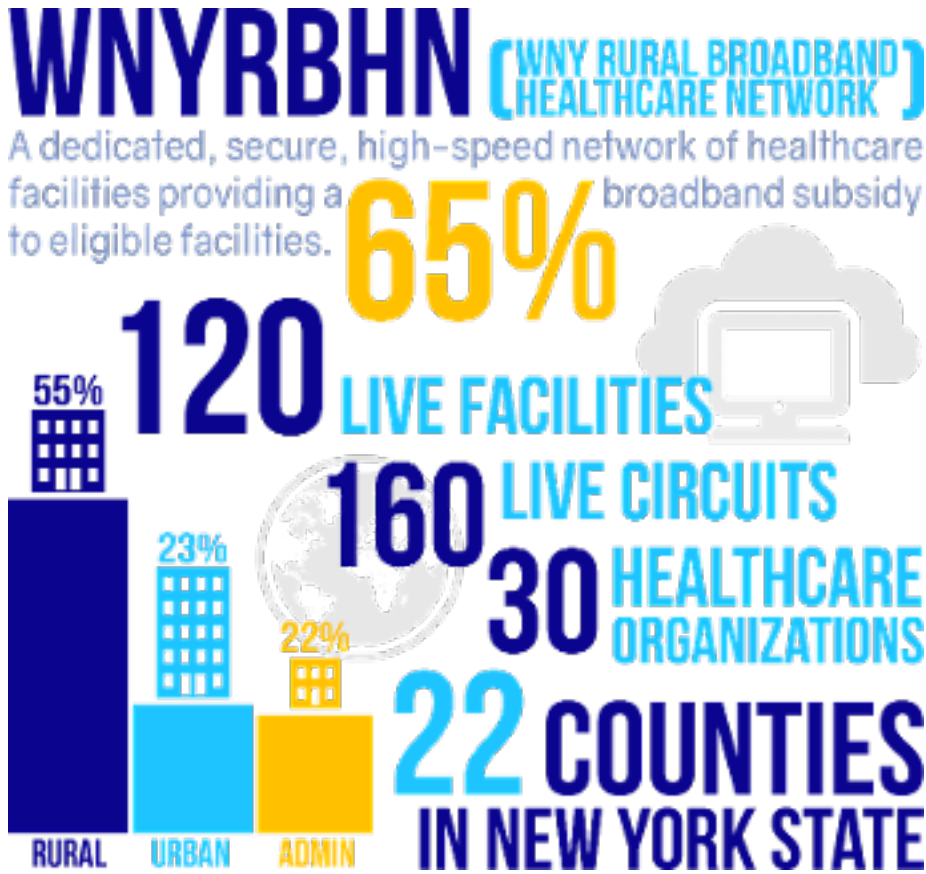
R-AHEC worked collaboratively with 13 colleges and academic institutions to identify preceptor sites for their health professions students in rural communities throughout Western New York. R-AHEC's efforts included providing affordable housing for health professional students at the William F. Thiel Hospitality House in Warsaw (Wyoming County) and through our decentralized housing support program where we were able to provide 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.



RURAL HEALTHCARE TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE



"My experience working with R-AHEC is outstanding; it's an outstanding organization to deal with. You have people who you can get a hold of right away, they're very accommodating, they prioritize your issues, and they make sure things get taken care of in a timely manner."

Tom

Catholic Health System

R-AHEC, as the consortium lead and network administrator, works on behalf of network members to obtain subsidies through FCC programs and to identify and develop other network member benefits such as equipment subsidies and education opportunities. The WNYRBHN 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 a secure, high speed IP Network 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. Additionally, in 2017, Skilled Nursing Facilities became eligible to participate in the program.

We are continuing to work with our partners to develop a broad spectrum of network partners and services across the region to build and strength healthcare facilities and organizations.



LOOKING AHEAD IN 2018

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. Forming multidisciplinary health care teams, students will identify the root causes of select clinical and social complexities, and propose potential solutions to reduce the over-utilization of emergency room visits and hospitalizations for a core group of patients.

Beginning in Fall 2018, each AHEC Scholar Team will utilize a hybrid model of in-person experiences and online modules to gain in-depth training on topics designed to augment patient care, such as cultural competency, social determinants of health, practice transformation, behavioral health integration, and interprofessional care coordination.



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, locum tenens physicians and families of community members experiencing a medical crisis

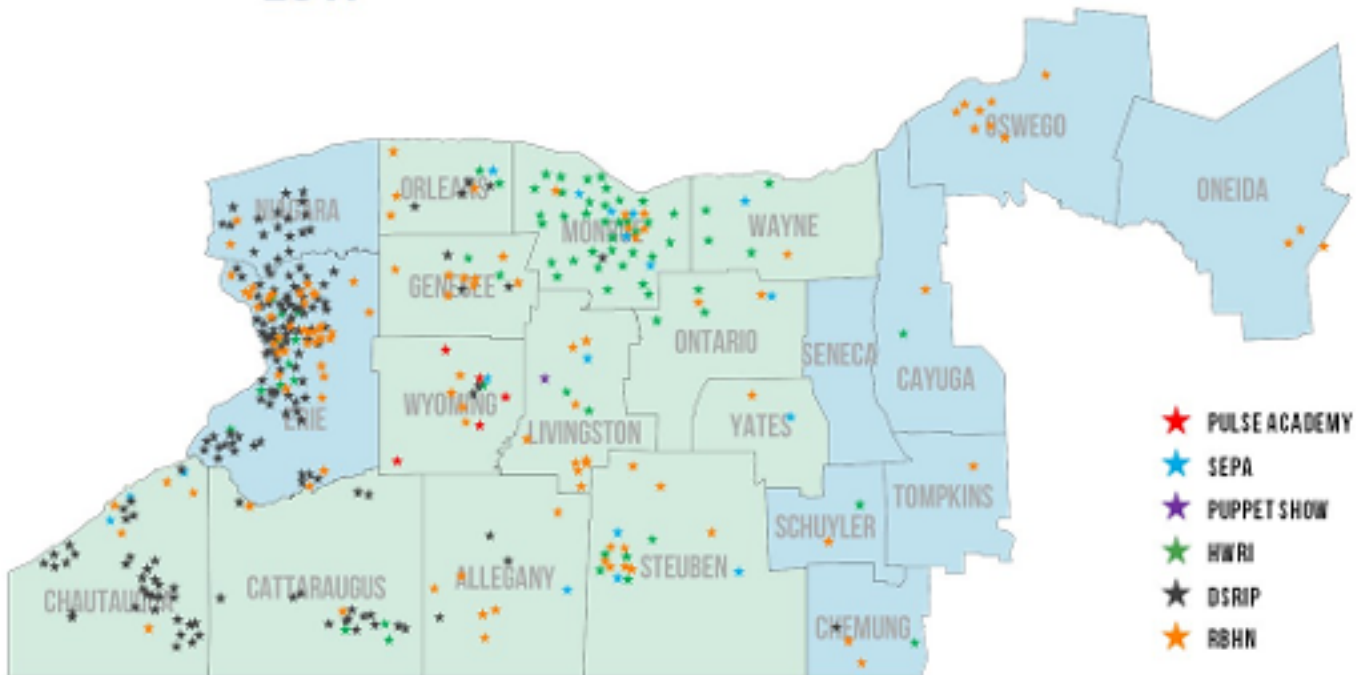
in Wyoming County. In 2018, R-AHEC is hopeful to begin renovations and to provide necessary upgrades to the Hospitality House so that we may better serve the needs of the guests and our healthcare community.

Advancement Training for Healthcare Occupations (ATHOS):

R-AHEC continues to offer quality trainings to healthcare providers in Western New York through this program. Presently, we are in the process of applying for accreditation to offer CEUs. Our instructor-led trainings include the following topics: Community Health Worker, Cultural Competency/Health Literacy, Professionalism, and Motivational Interviewing.



WNY R-AHEC PROGRAMMING 2017



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