Recruitment is not Retention (continued)

I am honored to be part of the Colorado AHEC. It is a pleasure to come to work and be part of the great things the AHEC is doing. Look around for your AHEC. Look through this newsletter to get a glimpse of just a few of the programs the AHECs are doing. Call your AHEC. Use your AHEC. Live healthy, live long.

Jack Westfall, MD, MPH
Colorado AHEC Director

Colorado AHEC System Office Welcomes New Associate Director

Clint Cresawn, MA, comes to the AHEC System from the Colorado Rural Health Center – Colorado’s State Office of Rural Health – where he oversaw the Center’s rural healthcare workforce development and rural healthcare policy efforts. It was in that role that Clint first came into contact with all the regional AHEC Directors, as well as Dr. Jack Westfall, AHEC Director. Clint’s workplace passions include education (he’s served as a college instructor for over 8 years), opening up opportunities for Colorado’s youth, and access to health care. Among other things, Clint will be involved in our workforce development, recruitable communities, and policy efforts.

Clint Cresawn, Colorado AHEC Director

Recruitment is not Retention

by Jack Westfall, MD, MPH
Colorado AHEC Director

How do you get a doctor to move to your rural community? Recruitment.

How do you get that same doctor to stay in your community for a long time? Retention.

Often these two terms are linked… recruitment and retention. For instance, “Our community needs help with its recruitment and retention efforts.” Or, “Come to our workshop on recruitment and retention.” These two terms have been used together so often that they have nearly become synonymous. But are they? Are the things necessary to get a doctor to move to a rural community the same things necessary to keep the doctor? I used to think so. But then I heard Dr. Donald Pathman, of the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, talk about the research on recruitment and the research on retention. While linked in many ways, the efforts necessary to recruit a doctor are not the same efforts needed to retain a doctor.

Here’s what he said: Individual physician characteristics do predict recruitment. No surprises here. Doctors with a rural background, docs with a spouse with a rural background, and docs with a genuine interest in rural practice; these things all predict going into rural practice. Not everyone with these characteristics enters rural practice, but more of them do. Poor recruitment may also relate to things a community can do nothing about: geographic isolation, failing economy, shrinking population.

Most important in retention is what the physician encounters in their rural practice and community once they get there. How good a fit is there between the physician and the community? Some strong associations were found between retention and the physician’s sense of control, feeling needed, at least some sense of ownership in the practice, to be kept busy but not abused, and opportunities for professional fulfillment like teaching. Spouse and family satisfaction were closely tied to retention.

Loan repayment is good, scholarships are good, but physicians will not stay where they don’t want to be. Many of the factors related to retention are within the control of the community. A community that is accommodating and can help mold its fit to the doctor will be more likely to keep their doctor.

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Colorado AHEC Leaders Visit Congress During National AHEC Organization Spring Policy Days

Carol Giffin-Jeansonne (Western Colorado AHEC), Sally Henry (Centennial AHEC), Freddie Jaquez (San Luis Valley AHEC) and Jim Kelly, MD (Colorado AHEC) met with staffers from the offices of Senators Allard and Salazar and Representatives DeGette, Lamborn, Perlmutter and Salazar. The congressional aides were both interested in and expressed appreciation for all the initiatives of the Colorado AHEC program. As luck would have it, both Senator Ken Salazar and Representative John Salazar happened by during the office visits and warmly greeted their old school friend and basketball opponent, Freddie Jaquez. Representative Salazar then invited the Coloradoans to view the House’s session, over which he was presiding, from the House of Representative’s Gallery!

From the Librarian’s Desk
by Clair Birkman, MLIS
Editor-in-Chief

Do your patients ask you where to find reliable health information on-line? Consider referring them to CAPHIS, the Consumer and Patient Health Information Section of the Medical Library Association (http://caphis.mlanet.org/). The CAPHIS site provides a comprehensive list of pre-screened health information web sites, divided by demographic group (e.g., “Parenting & Kids” or “Senior Health”) and by topic (e.g., “Specific Health Topic” or “Drug Information Resources”). All the sites are designed for use by non-clinicians. Also included is a link to guidelines your patients can use to evaluate health-related web sites for reliability and accuracy.

Southeastern Colorado AHEC
Emergency Preparedness Program for High School Students

Southeastern Colorado Area Health Education Center (SECAHEC) has partnered with Sandia Labs to bring an innovative new program for high school kids to Colorado for the first time. Rye High School in Rye, and Mitchell High School in Colorado Springs, are only the 6th and 7th schools to participate in this program in the country. The program runs for about six weeks and is structured around simulated natural disasters (including pandemics), industrial accidents, or terrorist incidents in either the students’ hometown or a fictional location. Sandia staff, Dr. Annette Solbel, a retired Major General, former Director of Intelligence for the National Guard Bureau and a former air surgeon; and John Taylor, Nuclear Engineer and Manager of the Integrated Technologies and Systems Strategic Management group Support Department at Sandia National Laboratories, will visit the classrooms three times to work with students and run tabletop exercises. The program includes basic instruction in homeland security, emergency response and case studies focused on particular aspects of emergency response. The program culminates with a half-day scenario-based exercise in which student teams representing local, state, and federal entities are confronted with a realistic accident, incident or natural disaster in a series of time steps, each of which requires the students to react to the scenario, to interact with each other, and to discuss issues and problems. The students are then asked to write up the exercise with an emphasis on lessons learned. At the end of the program, students are also asked to brief their local school boards and/or state officials on their program. The students and their teachers are invited to the High School Homeland Security Leadership Development Camp and Curriculum Development Workshop in Roswell, New Mexico for a week-long program in June.

This camp is co-sponsored by the New Mexico Military Institute and Sandia National Laboratories. As part of this leadership and critical thinking skills development program, students will have the opportunity to:
- Receive training from the Daniels Leadership Center
- Take a Leadership Reaction Course
- Learn about ethics issues in national security leadership
- Participate in a low ropes course
- Participate in case studies and classroom exercises
- Learn about agro-terrorism on a field trip to an Environmental Monitoring Center
- Develop a cyber network
- Visit a local law enforcement training facility (Matrix in Artesia) and learn about evasive driving and handling explosives
- Enjoy a visit to Carlsbad Caverns

SECAHEC is excited to be able to bring this kind of opportunity to Colorado students through its work with the Southwest Center for Public Health Preparedness, and to assist in its continued development as a program for high school students.
San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center

San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center Has Been Busy!

The last few months have found the SLV AHEC quite busy in its communities. From a professional health care worker survey administered by Nurse Coordinator Charlotte Ledonne in early fall 2007, we have worked to fulfill a number of requests and needs through educational workshops organized by the SLV AHEC. These workshops are a significant service to health care providers in the San Luis Valley.

The health solutions Cardiovascular Assessment kiosks placed throughout the valley continue to be utilized by San Luis Valley residents. Because the kiosks are so easy to use, they pose no barrier for utilization by users of any age.

The In-Home Chores for the Elderly Program continues to serve individuals age 65 and better with home chores they cannot perform for themselves, allowing them to remain living in their own homes independently and with dignity before having to think of moving into an expensive nursing home situation. Currently, the SLV AHEC is serving 20 such elders.

The “Grow Your Own” Summer Health Careers Institute/Student Health Careers Guild continues to generate much interest in the San Luis Valley. Because the San Luis Valley is a medically underserved Area (MUA) and has its share of difficulty in recruiting and retaining professional health care workers, this high school student health careers awareness program has received much interest from medical services administrators, practitioners, educators and others. This exciting program will take place from June 15, 2008 through May 31, 2009. It will also monitor students for a three-year period thereafter.

In collaboration with the District 6 Nurses Association of the San Luis Valley Nightingale Committee, the SLV AHEC honored recipients of the 2008 San Luis Valley and Southeast Nightingale Awards. Below is the press release from that event:

The District 6 Colorado Nurses Association SLV Nightingale Committee, in collaboration with the San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center and South East Area Health Education Center in Pueblo, is honored to announce the recipients of the SLV and South East Nightingale Awards. The nurses were selected for their demonstration of excellence in human caring in their professional practice, personal and community life with special attention to areas of leadership, education, clinical care and community involvement. A dinner and awards ceremony was held Friday, February 28, 2008 at Adams State College, with Sara Jarrett, EdD, CNS, RN, from Denver, as the keynote speaker. Sara Jarrett was the recipient of the 1995 Statewide Nightingale Award.

Pictured below are the 2008 SLV and South East Colorado Nightingale nominees and their current employer: Denise Esquibel, LPN, Rio Grande Hospital Clinic; Joan Martinez, LPN, Rio Grande Hospital Clinic; Lorrie Schofield, LPN, Rio Grande Hospital Clinic; Heather Hafeli, RN; SLV Regional Medical Center; Ruth McWhirter, RN; SLV Regional Medical Center; Melody Story, RN; Rio Grande Hospital; Eileen Dennis, RN; Parkview Medical Center; Darlene Ealey, RN, Department of Veterans Affairs Pueblo Nursing Home; and Chad Hess, RN, PA, Pueblo Community Health Center. Chad is the finalist for the Statewide Nightingale Award.

Chad is one of 15 finalists from around the state and will attend the Nightingale Awards Dinner in Denver on Saturday, May 10, 2008.

Local businesses who made donations to help bring this exciting event to fruition include: Adams State College, Rio Grande Hospital; SLV Area Health Education Center; SLV Regional Medical Center; and Valley Wide Health Systems.

NEW! AHEC Student Senate Representatives

Andrea Wismann
AHEC Student Senate Representative

Andrea is a fourth year medical student at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, and a fourth generation Colorado native. She hopes to work as a physician in women’s health (possibly obstetrics/gynecology or family medicine) in a rural or underserved area. Her long-term goals, aside from family, are to be an active physician advocate for health care reform and greater resources for underserved populations. She enjoys spending time with her family, fiancé, and pets (a black lab and tabby cat), gardening, painting, and any/all outdoor activities.

Andrea completed her undergraduate degrees in biology and biochemistry at CU Boulder, followed by outreach teaching of science and cardiovascular health in Denver Public Middle Schools. She completed a Masters of Science in Public Health at CU, and a Certificate of Maternal and Child Health at the University of Arizona.

Her study emphases included health curriculum and statistical analyses, environmental health policy, and international health. She has worked a number of jobs, as a student assistant for the Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center at CU, teaching assistant in environmental health, researcher, teacher, and CNA. She recently published a paper on environmental health surveillance across the nation in the American Journal of Public Health in March 2007. Andrea has participated in a variety of state and national organizations serving as the Secretary for Environment Section of the American Public Health Association from 2004-07, as Student Representative for the Colorado Chapter of the American College of Physicians in 2005-06, and Colorado Society for Public Health Education from 2003-04. As a long-time CU student and alumna, she has been active in student leadership, serving as the Vice President of the Health Sciences Student Senate from 2004-05 (she is a current class representative), as a former executive on the UCHSC Consolidation Committee, Student Senate from 2003-04. As a long-time CU student and alumna, she has been active in student leadership, serving as the Strike President of the Health Sciences Student Senate from 2004-05 (she is a current class representative), as a former executive on the UCHSC Consolidation Committee, Student Senate.

San Luis Valley AHEC
http://www.slvhec.org/
300 Ross, P.O. Box 1657, Alamosa, CO 81101
Phone: 719.589.4977 / Fax: 719.589.4978

NEW! AHEC Student Senate Representatives

Rob Nelson
AHEC Student Senate Representative

Salutations AHEC! I’m joining you from the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora, where I’m a first-year physician assistant student and a member of the Student Senate. My interest in AHEC stems primarily from two things: 1) I’m on the rural track option for my program and will be utilizing AHEC’s services in the future, and 2) I grew up in Glenwood Springs, a rural community on Colorado’s western slope. Both of these facts have given me a good pulse on student concerns through my involvement in both the CHA/PA program and the greater Student Senate.

I completed my undergraduate education in 2006 at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs where I received a BA in Biology and Chemistry. While in the Springs I worked as an Emergency Department Technician and have a subsequent interest in pursuing critical care medicine, among other areas of health care, after I finish PA school in 2010. My free time is a hoot! Home brewing is my hobby but I’ve been snowboarding, biking, and hiking with a smile on my face. I try not to think of my prior days guiding raft trips on the Colorado River, as it oft prompts me to hum John Denver tunes at the dinner table. My goal is to be an outstanding PA, fly airplanes, and own llamas.

A note about the Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant program: CU’s master’s-level PA training program is among the most established in the nation. Originated in 1968 as a subsidiary of the School of Medicine’s Department of Pediatrics, we have a focus on diagnosing and treating children; however, we are fully-trained in adult medicine as well and approximately two-thirds of each graduating class of 40 goes into an adult primary care or specialty role. The program length is three years, ranking it as the longest in the country.
2008 Denver Metropolitan Regional Science and Engineering Fair

The top 30 students and their projects from the regional fair advance to compete at the state level. The top 10 percent of students and their projects in the junior division are nominated to participate in the national science competition the Society for Science and the Public Middle School Program. The top two students and their projects in the senior division advance with all expense paid trips to compete in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair to be held in May in Atlanta, Georgia. There are thirteen categories in which a student can compete, depending on the scientific discipline of their project. First, second and third awards are given in each category.

Central Colorado AHEC
http://www.centralcoahec.org/
PO Box 6267, Aurora, Colorado 80045
Phone: 303.724.0335 / Fax 303.724.1548

CAHEC Educational Activities

The top 30 students and their projects from the regional fair advance to compete at the state level. The top 10 percent of students and their projects in the junior division are nominated to participate in the national science competition the Society for Science and the Public Middle School Program. The top two students and their projects in the senior division advance with all expense paid trips to compete in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair to be held in May in Atlanta, Georgia. There are thirteen categories in which a student can compete, depending on the scientific discipline of their project. First, second and third awards are given in each category.

This year’s Science and Engineering Fair was held at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science on February 27th and 28th. The fair, open to middle and high school students in a seven-county area, represented the hard work and dedication of more than 300 students and their teachers. Following the same ISEF rules as the Colorado State Science and Engineering Fair to be held in April of this year, the regional fair enjoys the sponsorship of major companies and educational institutions: Intel Corporation, Synopsys Community Fund, Lockheed Martin, University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine, University of Colorado Denver Family Medicine, University of Colorado Denver College of Liberal Arts, Colorado Area Health Education Center (AHEC) System, Colorado BioScience Association, Denver Section of the Society of Petroleum Engineers, Hutton Architecture Studio and WIN: Whitney and Ian Navarro. The success of this program is directly dependent on their support, as well as that of the sponsors who provide cash and special awards. This includes the armed forces and professionals and private agencies that are proud to honor the future scientists of Colorado.

Organizing this event is a major cooperative effort of over 130 volunteers and 80 judges. These people experience multiple challenges in logistics and coordination, but they also are rewarded by witnessing the levels of achievement, pride and excitement of these talented young people.

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Appreciating Our Host Families

The AHEC system is assisted by a number of host families who generously provide housing to our students during their clinical rotations. Please meet two of the host families in our western region:

Peggy Drees is a wonderful host. She has been a host for WCAHEC for three years, and every student has absolutely loved staying there. In fact, if the students return to Pagosa Springs, they request Peggy’s home. The students also put the word out to other students traveling to Pagosa Springs to expect a great host. Students enjoy Peggy and Frank so much, they sometimes return just to say hi. They love hosting students and look forward to the next rotation of students.

Another student housing host, Mary Arceneaux, was mentioned recently in What’s Going On Here?, a weekly message from Richard Krugman, MD, Dean of the UC Denver School of Medicine and Vice Chancellor, Health Affairs for the University of Colorado Denver:

This is national AHEC week. I can’t think of a better way to celebrate than with the story of Mary Arceneaux. Mary lives in Cortez in Southwestern Colorado. She benefits from an AHEC or Area Health Education Center. This vital national program helps provide health care and recruits health care workers to rural areas. One good turn deserves another. So Mary decided to rent living space to one of our medical students, Joyce Gallegos, during Joyce’s experiences, more acronyms (almost all beginning with C) than I ever thought possible, and some of the brightest, most caring and talented people I’ve ever encountered from the WCAHEC staff, to the directors and staff in the other CO AHEC offices, and across the AHEC and NAO world. I am blessed and I am grateful.

This is a vignette of life in rural western Colorado: I have no doubt that you can find many similar stories across rural America, but I wanted to share it because it so truly paints a picture of the very fine people in Delta County and of rural medicine at its finest.

We were really in a tough spot. We had just baled an absolutely outstanding first cut of prized horse hay – 800 bales – and were getting ready to bring it in from the field when my husband, Carl, crushed his hand really badly in a farm accident. Twenty four hours after the accident he was in the hospital, I was at home, and two days of serious rain were predicted. For those of you who are not rural, rain on baled hay is a really bad thing. At best, it transforms quality horse hay to cow hay, and drops its value by roughly 60%. At worst, it molds and devalues it even more.

My only hope was in finding several strong folks at the workforce center I could hire to bring the hay in before the rain hit. We hadn’t lived there long, and while we had met some of our neighbors, we didn’t know any of them very well so I didn’t even consider asking them for help. I walked out the door headed for town, and oh boy, what a sight met my eyes! Six neighbors, wives included, and two pickup trucks were in the field and the hay was just flying into the trucks. Five hot and sweaty hours later, all 800 bales were out of the fields and stacked under shelter. The only help they would accept from me was sandwiches and cold drinks. What incredibly fine people!

Oh! Since this is a story for our AHEC news letter, medicine, really good rural medicine, has to be part of the story. The Grand Junction doc we consulted with suggested amputating all four fingers on Carl’s left hand. Since Carl is left handed, this was not a good scenario. Our Delta Orthopedic physician told us that, while he wasn’t a vascular surgeon, he would see what he could do to save some of the fingers. Six hours of surgery later, he walked out and said, “I kind a lied – true, I’m not a vascular surgeon, but I did have some training, and while I can’t guarantee how he’ll heal, as of now he’s only lost one joint on his little finger.” Several years later, his little finger is really short, but Carl has four very crooked, very usable fingers on his left hand.

What a great place to live!
Kelli Kessel, Program Development & Management

Kelli Kessel is the Program Development & Health Education Manager at Western CO AHEC. She previously worked at AHEC and after a career in pharmaceuticals, decided to return to what she enjoys most: health & education. A lifelong vegetarian, she has always had a strong interest in health & nutrition. She has worked as a Wellness Manager, Health Educator, Personal Trainer, College Instructor, Teacher & Independent Consultant.

Kelli holds a BS degree in Exercise Physiology & Wellness Management as well as a Masters in Public Health. Someday, she would like to earn a PhD in nutrition or psychology. Locally, she is the Race Director for the Rim Rock Run (a 22.6 mile “jog” over the CO National Monument) and is an advocate for Prison Reform. Kelli enjoys cooking, distance running, road biking, photography and reading. She is married to Mike and they enjoy camping, biking and animals. They live in Palisade with their goats, chickens, barn cats and three Labrador Retrievers: Baylee, Saige and Scout. Mike and Kelli are awaiting the adoption of their first child – a little girl from China.

Roland Reynolds
Administrative Assistant & Special Projects:

Natasha Schumann (business manager for the Western Colorado AHEC office), is a family friend who explained the WCAHEC’s mission and that I might find the work interesting. When Carol Caffin-Jeansonne (WCAHEC Director) interviewed me and introduced me to the colonoscopy simulator and the challenge to reduce colon cancer, I was intrigued. I began working at WCAHEC just after I graduated from AHEC and am truly blessed to be able to have a career and personal life that I love. I have found my volunteering efforts both enjoyable and rewarding. It seems the combination of social interaction and reservoir water supplies. They did not need that help but the McGinnis Canyon Wilderness effort was forming, so I ended up representing hikers in the study effort. Five years ago I discovered Grey Gourmet (known elsewhere as Meals on Wheels). This system provides delivery of balanced nutritious meals for seniors at number of points within the county. Having lunch with seniors a few years older than me turned out to be a real pleasure as these old timers were able to rekindle my youthful memories of my hometown area as most of them had grown up in the area themselves. These days I do a weekly delivery to nearby Clifton and though most of the seniors there have been in the area only a few years we find plenty in common to talk about.

I have found my volunteering efforts both enjoyable and rewarding. It seems the combination of social interaction and doing routines you like and are comfortable with makes it easy and natural. I have been able to locate some computer techniques as we build our data base for better marketing of educational classes. It has proved a challenge to keep up as Kelli’s class promotions have generated much increased call traffic. Natasha was right: I have found the work both interesting and challenging.

Most of my volunteering used to be centered around work. However, when I retired back to my home town I found helping keep the neighborhood irrigation system clean wasn’t enough. Since my main recreation centered on hiking old trails of my youth, my first try was to offer to help the post 9/11 forest service to check

Natasha Schumann
Business Office Manager

Natasha Schumann has been with WCAHEC since July 2002 in the position of a Business Manager doing accounting and other projects, like the Cardiovascular Kiosk, CNA program etc. She is originally from St. Petersburg, Russia. She came to the U.S. with her daughter who was an exchange high school student in 1994. Her daughter moved back to Russia and Natasha met an American civil engineer; got married and stayed. She was a mechanical engineer in Russia and got an accounting degree at the Mesa State College in Grand Junction. She likes gardening (cantaloupes grow really well in Palisade), swimming and yoga. Also she travels to Russia to visit her two grandkids, and tries to see some other countries on the way. This year it was Jordan, a fascinating country with a lot of historical sights, the famous Petra, with a city built in the mountains and two Seas: the Red and the Dead. Amazingly, the landscape of Jordan reminded Natasha a lot of Colorado.

Sarah Starwalt
Student Housing Liaison

I began working at WCAHEC just after I graduated from Mesa State College in January 2006. I worked in the office until July 2007 and then I began working from home as the Housing Coordinator as well as a full-time mom. Jackson Parker joined the WCAHEC team in March 2007. He is truly the WCAHEC baby; he is now one and into everything. He continues to work for WCAHEC by arranging hanging files! I absolutely love working for AHEC and am truly blessed to be able to have a career and raise Jackson at the same time.

Welcome to Zulema Smith…

Zulema Smith, RN, MPH has replaced Lisa Fenton Free. Zulema has a strong background in both nursing and public health and we are honored to have her on board with us!

…And Two Farewells

WCAHEC recently said good-bye to longtime board member Lisa Fenton Free. Lisa has been an incredible resource for AHEC and her dedication to improving our organization is greatly appreciated. Lisa remains the Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Health Foundation where she generates philanthropic support for innovative health care approaches.

We also said goodbye to long-time employee Helena Sisneros. Helena, her husband Al and their two daughters returned to Texas to be closer to family. Helena was instrumental in the development of programs, with cultural competency being one of her most successful and personally rewarding projects. Helena will be greatly missed by everyone at AHEC and we wish her the best of luck as she begins a new chapter in life!