HPV: You Are the Key to Cancer Prevention

By: Jennifer Hellier

Did you know that “You are the Key” to Cancer Prevention?

Human papillomavirus (pap-ah-LO-mah-VYE-rus) (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted virus in the United States. Sexually active people will acquire HPV at some point in their lives. HPV is short for human papillomavirus and is a group of more than 150 related viruses. Each HPV virus in this large group is given a number, which is called its HPV type. HPV is named for the warts (papillomas) that some HPV types can cause. Some other HPV types can lead to cancer, especially cervical cancer. There are more than 40 HPV types that can infect the genital areas of males and females. But there are vaccines that can prevent infection with the most common types of HPV.

The National AHEC Organization National Training Center is embarking on Improving HPV Immunization Rates on a National Scale Utilizing the National AHEC Network project.

Continued on page 2
The project will work in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to improve the HPV immunization rates of 11 and 12 year old, males and females, throughout the nation by improving clinician training and understanding of the vaccine.

To complete this project, 10 regional HPV project coordinators were hired to work closely with selected AHEC entities in each state within their region to establish and maintain links with appropriate resources. Corryn Celmer, Program Specialist with Yankton Rural AHEC, is the Region H Coordinator. States in Region H are: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming.

You can watch a recorded webinar to learn how to discuss the HPV vaccine. Please use this registration link: https://events-na5.adobeconnect.com/content/connect/c1/951358841/en/events/event/shared/1480695977/event_registration.html?sco-id=1604404000&_charset_=utf-8.

Contact Jennifer Hellier PhD, your Colorado HPV Ambassador, for information on professional education opportunities about HPV Vaccinations.

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My Colorado AHEC Program Testimonial

By: Shannon Shaw

My name is Shannon Shaw and I have just completed my third week of medical school. I have wanted to study medicine since I was sixteen years old and up until the summer after my freshman year of college, I had absolutely no idea what to do about it.

I grew up in the northeast Denver neighborhood of Montbello where growing up to even graduate high school was considered to be a degree of over-achievement. Denver Public Schools, then, as it does now, had a huge percentage of high school drop-outs. I was just another student in the crowd and was not expected to go far according to most of the adults that I encountered in an educational setting. The little encouragement I received was largely focused on graduating high school, and the few who suggested college were incredulous at the idea that I wanted to be a science major.

I really didn’t know where to start, so I attended college fairs and looked for institutions that were known for biology. I was able to shadow a family practice physician who volunteered through a program in my high school, but he openly admitted he did not know much about the application process as it had been many years since he had been a student. My family were supportive but could offer little help as no one in my family had ever attended medical school.

I chose to attend Western State Colorado University because it was a change from what I had grown up with. It is known for its biology programs but mostly produces wildlife biologists. I was more intrigued by the idea of leaving the city than I was about the number of successful pre-meds a school turned out. I will never regret going to Western State, as I think it was the best thing for me. It is a tiny school, but it gave me the opportunity to get one-on-one attention and develop as an adult in ways that would have been impossible had I gone to a large school in a city.

It was quickly pointed out to me that there was little help for me at Western State if my ultimate goal was to get into medical school. The professors gave me encouragement the likes of which I had never encountered before, but because the school is so small it was impractical to have a formal advisory program for the few pre-med students that attended.

I have little doubt that I would not be where I am today had it not been for the CREATE Health Scholars Program, now Co-HPD (Colorado Health Professions Development) Scholars, run by Dr. Jennifer Hellier out of the Colorado AHEC Program office. Since the program was started, Western State professors have advised all of their pre-health students to apply, and I was lucky enough to be accepted to this program twice. This was the first time in my educational career that I was given clear direction for what I needed to do to reach my goal of becoming a physician. I was exposed to different types of healthcare careers, participated in emergency scenarios, and received lectures on professional dress and behavior. This program was one of the most
difficult things I have done. It pushed me harder that I thought I could be pushed. This program made me
grow as human being, and it made me a better and more confident student. I learned how to make myself into
a competitive applicant. I learned what I needed to get involved in, what I was competing for and who I was
competing against. The first year I did it, I was forced to really consider whether or not I wanted to take my
life down this immensely difficult road and I realized that I did. The second year gave me resources that I
would never have been able to get access to otherwise. I could not have scored as well as I did on the MCAT
without the Kaplan preparation course that this program provided, and my resume would not be as robust
without the advice of Co-HPD to always try new experiences, especially the ones that make you uncomforta-
ble.

This program pushes its students not to reach expectations set by others but to exceed the ones they set for
themselves. I got more involved in my campus because of Co-HPD. I am naturally a very quiet, introverted
person. Yet after doing this program I took a job as a Supplemental Instruction Leader at my school, a job that
involves talking in front of entire classes of students, answering questions in front of an audience and being a
person that is presented to incoming students as someone to seek out and lead study sessions for difficult clas-
ses. It was a job that I would never have accepted without the guidance of Co-HPD, yet it was one that I
turned out to love and that I discovered I had a gift for. I held offices in clubs, and I involved myself in re-
search projects that I would have never believed I would get involved in when I started undergrad. By the
time I finished my junior year, professors I had never had a class with knew who I was. I reached a point
where I could help give advice to the pre-med students in the years below me because of the advice I had re-
ceived from Dr. Hellier and Co-HPD. I wanted to leave a legacy at Western State, which still did not have a
formal pre-health advising program, so I co-founded the Pre-Health Club to create an avenue for students to
help each other. One of the founding principles of that club is the recommendation that all members should
attend the Co-HPD program at least once.

This program changed the course of my life and shaped the person I have become. I will be forever grateful
that I applied to it as a shy, awkward nineteen year old because when I finished I was never the same again.
Co-HPD was not my only experience with a pipeline program, however. When I applied to the University Of
Colorado School Of Medicine for the 2014 cycle, I cannot remember a time when I was more on edge. I was
stunned to get an interview because the pool for medical school applicants is so competitive. I was invited to
apply to the post-baccalaureate program, another shock, especially since I had no idea that CU had one. When
I was told I was accepted, the feeling was surreal. Knowing that I just had to successfully complete an extra
year of science courses to be automatically accepted into medical school of the 2015 cycle was an enormous
relief. I would be lying if I said that I was not a little hurt at first that I was not accepted directly into medical
school but the post-baccalaureate program turned out to be exactly what I needed.

Transitioning from a school like Western State, where the average class size is less than thirty students and
professors chat with students at the local bars, to attending school in Denver, where professors have to look
you up by your nine-digit I.D. number to figure out who you are, was a bigger culture shock than when I ini-
tially started attending Western State after high school. I was not ready for it, and I am so thankful that I was
given an extra year to grow up and prepare for medical school in a more rigorous environment. Once I was accepted to the post-baccalaureate program, I became a Team Leader for Co-HPD so that I could teach others about my path to medical school and to give back to the program that helped me.

These pipeline programs helped me make a nearly impossible dream real. I could not have come as far as I have in such a short amount of time without them. I am only twenty-three years old, and yet I have long surpassed the point anyone thought I could reach when I was growing up. I come from a place that has very low expectations for its youth; statistics say that I should never have come this far. These pipeline programs gave me the resources to make certain that I did not become a statistic. I am successful because I worked hard, but without these programs in place to give me direction, I could never have reached this point on my own.

Connecting
Students to Careers,
Professionals to Communities and
Communities to Better Health

Central Colorado AHEC Office Updates

By: Robbie Ruggles

Central Colorado AHEC has many exciting changes and updates to report this quarter. In June we finally moved into a more spacious office. Our staff members now have room to breathe in their offices, and we’re very excited to have a large conference room at our disposal. Along with a new office, we also have a few new staff members. Lin Browning is taking the helm as our Executive Director. Additionally, Robby Ruggles joins us as our new Technical and Communications Support Manager and Taylor Hayes is our new Student Program Coordinator. Jacinta Lisauskaite joins us as our Youth Mental Health First Aid AmeriCorps member. This is the third year we’ve participated in this national program in partnership with Northwestern Connecticut AHEC & Colorado Behavioral Health Care Council.

We have exciting news to announce about two of our former members. Aaron Jones has completed his journey from the original Aurora LIGHTS program in 2009 to medical school. He is now a full-time medical student at Rocky Vista University in Parker, Colorado. Now all of the original Aurora Lights mentors are in medical school or employed in a medical field. Also, Emily, our former AmeriCorps member has completed her term, and has been hired by the Colorado Behavioral Health Care Council.

The Aurora LIGHTS pipeline program continues on. This summer, 25 students from area high schools participated in Aurora LIGHTS at the Biotech Institute. Our pipeline program is now funded by The Anschutz Foundation to expand career exploration opportunities to middle school students. This summer we put our partnership with “Project: Be Ready” to work as we surveyed the students who took part in the program. “Project: Be Ready” utilizes Pairn.com’s technology and is the first validated measurement system for life and workforce preparedness. We are planning to administer a second survey to these same students to measure how they have progressed and offer them coaching in areas identified by the survey. We also have funding for our Summer Youth Pipeline Program, and we’re hard at work planning and developing awesome programs for next summer.

Lastly, we’d like to announce our brand new Facebook page at: https://www.facebook.com/centralcoahec. We’d really appreciate it if everyone can visit the page and click Like. The more Likes we have the more people in our community we can reach.
Central Colorado AHEC Welcomes New Executive Director and Staff Members

**Executive Director, Lin Browning.** In July 2015, Lin Browning enthusiastically came to be the new Executive Director for the industry and community members served by the Central Colorado Area Health Education Center (CCAHEC).

With a desire to help refine, unite and focus objectives of the organization, Lin brings a passion for fresh ideas and collaboration. She most recently worked as the President/CEO of the Evergreen Area (CO) and Angel Fire (NM) Chambers of Commerce where she launched a variety of innovative and successful programs and events while increasing revenue.

With degrees in Education (MA) and Psychology (BA), certification in Economic Development and Non-Profit Management, along with experience in Real Estate, Investing, Business Development and Human Resources, Lin feels that leading the CCAHEC utilizes her strengths and allows for continued progression.

Taking the helm at CCAHEC after a period of leadership and staff transition, Lin has focused on building a strong team to solidify goals and direction in addition to discovering all that AHEC programming entails. Bringing together seasoned and new team members has created an atmosphere for fresh growth with a solid, historical foundation.

Lin’s dual passions for education and workforce development lend themselves nicely to the current projects CCAHEC is working on, particularly the Health Science, Engineering, and Technology Career Exploration Initiative, which focuses on exposing middle school students within Aurora Public Schools to STEM careers.

As a true collaborator, Lin is grateful for the strong partnerships between the Colorado Regional AHEC Centers and the leadership from the Program Office. It is important to work and grow together, and Colorado AHECs are a shining example of how that is done.

Lin loves the outdoors and the Colorado lifestyle and enjoys the many experiences to be found in the Denver area and mountain communities with her sons, dogs, and ever-increasing list of family pets!

Lin can be reached at the CCAHEC office at 303-923-3734 or by email LinBrowning@centralcoahec.org
Robby Ruggles, Technical and Communications Support Manager. The Central Colorado Area Health Education Center in Denver is pleased to welcome Robby Ruggles to our team. Robby is now our Technical and Communications Support Manager. He comes to us with years of web design and technical support experience. He was Honorably Discharged from the US Navy after 13 years of service last July. His distinguished service began in January, 2001. He served as a Master-At-Arms, which is the Navy’s military police. Later in his career he moved into a larger leadership role, and at one point had 60 sailors working for him while stationed in the Middle East. Ultimately, he decided to leave the US Navy and pursue a career in a field which he is passionate about.

Although he is originally from Las Vegas and traveled the world in the Navy, he is happy to have finally settled down and now call Colorado home. He lives in the mountains southwest of Denver and enjoys exploring this beautiful state. Robby and his girlfriend are expecting their first child in October, and he couldn’t be more excited to finally become a father.

Taylor Hayes, Student Program Coordinator.
The Central Colorado Area Health Education Center in Denver is excited to welcome Taylor Hayes to our team. Taylor is taking the reigns as Student Program Coordinator. He is a recent graduate from the University of Colorado at Boulder where he studied a combination of history and public health. He is eager to apply what he’s learned in combination with his passion for working with youth and education. He appreciates the opportunity to begin working with the community that he’s lived in most of his life. Taylor’s life outside is consumed by reading, hiking, developing his cooking skills, and learning French. Once he finishes moving to Denver, Taylor plans on volunteering with the LGBT center located in downtown Denver.
Southwestern Colorado
AHEC
Area Health Education Center

SWCAHEC Celebrates 5th Anniversary
National AHEC Organization CEO Attends Reception

DURANGO, CO — Southwestern Colorado Area Health Education Center (SWCAHEC) recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. Many members from the region’s healthcare community, program staff and regional AHEC directors from across the state attended a reception marking the occasion.

SWCAHEC Executive Director, Kathleen McInnis, said the local center continues to strive for improved quality and accessibility of healthcare for residents of southwest Colorado through pipeline programming and a goal of developing a strong healthcare workforce. “SWCAHEC is also committed to continuing the development of quality health education and programming for students, professionals, and community members in our region,” she said.

The National AHEC Organization’s Chief Executive Officer, Robert Trachtenberg, made his way from Rhode Island for the special event. Trachtenberg said his visit to southwest Colorado was transformational. “I rarely get to see directly and up close how impactful AHECs are in some of the most rural and frontier areas of our country. I, of course, know how important our work is, and know that great work occurs in every corner of the country every single day, though seeing and learning of the impact of our work firsthand in a part of the country I've never visited made it particularly valuable.”

Trachtenberg also took part in the Colorado AHEC program’s executive directors’ quarterly meeting held in Durango that same week. Trachtenberg updated the group about the National AHEC projects, funding priorities and the latest health trends.

Trachtenberg has been the National AHEC CEO since 2011. He has 20 years of experience in community-based organizational development.
Win-Win for Patients and Health Care Community
Voluntary Collaborative Improves Patient Health and Achieves Cost Savings

The Center of Excellence in Care Coordination (CoECC) has demonstrated significant progress by working with the local health care community. For the past year, more than 40 partner organizations came together under the CoECC to build a health infrastructure for improved patient services and greater health system efficiency. The results show improved access to timely and appropriate care for patients as well as cost savings across southwest Colorado.

In an effort to bridge some persistent gaps for patients who receive services from multiple health care providers, it was proposed that the healthcare community itself could help untangle some of the complexities stifling the system. The CoECC therefore, convened several working groups including the Durango Blue Group. The Blue Group is a voluntary initiative between patients with complex care needs and their team of clinicians and care coordinators.

Blue Group meetings revolve around care goals, care management, and planning issues. The Blue Group has made positive strides for patients with chronic illnesses. Even most disadvantaged individuals are empowered to focus on what they can do to stay as healthy and independent as possible. The Blue Group has achieved some important goals after only 8 months in existence. Since the first meeting in October 2014, the group has coordinated care across different healthcare organizations and community services.

It is estimated that the Blue Group has saved an average of $8,357 per patient over a three month period. This dollar amount was calculated by comparing the total cost of healthcare services for each patient before and after receiving community-wide care coordination services by the Blue Group.
“The effort has averted many undesirable health events for individual clients,” said Nora Flucke, CoECC Project Director.

“Members of the Blue Group have been instrumental in identifying real needs and taking timely action to prevent bad situations from turning into crises.”

Flucke, a professional care coordinator and Blue Group member, describes her work as unpredictable yet very rewarding. She accounts, “We go the extra mile to help patients meet their health goals. For example, we might coordinate medical appointments, prescriptions, housing needs, and transportation. We have even set-up pet sitting services so that a client could finally undergo a long-delayed surgery.”

Flucke added, “Even though much of community-wide care coordination is intangible, its effectiveness is measurable. None of the patients, who are still in the area, had a major health event, that is not a single emergency department or urgent care visit. Even patients suffering from multiple illnesses who had been hospitalized many times prior to receiving services by the Blue Group were not admitted to the hospital since.”

Flucke concluded, “Patients really appreciate when health professionals work together. For patients it means better, faster access to medical, social, and financial help-- and a lot less hassle.”

Southwestern Colorado Area Health Education Center (SWCAHEC) was awarded a grant from The Colorado Health Foundation to design and implement the CoECC in 2014. The CoECC serves care coordinators across eight counties; Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Montezuma, Ouray, San Juan, and San Miguel.

The Center of Excellence in Care Coordination is made possible through support and funding from:

Southwestern Colorado AHEC

The Colorado Health Foundation™
Centennial Area Health Welcomes New Staff and a New Program

**John Bayer, Mental Health First Aid Trainer.** John graduated from Rockhurst University in 2014 with a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology. After a year working as a carpenter, he decided to re-explore his passion for volunteer work which led him to his current position as an AmeriCorps member. In his free time, he enjoys to hike, play tennis, and cook. One of his favorite meals to cook is grilled cheese made on homemade bread. He is excited to start his work with Mental Health First Aid Colorado and Centennial Area Educational Health Center and hopes to grow the Youth MHFA program in the northeast region of the state. John can be reached by calling 970-330-3608 or by email at jbayer@cahec.org.

**Gwyneth Milbrath, Nurse Coordinator.** Gwyneth is a nursing instructor at the University of Northern Colorado. Her teaching focus is in graduate and undergraduate public health courses, and she is finishing her PhD in Nursing at the University of Virginia. She also works as a registered nurse in the emergency department for University of Colorado Health. She is excited to work with the Centennial AHEC as the Nurse Education Coordinator and will assist the team with grant writing, program development, and program management. Gwyneth can be reached by calling 970-330-3608 or by email at Gwyneth.Milbrath@unco.edu.

**Nancy Schumacher, Student Liaison and Educator and Housing Coordinator.** Nancy grew up and went to school in Greeley. While she has served in a variety of positions, she is an entrepreneur at heart who has spent years working in the health and human services sector. She is a CNA on a mission to provide training and education to underserved areas. Nancy’s passion for education is supreme and she enjoys working and engaging with students. In her free time, she is the mother to two college-aged children. Nancy can be reached by calling 970-330-3608 or by email at Nschumacher@cahec.org.

**New Program**

Centennial is excited to announce we will be participating with the Colorado Foundation for Public Health and the Environment Regional Health Connector program. This program will be deployed across Colorado and the Regional Health Connectors will serve as practice transformation and community health connectors, building linkages among the various components of the healthcare delivery system, practice transformation organization, public health systems, community organizations, state, county and city agencies, and the academic health system.
Community Health Workers Shine in San Luis Valley
By: Freddie Jaquez

San Luis Valley AHEC welcomes Lisa Jaquez Casias to the team and gives kudos to Rodney Sandoval and Honey Quintana. These three community health workers provided cardiac risk assessment screening and follow up to residents in Conejos, Costilla and Alamosa counties through the Colorado Heart Healthy Solutions program. Honey Quintana, with Costilla County, screened 88 new clients and completed rescreens and followed up with 158 clients over this last year. Rodney Sandoval, with Conejos and Alamosa County, screened 200 new clients and completed rescreens and followed up with 312 clients over this last year. Honey and Rodney worked with their clients to make positive behavior changes to bring down cholesterol and blood pressure values.

Lisa Jaquez Casias takes over the helm for Honey in September and comes to the job with great experience! She held the position prior to giving birth to triplets who are now three years old.
Top Nursing Graduate at Adams State University Nursing Program
By: Freddie Jaquez

Samantha “Sam” Cordero—2010-2011 “Grow Your Own” program participant. Samantha “Sam” Cordero, 2010 – 2011 “Grow Your Own” student with the San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center (SLVAHEC), was the top graduate among the Adams State University Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students for 2015. She filled her college years with study and service, working as a tutor and being active with Circle K, affiliated with the Kiwanis Club.

She was part of the Professional Practice class that created the first Annual Nursing Symbol. “Creating the symbol helped us focus on why we wanted to become nurses and what would make us good nurses,” she said. “I’ve liked every rotation we’ve done so far, but I haven’t yet found exactly what I want to do. I’d like to get experience as a medical/surgical nurse,” said Cordero. Nevertheless, she is committed to rural healthcare and would like to work in the West.

Cordero began to focus on a nursing career after attending the Summer Health Careers Institute, presented by the San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center. During the two-week internship prior to her senior year of high school, she shadowed a doctor at the hospital. “Nurses are there all the time. They are with the patient through everything,” she said. Having worked as a summer camp counselor, she said, “Kids are my thing.” One day last winter, she and a fellow Circle K member, Ashley Setzer, brought smiles to patients at Children’s Hospital Colorado and the Ronald McDonald House when they dressed as the heroines from the movie Frozen. The two had first portrayed Anna and Elsa during the Alamosa Ice Fest as part of their work with the Kiwanis Club. Yvette Lujan, Nursing Department clinical placement coordinator, said, “Samantha is a great example of a nursing student that is very dedicated to being involved in the community.”

A significant part of her nursing education was a spring break nursing mission to Guatemala. “I had never left the U.S. before. They said it would change my life, and it really did,” Cordero said. She said the clinic’s doctor would see 20-40 patients in the morning alone, with the most common conditions being colds, pregnancy, and gastro-intestinal problems. “It makes you realize how lucky you are to live in a place like the U.S. It also shows you how poorer countries make things work and set priorities,” she said. (Article and picture – courtesy of ASU, A. Stater)

“We are extremely proud of Samantha,” stated Freddie Jaquez, Executive Director of the San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center. “She was a great student in the “Grow Your Own” program and has had continued success throughout her higher education experience.”
Southeastern Colorado AHEC Partners with Telligen

By: Doreen Gonzales

Southeastern Colorado AHEC has partnered with Telligen of Greenwood Village, CO to provide the Diabetes Self-Management Education program (DSME) to Medicare and Medicare-Medicaid beneficiaries in Southeastern Colorado. Telligen is a Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) dedicated to improving healthcare for consumers and providers. The organization, in collaboration with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and other QIN-QIOs, will support the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ National Quality Strategy to achieve better care, better health, and affordable care.

Southeastern Colorado AHEC is subcontracted under Telligen for a four-year period to provide DSME classes to rural and underserved Medicare and Medicare-Medicaid recipients. The disparate subpopulation target groups will include African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Asian, and Pacific Islander residents. The classes will be given to populations in the southeastern Colorado counties which lack diabetes education resources, as well as physician practices that would like to offer DSME to their disparate Medicare or dual eligible patient population with diabetes.

Southeastern Colorado AHEC is excited to provide DSME classes to Medicare and Medicare-Medicaid beneficiaries in our service area where rural healthcare facilities struggle with available resources for their patients and for people who do not receive quality health information. Health inequity issues still exist in our state and partners like Telligen offer the means to spread health education programs to rural and underserved populations. Colorado AHECs make the best partner to ensure quality health programs reach every corner of our state.
Western Colorado AHEC New Program Offerings

This summer and fall, Western Colorado AHEC (WCAHEC) increased their health career programs and outreach to counties they have not reached in the past. Georgia Stewart (Executive Director) and Nicole Heil (Student Services, Program Coordinator) obtained certification to teach CPR and First Aid to the citizens of the 13 counties that WCAHEC serves. If you are interested in becoming trained, please contact Georgia or Nicole at 970-434-5474 or by email: gstewart@wcahec.org or nheil@wcahec.org.

The WCAHEC Nurse Aide Training has been administered for more than three years and has expanded the number of available seats for each class. Nurse Aide Training is provided during evening classes for 6 1/2 weeks. A class includes 80 hours of classroom time and 24 hours of clinic time and runs Monday through Thursday from 5 pm to 9 pm at the 1405 Wellington Ave location. Additional evening and daytime classes are scheduled as needed. A basic class fee is $945 which includes a background screening fee, books, and a Colorado Board of Nursing exam application. Currently, this course has a 87% passing rate for first-time certification. Scholarships are available through Mesa County Workforce Center (970-248-0871). For a schedule of classes and registration information please contact Natasha Schuman at nschuman@wcahec.org or 970-434-5474, extension 2.

WCAHEC has also started a Qualified Medication Administration Personnel (QMAP) program to help support health professionals on the western slope to administer medications safely and accurately according to written physician’s orders. For more information about the WCAHEC QMAP program, please contact Georgia or Nicole at 970-434-5474 or by email: gstewart@wcahec.org or nheil@wcahec.org.
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