Centennial AHEC Hosts 25th Annual Nightingale Awards

Centennial AHEC hosted the 25th Annual Centennial Nursing and Regional Nightingale Awards Dinner, recognizing 35 northeast Colorado nurses for their excellence in caring on March 12th. Enthusiastic family, friends, employers and supporters applauded Centennial award winners: Carol Corona, RN (Greeley); Frances Culler, RN (Loveland); Deborah Davis, RN (Estes Park); Carol Ann Gilbert, RN (Fort Collins); Adeline Hines, RN (Loveland); Faye Hummel, RN (Brighton); Jo Ann McGrath, LPN (Greeley); and Dianne Stille, RN (Eaton). The Embassy Suites in Loveland served as the venue for 250 proud guests.

The gala event, supported by Banner Health, Poudre Valley Heath Care, Medical Center of the Rockies, Colorado Plains Medical Center, McKee Medical Center, North Colorado Medical Center, Sterling Regional Medical Center, Eben Ezer Lutheran Care Center, Estes Park Medical Center, and Valley View Villa, featured nursing education’s apricot color and slide presentations of the nominees and their employers. The hard work of Centennial AHEC’s Emily Jo Hasley, RN, made the event (which she says is one of her most important duties), a success. Kay Miller, RN of Medical Center of the Rockies served as mistress of ceremonies and 20 area nurses served on the 2010 Nightingale committee.

The awards honor the philosophy and spirit of Florence Nightingale who stated, “Nursing is an art and if it is to be made an art, it requires as exclusive a devotion, as hard a preparation as any painter’s or sculptor’s work; for what is the having to do with dead canvas or cold marble, compared with having to do with the living body – the temple of God’s Spirit? It is one of the Fine Arts; I had almost said, the finest of the Fine Arts.”
Community Health Centers a Valuable Resource for Colorado

Federally Qualified Health Centers, more commonly known as Community Health Centers (CHCs), are non-profit or public comprehensive primary care providers with a mission to provide health care to low-income working families and individuals. CHCs are governed by community boards, and 51 percent of board members must be patients of the CHC.

CHCs currently provide a health care home to more than 500,000 of their community members – one in 10 people in Colorado – including one third of our state’s low-income uninsured, one third of Medicaid enrollees and one third of CHP+ enrollees. Fifteen CHCs operate 138 community, migrant, homeless and school-based clinics across the state.

CHCs serve urban, rural and frontier areas of the state that have shortages of primary health care providers.

- Services are targeted to families earning less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- CHCs provide a long-term medical home for families as they move in and out of private health insurance, eligibility for public programs and no insurance coverage at all.
- Services are offered on a sliding-scale fee based on income to keep care affordable.

CHCs provide high-quality, evidence-based care. In fact, studies show that CHCs are especially effective in terms of both cost and quality.

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SLVAHEC Students Participate in Haiti Relief Effort

The San Luis Valley AHEC Summer Health Careers Institute/Student Health Careers Guild Project Coordinator, Lisa Lucero, demonstrated a very innovative change of course for a planned field trip for some of our “Grown Your Own” students this past January. Five students and a counselor were set to take a trip from Alamosa, Colorado to Denver, Colorado (about 250 miles one way) to attend the National Western Stock Show. All was arranged for the students to leave on Friday January 22, 2010. Everyone was cooperating exceptionally well – except the weather. It was snowing heavily and it simply was not safe to take the students on such a long trip, over mountain passes, in such nasty weather.

Lisa, at the spur of the moment, changed their plans and had the students, who come from small towns around the San Luis Valley, stay in Alamosa, the largest town in our small valley. She arranged for rooms at a local motel for both students and counselor, and they arranged for new activities without having to travel much from one destination to another. The most innovative activity is the one Lisa thought of which became a smash with the students. Lisa took the students and their counselor to the residence of Joanne Kaufman, a contributor to the health sciences students’ service learning projects, who had previously lived and worked in Haiti. There the students learned about conditions in Haiti, while they assembled 80 care packages of personal hygiene items for the Haiti earthquake relief effort. This was a remarkable turn of events which, in the long run, possibly had more value to the students than a rodeo at the National Western Stock Show.

Kudos to Lisa Lucero for demonstrating innovation and instilling a sense of sensitivity in high school students who may otherwise never been exposed to such a serious world event!

Project TEACH Benefits the San Luis Valley

SLVAHEC is one of 10 area non-profit community-based organizations (CBOs) participating in Project TEACH (Teaching Equity to Advance Community Health). Project TEACH, which is funded by a grant from the Office of Health Disparities at University of Colorado Denver, is designed to assist CBOs in improving their skills and knowledge of regional health disparities, community engagement, cultural competence, program evaluation, evidence-based interventions and grant proposal development. The training was very informative, and we look forward to continuing to serve the San Luis Valley. For more information about Project TEACH, please visit http://www.uchsc.edu/hcpr/disparity.php.

SLVAHEC staff takes part in Project TEACH training.
WCAHEC Takes Part in Student Health Career Day

Western Colorado AHEC (WCAHEC) is a partner in planning a Health Career Day for high school students in the region’s Mesa County Valley District 51. Approximately 80 students from four high schools in District 51 are expected to participate in the event, which will take place at Grand Junction’s Community Hospital.

After an introductory session in which they will learn about the requirements to become a physician, the students will take part in a tour of the hospital offering hands-on experiences designed to introduce them to different healthcare disciplines and career choices. Their tour will include visits with: radiologists; laboratory technicians; phlebotomists; occupational, physical and speech therapists; nurses; emergency medical technicians; respiratory therapists; pharmacists; and the health records department. The presentations will discuss the educational requirements and responsibilities of each professional position within the department, and include interactive demonstrations of what the different professions do on a daily basis (i.e., running lab tests or reading radiology films on the computer). In addition, students will have the opportunity to volunteer at the hospital; it is hoped that this very immersive experience will help stimulate even more interest in careers in the health field.

Community Hospital and District 51 would like to make this an annual event, fostering community relationships and encouraging further interest in healthcare professions in our area youth.

WCAHEC Preceptor Activity Increases

Grand Junction’s St. Mary’s Hospital and medical campus, as well as Community Hospital, are growing at a steady rate. With their growth, the number of students that local physicians are able to precept increases as well. Steamboat Springs, Pagosa Springs, Glenwood Springs and the Vail Valley have seen steady student rotation activity, as well as student community interest. We commend our preceptors and host homes in these communities for their dedication and continued support in the advancement of the careers of CU Denver students.
Aurora LIGHTS Saturday Academy Students Graduate

On Saturday March 13, 2010, 27 freshman students from Central, Hinkley and William Smith High Schools completed 10 Saturday sessions, with a commencement ceremony for the Aurora LIGHTS Saturday Academy program.

The students spent the last few months learning about health careers using simulation, exploration and some imagination, as evidenced by the “come as you are 15 years from now” skits that the students performed as a final presentation for the program.

The students also brushed up on math, science and chemistry skills, as well as completing a Health Career Education Plan outlining how they are going to make the future that they desire happen. Students learned about current topics in health careers in addition to health disparities information.

Parents and community partners were invited to attend the final ceremony supporting the students who completed the program. They also had a glimpse into the future of the Aurora LIGHTS program as older students talked about their experiences in college and post–baccalaureate programs, which included receiving mentoring and tutoring, and the opportunity to take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) prep test, paid for by the Aurora LIGHTS K-20 pipeline program.
Centennial AHEC Nurses Win Regional Nightingale Awards

Faye L. Hummel, RN PhD CTN, Centennial AHEC board member, and M. Dianne Stille, RN MS, retired Centennial AHEC Director of Education, were two of seven area nurses to win Centennial Regional Nightingale Awards at the banquet March 12th.

Dr. Hummel, a professor of nursing at University of Northern Colorado, was honored for her commitment to global public health. Over the past two decades, she has made repeated volunteer trips to Vietnam to enhance schools of nursing, and in 2007 was instrumental in credentialing the country’s first masters nursing program. The initial class of graduates will double the number of Vietnamese MS-prepared nurses who are nurse leaders in their own country.

Ms. Stille, who worked at Centennial AHEC for 19 years until her retirement in 2008, is now an instructor at Aims Community College. Her award especially honored her work with families of special needs children in Weld County. Eight years ago, she established an ongoing volunteer support network and respite program for these parents, to both stretch limited resources and assist the clinical needs curriculum which involves nursing students in the group's activities. Thank you and congratulations to them both!

Emilia Cintora is Daniels Scholarship Semi-Finalist

Graduating Evans High School senior Emilia Cintora has been selected by the Daniels Foundation as a semi-finalist for a 2010 Daniels Scholarship. Emilia was a 2009 AHEC Summer Health Participant and made such a positive impression that Sally Henry, Executive Director, nominated her for the prestigious award.

Bill Daniels, a pioneer in cable television, achieved success through a combination of perseverance and good fortune and was respected for his humanitarian endeavors. Bill had a passion for investing in deserving students, long believing that people fortunate enough to succeed have a responsibility to help others. He established the Daniels Fund, now one of the largest foundations in the Rocky Mountain Region, in 1997 to offer funding to those at risk of not being able to afford a college education.

Emilia’s goal is to be a baccalaureate-prepared registered nurse. As a first generation Hispanic student she will be a role model for other Hispanics and help to fill a great need in the healthcare workforce – sufficient numbers of bilingual and bicultural health professionals to care for Colorado’s quickly growing Latino population. She is now preparing for a round of personal interviews and we’re awaiting her final selection notice. Congratulations, Emilia!

Centennial AHEC Website Has New Look

Come visit Centennial’s updated website -- full of information on the agency, its programs and people as well as lots of valuable resources. Many thanks to Anna Vickery, Community Health Director, Jim Crandall, Electronic Information Specialist, and Scott Moore of the AHEC System Office who made it happen.

www.cahec.org

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Denise Denton Joins Centennial AHEC

Denise Denton, best known in Colorado as the founder and executive director of the Colorado Rural Health Center until she stepped down two years ago, is now providing Community Outreach and Programs Development for Centennial AHEC. Denise has worked in the rural health arena for 25 years at the local, state, and national levels, focusing on workforce, community development, and the needs of the medically underserved. At a national level, Denise served on National Health Service Corps Advisory Council; on the board and as Treasurer of the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health; and on the board of the National Rural Health Association and as President in 1992. Denise also served on First Lady Clinton’s National Health Task Force chairing committees on Health Workforce Development and Rural and Frontier Access.

Denise’s ties to AHEC go back to her arrival in Colorado in the early 1990s to start the rural health center.

Welcome Centennial’s New Board Members

George DelGrosso, MA of Firestone and Dan Doherty, EdD of Greeley were elected to CAHEC’s Board of Directors on March 10th.

George is the Executive Director of Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council (CBHC), the membership organization for the Community Mental Health Centers, Behavioral Health Organizations and specialty clinics in Colorado. In addition to his duties at CBHC, George serves on the Executive Committee of the National Council for Behavioral Healthcare, and is chair of the Council’s Association Executives Committee. George combines his years of experience at different levels of community mental health, the information he has assimilated on a broad range of mental health issues, and his familiarity nationally with mental health service delivery to educate policy makers and the public on this important healthcare issue. George is no stranger to Colorado AHEC, having served on the board of the San Luis Valley AHEC in the past.

Partnerships with Colorado were key to the Center; in fact, Centennial AHEC served as fiscal agent to the fledgling center before it was incorporated.

We are delighted to have her with us; it is often said “Denise knows everyone in Colorado healthcare.” Currently she is coordinating Centennial AHEC’s Colorado Trust Healthcare Advocacy and Partnership for Health Initiatives, identifying and developing new initiatives and serving as a professional liaison to regional healthcare providers, agencies and organizations.

Dan Doherty has been the Academic Dean at Aims Community College since May, 2007. Prior to that he was at Western Nebraska Community College, at which time he was instrumental in the organization of the Western Nebraska AHEC and served as a board member and treasurer. He was also a member of the Nebraska State AHEC Advisory Board. Dan’s early career was in theater and he’s been director of two National Endowment for the Humanities projects.

Sally Henry, Executive Director, is very grateful to these individuals who have offered to donate their time and talents in the work of our agency.

Denise Denton, MA
Southern Colorado Celebrates Nightingale Award Nominations

A gala dinner with approximately 100 attendees honored nurses from southern Colorado who were nominated for the regional Colorado Nightingale award. Nurses are nominated based on their demonstration of excellence in human caring in their professional practice, and in their personal and community life, with special attention to areas of leadership, education, clinical care and community involvement. A selection committee reviewed all nominations and selected a nominee for the upcoming statewide Nightingale dinner event on May 9, 2010 in Denver.

Two keynote speakers addressed the group. Yvonne Olme, a retired registered nurse, contrasted the early days of her nursing career with the current nursing environment. Gone are the days of white starched uniforms and hats proudly identifying the school a nurse attended. Although the uniform may have changed, the role of nurses as the backbone of the medical health care system is intact.

Karen Tomky, a nurse-practitioner from Crowley County and former Nightingale Award recipient, brought her beautiful bronze statue of Florence Nightingale holding an injured soldier. Her message included a reminder that although technology has changed the practice, high-touch is still the preferred mode of healing. Karen, an avid iris grower, succeeded in getting a specific strain of iris named Florence Nightingale to honor the famous nurse.

San Luis Valley Nominees in the LPN category were Betty Anderson and Carol Martinez. The San Luis Valley nominees in the RN category were Ola Bovin, April Hurley, Joseph Ledonne, Maryanne Martinez and Veronica McAuliffe. The Southeast RN nominees were Vicki Brownrigg, Cindy Corbin, Donna Fisher, Karen Hoffman-Maroney, Joyce Pfalmer, Lillian Rubidoux, Wanda Sargent, Eva Tapia, F. Michael Vislosky, Jr., and Theresa Wright.

San Luis Valley recipients are: Carol Martinez, LPN, Colorado State Veteran's Center, Homelake; Ola Bovin, RN, Alamosa County Nursing Service; and Maryanne Martinez, RN, Costilla County Nursing Service.

The statewide Nightingale nominee for Southern Colorado is Eva Tapia, Department Chair of the Nursing Program at Pueblo Community College. Eva will attend the Statewide Nightingale Awards banquet and is one of 15 finalists.
Community Health Centers, continued

- Nationally, medical expenses for CHC patients are 41 percent lower ($1,810 per person annually) compared to patients seen elsewhere.
- Care provided by CHCs reduces avoidable emergency room visits and hospitalizations.
- CHCs improve health outcomes for cancer, stroke, diabetes, asthma, infant mortality and low birth weight through innovative care management programs. These efforts reduce health disparities across populations, saving millions in long-term health care costs.

CHCs also provide employment for more than 3,000 individuals across the state, and generate approximately 3,000 more jobs in other businesses and industries in their communities, including jobs for people who supply medical equipment, maintenance services, and clean linens to CHCs. For more information, please visit http://www.cchn.org/.

FASD: Promising New Interventions

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) refers to the range of effects that an individual can experience when the developing fetus is exposed to alcohol during pregnancy. These effects, including developmental, cognitive and behavioral issues, can be severe, and are 100% preventable. Many individuals struggling with these issues require therapeutic interventions throughout their lives. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released the results of five innovative research projects that show positive changes in the alcohol-affected individual. The studies looked at five different interventions across five diverse settings within the US. The studies included:

Study 1. Project bruin buddies: a social skills training program to improve peer friendship for children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (University of California at Los Angeles)

Study 2. Georgia-socio cognitive habilitation using the math interactive learning experience (MILE) program (Marcus Institute)


Study 4. Parent-child interaction therapy: application of an evidence-based treatment to reduce behavior problems among children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center)

Study 5. Families moving forward: a behavioral consultation intervention to improve outcomes for families raising children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (University of Washington)

All five of the studies showed promising results to the field of FASD prevention. When individuals with disabilities receive the proper interventions for their disability we can reduce the incidence of secondary disabilities. You can view the full review of these five studies in: Bertrand, J. Interventions for children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD’s): Overview of findings for five innovative research projects. Research in Developmental Disabilities (2009). Doi:10.1016/j.ridd.2009.02.003

For more information on these studies or other information please contact Dr. Pamela Gillen at COFAS 1-888-724-FASD (3273).
Congratulations!
2009-2011 Health Professions Scholars

The Colorado AHEC System Program office received a generous grant from The Colorado Trust to develop and manage a health profession scholars program to graduate students in healthcare professions education who opt to practice in rural or other underserved sites. This Health Profession Scholarship is part of The Colorado Trust Foundation Workforce Investment Strategy Initiative.

The Colorado AHEC System Program office, based at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, partnered with The Colorado Trust to award health professions scholarships to help increase the health care workforce in rural Colorado. These two-year (maximum $30,000; minimum $15,000) scholarships are designed to assist graduate level health professions students by paying for a significant portion of their education. Target groups for this scholarship include graduate level nursing, graduate level allied health, dental, pharmacy, public health and medical students. The scholarship award process begins when prospective recipients submit an application. A statewide Scholarship Committee reviews the applications. Selected scholarship recipients agree to practice in a rural, frontier, urban underserved community or faculty position upon completion of their training for a minimum of two years.

Each year all recipients attend a Health Profession Scholars Banquet in their honor. All recipients are recognized and the current year recipients receive an etched glass award at the banquet. This year the banquet was held on March 6, 2010 at the Denver Marriott City Center, Colorado Ballroom. There are currently 40 Health Profession Scholars.

Twenty additional scholarships will be awarded this year. Applications for the 2010-2012 Health Profession Scholarship will be open May 1, 2010 and close on June 30, 2010. Only online applications are accepted.

Online application link:
http://hschealth.uchsc.edu/ahec/cthps.asp
Central Colorado Area Health Education Center
2009-2011 Health Profession Scholars

Left to Right: Corey Dobson – University of Colorado School of Medicine; Iris Clark, Executive Director, SECAHEC; Tiffany Landa – Colorado State University Pueblo Nursing; and, Valerie Lobato – Red Rocks Community College Physician Assistant

Southeastern Colorado Area Health Education Center
2009-2011 Health Profession Scholars

Left to Right: Bethany Fielkorn – University of Denver Psychology; Carol Benzing – University of Colorado School of Pharmacy; Morgan Ehlers – University of Colorado School of Pharmacy; Aimee Jacoby – University of Colorado Child Health Associate Physician Assistant; Kristina Wenzel, Executive Director, Central Colorado AHEC; Clayton Shaw – University of Colorado Physical Therapy; Hector Lopez-Frisbie – Red Rocks Community College Physician Assistant; and, Kyle Gateley – Rocky Vista University Osteopathic Medicine

Western Colorado Area Health Education Center
2009-2011 Health Profession Scholars

Left to Right: Amber Matthews – University of Colorado Physical Therapy; David Baumgarten – University of Colorado School of Medicine; Katja Austin – Regis University Nursing; Carol Giffin-Jeansonne, Executive Director, WCAHEC; and, Jodi Bauer – University of Colorado College of Nursing
Interdisciplinary Rural Training and Service Program

The Colorado Area Health Education Center (AHEC) serves as administrator and evaluator of the Interdisciplinary Rural Training and Service (IRTS) program funded by a grant from Kaiser Permanente Colorado. Through the program, students from the disciplines of medicine, pharmacy and dental medicine have increased exposure to each others’ role in rural health care delivery. This is important in healthcare, where professionals must appreciate the knowledge and skills of their colleagues in other professions in order to provide comprehensive care for patients. The major components of the program include:

Students from many health professions already go to rural areas in Colorado for clinical clerkships and rotations. The IRTS program links them for shared experiences so that they can learn about each others’ skills and scope of care. First, students “shadow” each other to observe their clinical activities. Second, students collaborate on “service learning” projects such as health fairs, school presentations and community events. Regional AHEC offices facilitate these connections by identifying activities that will be of value to the community and track the schedules of students who are in their region in order to link them up for activities.

Students work in “disease management” clinics established by the School of Pharmacy to help community physicians manage patients with heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, blood thinning medications and lipid disorders. Medical students learn by accompanying pharmacy students in these clinics.

The Colorado Smile Makers mobile dental van staffed by students and faculty from the School of Dental Medicine provides screenings and basic dental treatment in rural communities. Students from other professions shadow dental students and are being taught how to conduct oral examinations of children and adults. Dental students are encouraged to practice in rural areas upon graduation.

Students have responded positively to these experiences. Here are some examples of what they say they learned:

“Made me more aware of knowledge I take for granted that health care workers in other areas may not be familiar with.”

“… about the importance of early dental care.”

“… doctors in an office setting are very busy seeing walk-in patients in addition to scheduled patients. The doctor that I shadowed with the med student was very judicious with antibiotic use which was gratifying to see. The doctor patient relationship in rural settings was very good to see. The doctor had known many of the patients for years and there was a lot of trust there.”

“… the Pharmacy School offers a special clinic for diabetic patients that is primarily education-oriented. It seems like a great program for patients, and would be helpful if more medical students knew about it to refer patients.”

According to Marc Deutchman, MD, IRTS Program Director, “Fostering teamwork and shared responsibility is a hallmark of the new model of healthcare called the Medical Home. Providers in rural communities are often ahead of the curve in this area, since they already know each other and rely on each others’ skills. Rural clinical sites have a lot to teach that can be brought back to the campus.”