Healthier Living Colorado Expands Offerings Through SECAHEC

Southeastern Colorado AHEC (SECAHEC) is proud to announce that the Healthier Living Colorado™ program is now available in our region. The Stanford University evidence-based program encourages those coping with chronic disease to take steps toward self-managing the disease. Steps encouraged include setting action plans to take the prescribed treatment, coping with the emotional strain a chronic disease can add, and enjoying life to the extent possible. The program has been shown to reduce the number of doctors’ visits and hospital stays. Jo Stinchcomb, SECAHEC’s Health Education Coordinator, has been busy working with Healthier Living Colorado™ program series leaders to set up workshops in various Southeastern Colorado communities.

Recently SECAHEC and Consortium for Older Adult Wellness (COAW) hosted a new leader training in Sterling for Tomando Control Colorado™ (TCC™). This is the Spanish-language version of Healthier Living Colorado™. The training prepared six leaders to take this program into their communities. In the five-county area surrounding Sterling four new leaders will conduct classes through a local non-profit, Rural Solutions. In Lamar, two new leaders will lead classes through High Plains Community Health Center, which also offers the Healthier Living Colorado™ program.

What the Heck’s an AHEC?

The United States Congress created the national Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Programs in 1971. The AHECs were created to link the resources of university health science centers with local communities. Today, this network of AHECs provides multidisciplinary educational services to students, faculty and local practitioners, ultimately improving healthcare delivery in medically-underserved areas throughout our nation. The Colorado Area Health Education Centers were established in 1977 as an academic-community partnership involving University of Colorado Denver.
What the Heck’s an AHEC? cont.

The Area Health Education Centers situated around the state provide a host of educational and public health services all over Colorado. The AHEC: provides support and housing for students from our health professions schools; provides home visits to a frail

Continued on page 9

From the Librarian’s Desk

We all need to find health information at one time or another, and many of us turn to the internet as a quick and easy resource. How can you be sure the information you find on-line is reliable? A great place to start is at CAPHIS, the Consumer and Patient Health Information Section of the Medical Library Association. The websites included at CAPHIS site (http://caphis.mlanet.org/consumer/index.html) have been pre-screened by health information professionals for patient use.

Another excellent source for pre-screened health information is NOAH, or New York Online Access to Health (http://www.noah-health.org/), which includes a mirror site in Spanish.

For links to more patient-centered health information sites, please visit the Colorado AHEC site at http://hschealth.uchsc.edu/ahec/library.asp.

Health Matters

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Medical and Pharmacy Students Assist Communities

In an effort to give back to the rural communities in which they are gaining clinical experience, University of Colorado Denver/Anschutz Medial Campus (UCD/AMC) medical and pharmacy students are assisting with community events. These “service learning” experiences not only provide real assistance to their hosts, but are educational – teaching how professional skills may be used outside traditional offices, pharmacies and hospitals. In talking with high school students about a career in medicine, a medical student used a hands-on suturing exercise to illustrate what physicians do. Partnering with Rural Communities Resource Center, medical students work on UCD/AMC outreach dental van, learning oral health while giving care to uninsured families. Students have made home visits with Baby Bear Hugs and discussed genetics with Wray High School science students. They have helped at both career and health fairs throughout northeast Colorado and supported families of children with special needs. Almost universally these students have reported that they become aware of community needs and activities they had no idea existed and local agencies have thanked us for the help provided.

Centennial AHEC Talks with Brush 4th Graders

Centennial AHEC’s (CAHEC) Emily Jo Hasley, Education Coordinator, and Anna Vickery, Director of Community Education, spent November 24th with 122 Beaver Valley Elementary students educating them about health careers. Using puppets developed by the Northeast Pennsylvania AHEC, the students shared stories of their experiences with a variety of health professionals and their perspectives on the field. One student stated “I want to be a nurse because I want to help people.” Because Emily Jo is a nurse and Anna is a health educator they were able to tag team and demonstrate two approaches to health – Anna focusing on the prevention side and Emily Jo on treatment. The CAHEC staff members also talked about healthy behaviors and how to use the 911 emergency system.
Mini-Med School Graduates in Alamosa

The San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center (SLVAHEC) and the University of Colorado Denver Anschutz Medical Campus sponsored the region’s Mini-Med School for 2009. This series of lectures, which took place weekly from September 16 to November 5, was held at the San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center via broadcast from Denver. Topics included anatomy and physiology, cell biology, microbiology, neuroscience, pathology, pharmacology, immunology and cancer. There were 1,300 participants around the state.

Student Health Careers Guild

SLVAHEC recently held two Student Health Careers Guild (SHCG) Student/Parent Pre-Collegiate Planning Sessions. The first session focused on assisting high school students with planning for college financial aid, including scholarships and Student Health Engagement Plans. The topic of the second session was critical thinking (including how it translates to everyday life situations and how it will assist at the next level, higher education) as well as a presentation to students and their parents on the College in Colorado program (www.collegeincolorado.org). For more information on this exciting program, please contact SLVAHEC at 719.589.4977 or http://www.slvahec.org/.

The Colorado Trust – Advocacy

There are many healthcare policy options and much to consider regarding healthcare reform, access, workforce and quality. With a grant from The Colorado Trust and in collaboration with the Colorado AHEC System Office and eight other grantees from various regions in Colorado, SLVAHEC will be able to poll San Luis Valley residents regarding their concerns on health care services through “conversations” held around the San Luis Valley. Data gathered from these conversations will then help to frame the work needed in this area which might then be useful in influencing state health care policy. Other grantees include: The Bell Policy Center, The Colorado Children’s Campaign, Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, Colorado Multi-Ethnic Consumer Consortium, Colorado Rural Health Center, CSU Collaborative-Pueblo, CSU Bighorn Leadership Program and the Colorado

In-Home Chores for the Elderly

SLVAHEC’s In-Home Chores for the Elderly program offers services that help the impaired elderly remain living in their homes with independence and dignity. One of SLVAHEC’s longest-running programs, the In-Home Chores for the Elderly program has been in existence for more than 20 years, and has served hundreds of participants. To be eligible to participate in the program, individuals must be 60 years of age or older, and meet income guidelines. Services provided to this vulnerable population include heavy household tasks such as shampooing carpets, removing and cleaning drapes, cleaning ovens, yard care, snow removal, painting and fix-up, and other household work which older persons are unable to perform for themselves. The services of a trained homemaker are not required. This program, where possible, utilizes healthy elders to assist elders who, without these services, would have to be placed in a nursing home.
Western Colorado AHEC Student Support Services

Western Colorado Area Health Education Center (WCAHEC) welcomes its new Student Support Services Coordinator, Steven Cruse.

Beginning January 1, 2010, Steven will provide student support services to University of Colorado Denver / Anschutz Medical Campus health profession students who travel to the western region. The Student Support Services Coordinator provides direct interface between our health profession students and the communities where they may choose to practice. He will also coordinate the housing in the western region for health profession students during a rural rotation.

Steven states that he is looking forward to “jumping in,” working with Western Colorado AHEC and connecting with the local health professions community. A native Coloradan, Steven is looking forward to welcoming students to the beautiful western slope region.

In addition to his work with WCAHEC, Steven is an avid art enthusiast, painting in oils and sculpting in bronze.

Facts about WCAHEC Student Support Services:

• From August to October 2009, WCAHEC placed 44 students in leased or host housing;
• We have eight new host homes in Aspen, Glenwood Springs, Vail, Steamboat Springs and Pagosa Springs;
• We have a new apartment located close to St. Mary’s Hospital in Grand Junction. This location will be very convenient for health professions students who come to St. Mary’s for a rural rotation experience; and,
• WCAHEC now sends a $20 gift card to each student during their rotation in our region.
Asthma Toolkit II: Terrific Response!

The search is over: Eve Muniz Valdez, RN, has been hired as Rural Outreach Coordinator and Trainer for the Southeastern Colorado AHEC (SECAHEC) Asthma Toolkits program. Both she and Shanae Gutierrez have hit the ground running. They both received intensive training at National Jewish Health and Research Center in Denver in early November. Since then Eve and Shanae have been busy getting the patient toolkits put together and contacting the hundreds of practices in the 10-county region.

The partnership between SECAHEC and National Jewish Health and Research Center has been in the works for more than a year thanks to Jack Westfall, MD, who heads up the High Plains Research Network. Dr. Westfall directed the successful Asthma Toolkit I program, a predecessor to Toolkit II. The Toolkit programs provide state of the art asthma screening tools and asthma treatment education for primary care physicians and their staffs. The Toolkits II program covers 10 counties including Pueblo and Colorado Springs. These counties alone are home to nearly 87,000 people with asthma. Funding for the program is provided by Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

The contact people at the practices are taken back when they learn about the asthma prevalence in our beautiful state. I think this program can certainly help an asthmatic to be able to enjoy our Colorado sunshine regularly.

Eve Muniz Valdez

Bruce Bender, PhD, National Jewish Health and Research Center, is the Principal Investigator for the project. He is well-known for his work in the field of pediatric asthma. National Jewish Health, headquartered in Denver, has been named by U.S. News and World Report magazine as the leading respiratory hospital in the country for the past 11 years.

Personnel in each participating practice will be provided with information on how to diagnose and treat asthma and use counseling methods to educate patients on self management techniques including the effective use of prescribed medications. This data will be used to formulate improved diagnosis and treatment approaches in the future.

As part of the program, the staffs of these practices will be encouraged to increase the use of spirometers to accurately measure a patient’s breathing capacity, which can often help identify the condition. These devices will be provided to each practice. Also provided will be literature and peak flow meters that will permit them to measure their own breathing capacity at home.

Contact Eve Muniz-Valdez, 719 544-7833; eve.munizvaldez@secahec.org
Colorado Conversations, an advocacy and policy program funded by The Colorado Trust, is gaining momentum in the Southeastern Colorado AHEC (SECAHEC) region. SECAHEC has organized and facilitated four conversations in addition to pulling together participants for a first time Rural Bighorn Leadership group in Lamar. “We are very excited to see the community response” notes SECAHEC Director Iris Clark. “The conversations and resulting community partnerships have enhanced SECAHEC’s capacity to fulfill its mission.”

Approximately 100 people participated in the sessions representing such diverse sectors as education, health care, business, government and economic development. Each session included presentations, discussion and electronic polling on various health care topics. Conversations were held in Walsenburg in partnership with Spanish Peaks Health Center, in Pueblo in partnership with Action 22 Health Policy Committee, in Lamar in partnership with Lamar Community College, and in Pueblo at Pueblo Community College. The Bighorn Leadership program in Lamar, also in partnership with Lamar Community College, drew 20 diverse stakeholders for a day-and-a-half meeting focused on the importance of health and health care education.

SECAHEC and SLVAHEC Collaborate on Nightingale Awards Dinner

Plans are underway for the 2010 Nightingale Award event. SECAHEC staffers Debra Ball and Suzette Bartch shoulder the responsibility for getting the word out to nominating organizations in the SECAHEC counties (Charlotte LeDonne coordinates the event in the San Luis Valley region). Both SECAHEC and SLVAHEC nominees will be acknowledged at a dinner in Alamosa honoring regional nominees prior to the state event in May. Last year, as well as for the Nightingale Events in the past, SECAHEC’s Debra Ball, portraying Florence Nightingale (shown at right), assisted in congratulating our 2009 regional nominees.

Right: SECAHEC’s Debra Ball as Florence Nightingale

Southeastern Colorado AHEC
http://www.secahec.org/
503 N Main, Suite 422, Pueblo, CO 81003
Phone: 719.544.7833 / Fax: 719.544.7955
Why is There an Aurora LIGHTS Program?

Why is there an Aurora LIGHTS program? I have permission to use this essay from an Aurora LIGHTS student (to remain anonymous) who attended the Aurora LIGHTS Summer Institute 2009. It tells one story of why this program was envisioned and developed – to offer a “leg up” to so many STAR students.

Kris Wenzel
Executive Director, Central Colorado AHEC

Student Essay: A Million Miles Away

Many people have spent their lives in a country that’s full of peace, with plenty of food and opportunities for education. When they hear “refugee camps,” they think of a place of no hope, where there is little room to move and no chance of escape. In reality, refugee camps have a place for education, a place for living, and a place to gather good memories.

The first drops of rain falling in July bring happiness for students because it means the start of the season they have been waiting for; it means the start of school. Everyone is ready for the first day of class. Everyone loves school even though there are no electricity or computers. The school houses are built of bamboo with roofs of leaves. There are a thousand students and only 45 teachers in the entire school. The smallest number of students in a classroom is 60. Students sit together on benches. Even though there is not enough space, all the students love to go to school. They have dreams of becoming an educator in the future, so that they can be someone who helps others.

Refugee people have another day that they will never forget: Their New Year’s Day. On that day, they feel like they are born again, and still have hope that one day they will see their own flag above them during a big celebration in their own country. They don’t want to be refugees or displaced people, but they have no choice. Their lives are difficult. Now, they just have to wait until the time when they will be free.

I know how the life of the people called “refugee people” looks because I was born in a refugee camp. I spent sixteen and a half years there. None of us will ever feel bad that we were born to be people who are known as “internal displaced people.” Our hope never dies. We trust that one day we will build our own country like other countries have, and we will have a big place for a school, and have everything that we have ever hoped for in our entire lives.

For more on the Aurora LIGHTS Program, please see page 11
What the Heck’s an AHEC? continued

elderly man in San Luis Valley; teaches nurses and radiology techs the best evidence-based practice; brings high school students from all over Colorado to the health sciences center campus to learn about health careers.

An AHEC helps educate community members about heart disease risks; helps provide oral health care to children in rural Colorado; honors excellence in nursing with the Nightingale awards; teaches physicians how to perform colonoscopy; and does puppet shows about health careers for elementary school kids.

AHEC is a teacher, a researcher, a student, a doctor, a nurse, a pharmacist, a dentist, a public health worker, a community advocate, a mother, a father, a grandma, a sibling, a child. An AHEC is part of our community – part of your community. AHEC represents the best in caring and educating, training and evaluating, learning and acting.

I recently heard someone say “AHEC is America’s best kept healthcare secret.” A lot of folks don’t really know about their local AHEC, but most people in Colorado are benefiting from the work of their AHEC. So if your child comes home excited about a health career, you may want to thank your local AHEC. If your physician knows the latest on asthma or COPD care, you may want to thank your AHEC. If your nurse provides the best care, you may want to thank your AHEC. If you learn about your high blood pressure at the local bank or community center, you may want to thank 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.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and Risk Drinking: Know the Facts

Colorado Fetal Alcohol Prevention Outreach Project (COFAS POP) is a statewide program working in conjunction with the statewide AHEC system to understand the effects of drinking alcohol and other drugs on the developing fetus. Do you know the facts?

What is risk drinking for a woman of childbearing age? Two drinks a day? More than seven drinks in a week? More than three drinks in a sitting? All of these are risk drinking behaviors for a woman.

Why are we concerned about risk drinking? When a women risk drinks she often does not know when she first becomes pregnant and this puts the unborn child at risk. Alcohol is one of the most dangerous teratogens, a substance that can damage a developing fetus. Every time a pregnant woman has a drink the unborn child drinks too. Alcohol passes easily through the placenta from the mother’s bloodstream into her baby’s blood, causing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications, including: mental retardation, learning disabilities, attention deficits, hyperactivity, problems with impulse control, language, memory, and social skills.

Are you ready to make a change? Call the COFAS Personal DECISIONS line at 1-888-724-3273.
Health Professions Scholars Program

The Colorado AHEC System is proud to announce
The Colorado Trust Health Profession Scholars for 2009-2011

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<th>Institution/Discipline</th>
<th>Regional AHEC</th>
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<td>Bauer, Jodi</td>
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Recipients receive up to $30,000 and agree to participate in a rural or urban underserved community for two years upon completion of their education. Applications for the 2010-2012 Health Professions Scholarship will open on May 1, 2010. Only online applications are accepted. For more information go to: http://hschealth.uchsc.edu/ahec/cthps.asp

For further information about the program, please see the fall 2009 issue of Health Matters at: http://hschealth.uchsc.edu/ahec/news/pdf/fall_2009.pdf
The Future is Bright for Aurora LIGHTS

The Aurora LIGHTS (LeadIng the way to careers in the HealTh Sciences) health career pipeline program is roaring into year two after a very successful year one. The first year has been transformative for all partners involved. Aurora Public School District (APS) has transformed its pipeline elementary, middle, and high schools into Aurora LIGHTS health career-focused programs. North Middle School Health Sciences and Technology Academy has doubled in size to include over 180 students and, because of Aurora LIGHTS, has officially transformed its entire campus into the North Middle School Health and Science Technology Campus to include over six hundred students. APS Central and Hinkley High Schools now also have Health and Science Academies involving over 120 students. During this past year we have had very successful programs for our high school students led by Central Colorado AHEC, including the Aurora LIGHTS Saturday Academy for 30 9th-grade students and the Summer LIGHTS Institute for 40 11th and 12th grade students from APS. This year Central Colorado AHEC has engaged another 30 9th grade students to participate in the Saturday Academy, which includes rigorous math and science coursework and career planning skills sessions over the course of ten Saturdays during the school year. We are also very excited by the growing participation and enthusiasm of undergraduate students in the Aurora LIGHTS program at Community College of Aurora and the University of Colorado-Denver Downtown Campus (UCD-DC). Over 200 undergraduates are participating in tutoring programs, mentoring, and job shadow experiences. An exciting new program is the Aurora LIGHTS MCAT prep course run by Kaplan for 27 juniors and seniors at UCD-DC to help them succeed on test day. Our partners, Metropolitan Community Provider Network (MCPN) and the UCD Office of Diversity, are placing our high school and undergraduate students in rewarding job shadow experiences at the various clinics, laboratories, and hospitals in the Metro-Denver area. Finally, we are continuing to provide important support services for more than 100 Aurora LIGHTS health professional students on the Anschutz Medical Campus in order to ensure success in courses and exams for graduation. The future is bright for Aurora LIGHTS!

You are Invited...

To become a Host Home to University of Colorado Denver Anschutz Medical Campus Health Profession Students

Health Profession students need housing during their rural rotation experiences.

Host Homes Provide:
A Private Bedroom
Private or Shared Bathroom
Limited Kitchen Space / Use

Host Home Benefits:
Be a Community Ambassador
Receive a small Housing Stipend

For more information contact
Brenda Baumgarten
303.724.0340
Engaging Communities in Education and Research

Colorado physicians, physician assistants, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, other healthcare professionals and community members were invited to participate in a two-day conference October 2-4, 2009 in Vail, Colorado. Highlights included numerous workshops, board meetings, a networking reception and the first annual 5K Run/Walk For a Cure. Dr. Richard Krugman, Vice Chancellor of Health Affairs, addressed the over 580 participants and guests during the Saturday evening banquet. Workshops and lectures focused on information and tools to improve different aspects of healthcare in rural settings, such as research, oral health of children and adults, management of medications, weight loss, physical activity and nutrition, blood pressure monitoring, alternative medicine, H1N1, critical care transportation, asthma, electronic health records and how to increase collaborative opportunities between existing organizations.

Keynote speakers were Stephen Thomas, Associate Dean for Diversity at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health, an expert on racial and ethnic health disparities, and Sandra Quinn, Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Education at the University of Pittsburgh and an expert on H1N1. Their Saturday morning presentation, “Less Talk, More Action: Advancing Community Engagement Strategies to Eliminate Health Disparities,” focused on the history of minority health disparities and discussed solutions for rural and urban practices.

The conference provided participants the opportunity to network in ways that impact their rural communities with others in their region and throughout the state. New collaborations between regional AHECs, community members, health professionals and university faculty have developed as a result of this conference.

This wonderful experience would not have been possible without the generous contributions of the following sponsors:

**Colorado Area Health Education Center (AHEC) System**
- Kaiser Foundation of Colorado
- CCTSI: Colorado Clinical & Translational Sciences Institute
- SNOCAP: State Network of Colorado Ambulatory Practice & Partners
  - BIGHORN
  - CaReNet
  - COPPER Net
- The Center for Medical Transport Research
- High Plains Research Network

**University of Colorado Denver / Anschutz Medical Campus**
- School of Medicine
- School of Dental Medicine
- School of Pharmacy
- School of Public Health
Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado A Community Resource

234 Columbine Street, Suite 333
Denver, Colorado 80206
303.377.9774
888.378.9779

Mission: The mission of the Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado (EFCO) is to prevent, control and cure epilepsy and to ensure people with seizure disorders are able to participate in all life experiences. Our goals are to improve the quality of life for people with epilepsy, eliminate the stigma associated with the disorder through awareness and education and prevent the onset of epilepsy.

Information and Referrals: Our information and referral line connects you with a qualified staff member who can answer questions and connect you with community resources.

Circle of Friends Groups: Our Circle of Friends groups provide educational and emotional support in a positive environment for people living with epilepsy and their families. Trained volunteers who have personal experience with epilepsy lead Circle of Friends groups. Contact us to join a support group or explore a leadership role call.

Community Education: Community education programs are extensive across the state, including urban, suburban and rural outreach, which offer seminars and presentations to educators, nurses, students of all ages, law enforcement and employers about seizure recognition and first aid.

Cavity-Free at Three: Oral Health for Children

Cavity Free at Three is a three-year statewide effort, funded by the Caring for Colorado Foundation to prevent oral disease in young children. The program aims to engage dentists, physicians, nurses, dental hygienists, public health practitioners and early childhood educators in the prevention and early detection of oral disease in pregnant women, infants and toddlers. Dental disease is the number one chronic disease of children in America, yet it is preventable.

Our goal is simple: we want all children in our state to be cavity-free by the time they reach age three.

Cavity Free at Three offers comprehensive training programs to interested health care providers aimed at addressing oral disparities in young children. Our model addresses the causes of decay, prevention techniques and what you can do to share the responsibility of early childhood caries. Our Technical Assistance Team is dedicated to outreach opportunities within community-based education centers throughout Colorado. Cavity Free at Three strives to make dental disease in children rare, rather than inevitable. For more information on how you can become involved, or locate local training opportunities, visit our website at www.cavityfreeatthree.org. We offer training throughout the state, including the metro area as well as locations along the front-range, western slope and eastern plains. We want to hear from you!

Susan Evans
Cavity Free at Three, Program Director
303-724-5191
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Karen Savoie, RDH, BS
Cavity Free at Three, Director of Education
303-724-4750
Karen.Savoie@ucdenver.edu
To Your Health!

What is High Blood Pressure? Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries as the heart pumps out blood. If this pressure rises and stays high over time, it can damage the body in many ways. High blood pressure is a serious condition that can lead to coronary heart disease, heart failure, stroke, kidney failure and other health problems.

How is high blood pressure diagnosed? Blood pressure is measured by placing a blood pressure cuff around your arm, inflating the cuff and listening for the flow of blood. Your doctor will measure your blood pressure at more than one visit to see if you have high blood pressure.

How often should I have my blood pressure checked? After age 18, have your blood pressure checked at least once every two years. Do it more often if you have had high blood pressure in the past.

Does it have any symptoms? Not usually. This is why it’s so important to have your blood pressure checked regularly.

How is it treated? Treatment begins with changes you can make to your lifestyle to help lower your blood pressure and reduce your risk of heart disease (see the blue box at right). If these changes don’t work, you may also need to take medicine. Even if you need to take medicine, making some changes in your lifestyle can help reduce the amount of medicine you must take.

Outlook: Blood pressure tends to rise with age. Following a healthy lifestyle helps some people delay or prevent this rise in blood pressure. People who have high blood pressure can take steps to control it and reduce their risks for related health problems. Key steps include following a healthy lifestyle, having ongoing medical care and following the treatment plan your doctor prescribes.

What is Obesity? Obesity means having too much body fat. Obesity occurs over time when you eat more calories than you use. Weighing too much may increase your risk for developing many health problems. If you are overweight or obese, you may be at risk for: type 2 diabetes; coronary heart disease and stroke; metabolic syndrome; certain types of cancer; sleep apnea; osteoarthritis; gallbladder disease; fatty liver disease; pregnancy complications. You may be able to lower your health risks by losing weight, doing regular physical activity, and eating healthfully.

How can you tell if you are at a healthy weight? One easy option is to calculate your Body Mass Index, or BMI. A free on-line service you can use is: http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/bmicalc.htm

Want to achieve or maintain a healthy weight? The key is maintaining balance between the calories you consume each day, and the calories you burn in your daily activities. Food portion sizes are far bigger than they were in the past, which means we’re taking in far more calories than we realize.
**What is Diabetes?** Diabetes is a disease in which your blood glucose, or sugar, levels are too high. Glucose comes from the foods you eat. Insulin is a hormone that helps the glucose get into your cells to give them energy. With Type 1 diabetes, your body does not make insulin. With Type 2 diabetes, the more common type, your body does not make or use insulin well. Without enough insulin, the glucose stays in your blood. Over time, having too much glucose in your blood can cause serious problems. It can damage your eyes, kidneys and nerves. Diabetes can also cause heart disease, stroke and even the need to remove a limb. Pregnant women can also get diabetes, called gestational diabetes.

**What is the Treatment for Diabetes?** Healthy eating and physical activity, along with blood glucose testing and oral medication or insulin injections may be part of the treatment for diabetes. People with diabetes must take responsibility for their day-to-day care, and keep blood glucose levels from going too low or too high. People with diabetes should see a healthcare provider who will monitor their diabetes control and help them learn to manage their diabetes.

**Can diabetes be prevented?** A number of studies have shown that regular physical activity can significantly reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes also appears to be associated with obesity.

**For more information, please visit:**

- The Centers for Disease Control: [http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/factsheet03.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/factsheet03.htm)

Understanding healthy and correct portion sizes is critical to long-term weight management. For an easy-to-use guide to portion sizes, visit WebMD at [http://www.webmd.com/diet/healthtool-portion-size-plate](http://www.webmd.com/diet/healthtool-portion-size-plate).

An increase in physical activity is an important part of your weight management program. Most weight loss occurs because of decreased caloric intake. Sustained physical activity is most helpful in the prevention of weight regain. In addition, exercise has a benefit of reducing risks of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, beyond that produced by weight reduction alone. Start exercising slowly and gradually increase the intensity. Trying too hard at first can lead to injury. Looking for easy ways to increase your daily activity level? Visit the National Heart Blood and Lung institute at [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/phy_act.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/phy_act.htm).


*health topics (in English and Spanish) at: www.medlineplus.gov*
Rural Track Welcomes New Class of Medical Students

The School of Medicine’s Rural Track welcomed 16 new members from the Class of 2013 this fall. The new students were welcomed at a reception during the first week of classes, at which they shared stories of their lives before medical school and received advice from their predecessors on surviving the rigors of medical study.

Interests, careers and activities of the new class of 2013 cover a broad range. For instance, Hollie Vigil taught high school students in the Colorado Rural Scholars’ Program, which brings selected students to the Health Sciences Center campus to learn about a variety of health professions. Kellen Alstatt worked in an Emergency Department and Derrick Foge completed a distinguished career as a medic in the United States Army. Many students had international experiences prior to starting school: Tony Cappa traveled to Brazil with his wife; Heath Eggleston backpacked in the Arctic; Matthew Podlogar traveled to Nepal and the Himalayas. Michael Orser was studying for his PhD in financial planning when he changed career interests to medicine.

Most of the students in the Rural Track have had significant rural living and work experiences. Camille Allison and Jason Yost farmed while growing up. Greg Burfeind worked as a river guide and school bus driver. Eric Brown worked on a lobster boat. Tim Clement owned a small ski industry business. Morgan Lauer was “Miss Rodeo Logan County” and taught horseback riding to children with disabilities.

The other rural track classes shared a range of advice. Sarah Dodd, of the class of 2012, advised setting aside time to take care of relationships, and recommended bringing spouses to all events. Corey Dobson, of the class of 2012, said to climb Colorado Mountains. Asa Ware, who grew up in Wray, Colorado, said “get your hands dirty” and Tierney Sparks of the class of 2010 emphasized maintaining balance in life and doing enjoyable things outside of school. Ely Walker of the class of 2011 said: “talk to older students,” and Avery MacKenzie of the class of 2012 advised taking advantage of unique opportunities the program offers.

The students were welcomed by the Colorado AHEC System staff, Dr. Norma Wagoner, Associate Dean of Admissions, and Laurel Petralia of the Colorado Trust. The Rural Track is funded by grants from the Colorado Trust, the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., and the Office of the Dean of the School of Medicine.

Back: Greg Burfeind, Heath Eggleston, Michael Orser, Eric Brown, Derrick Foge

Middle: Mark Deutchman MD (Rural Track Director), Camille Allison, Morgan Lauer, Tony Cappa, Kellen Alstatt, Matthew Podlogar, Laurel Petralia (Colorado Trust)

Front: Hollie Vigil, Dan Arnett, Tim Clement, Jason Yost

Not Pictured: Aaron Crum and Nate Chappelle