Western Colorado Area Health Education Center (WCAHEC), working in conjunction with the Colorado Board of Nursing, Mesa County Workforce Center, Hilltop Life Adjustment Program, Community Hospital and several area nursing homes, is currently providing an opportunity to achieve Nurse Aide Certification to those seeking a career in the medical field. So far this year, 54 students have completed the training; of those, 35 received scholarships from our partner agency, the Workforce Center (a Mesa County job placement program).

Our program is designed to meet the needs of a variety of individuals: In May 2010 our curriculum was reduced from 120 hours to 104 hours, in order to be competitive with other programs in Colorado. Additionally, we have designed the program as an evening course that lasts 6½ weeks. This format makes our program accessible for those who work during the day, as well as for high school students. In fact, high school student Edgar Ruiz, a participant in Colorado AHEC’s Summer Health Careers Institute, received a full scholarship from WCAHEC, successfully graduated from the program and became a licensed healthcare provider. The program's instruction is provided by registered nurses, and focuses on practical experience and patient interaction in a real world setting.

In May 2010 the Grand River Hospital District of Rifle, Colorado generously donated a fully electric...
From the Director
Jack Westfall, MD
What the Heck’s an AHEC?

Making Connections

I was visiting a friend last week and his eight-year-old daughter could not stop talking about The Great Hospital Adventure, and the wonderful puppets that showed what doctors, nurses, x-ray technicians and pharmacists do to help people who are sick. She wants to be a doctor. AHEC put on that show.

Got a call from a patient, and his 7th-grade nephew had just spent several days in a MASH Camp learning to take blood pressure, dissect cow eyes, and explore all the possible healthcare jobs in Colorado. His teacher was a nurse who just loved her job and inspired every single kid. He was excited to become a nurse. AHEC was there.

Talked with a sophomore at Aurora Public Schools who spent a second summer at the University of Colorado

Continued on page 10

From the Librarian’s Desk

Many clinicians are interested in bringing an evidence-based approach to their practice, but may face obstacles such as heavy patient load, practicing in a rural/remote area, etc. Fortunately, evidence-based guidelines have been developed for a number of clinical situations, and are freely available to health care providers. Here are three you may find useful:

National Guidelines Clearinghouse
www.guidelines.gov

The Community Health Association of Mountain/Plains States (CHAMPS)
http://www.champsonline.org/tools/ClinicalResources/default.asp

Colorado Clinical Guidelines
http://www.coloradoguidelines.org/

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Central Colorado AHEC Presents
Chronic Disease Self-Management Program

The Central Colorado AHEC was recently awarded a grant through the Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) to implement the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) series for 566 Coloradans in the greater Denver metro area and the San Luis Valley.

The CDSMP is a series of licensed, evidence-based, self-management workshops developed at Stanford University. The CDSMP teaches the skills needed in the day-to-day management of chronic conditions in order to maintain and/or increase life’s activities. Topics covered include: 1) techniques to deal with problems such as frustration, fatigue, pain and isolation; 2) appropriate exercise for maintaining and improving strength, flexibility, and endurance; 3) appropriate use of medications; 4) communicating effectively with family, friends, and health professionals; 5) nutrition; 6) how to evaluate new treatments. Classes are highly participative and will be facilitated by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are non-health professionals with chronic disease themselves.

The 2½-hour long workshops are given once a week for six weeks. People with chronic health problems attend together or people with diabetes may attend a diabetes-specific workshop. Spanish classes are also available. Adults over the age of 60 who have a chronic condition and caregivers for adults with chronic conditions are invited to attend the workshops. Class materials, including the CDSMP books, will be provided for the participants. The CDSMP series is completely free of charge for all participants.

Camela Billick, MD Honored at Golden Stethoscope Awards

The first annual Golden Stethoscope Award recognition event to honor excellence in clinical education was held May 19, 2010 at the Red Lion Denver Hotel. The University of Colorado School of Medicine’s Foundations of Doctoring, the Colorado AHEC Program and Central Colorado AHEC collaborated to honor the 60 clinical preceptors nominated by the School of Medicine students who wrote compelling letters about their unique experiences.

Camela Billick, MD of Salud Family Health Clinic was selected as the Best Family Medicine Preceptor. She was nominated by Annalisa Sterne, MSIII and Yihan Lin, MSII. They said about her:

• Our time with Dr. Billick has been a most rewarding experience of medical training – with a remarkable teacher and great clinician.
• We have transitioned from the role of simple observers to “doctors in training,” a truly active learning experience.
• Because of her view, we have not lost sight of the kinds of doctors and the kinds of people we want to be, in the midst of this education process.
Healthy Aging Symposium Piloted in Lamar

The Betz Family Endowment, Southeastern Colorado Area Health Education Center (SECAHEC), the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Lamar Community College and other organizations teamed up to offer the first Healthy Aging Symposium in Lamar, Colorado.

The Symposium kicked off Friday, June 18, 2010 with keynote speaker Wade Buchanan of the Bell Policy Center, who triggered lively discussion with his presentation on upcoming Colorado legislation. On Saturday morning Iris Clark, Executive Director of SECAHEC, along with Lynn Betz-Seybold and Tom Betz, of the Betz Family Endowment, gave the morning welcome, which was followed by a keynote from Dr. Carl Bartecchi of Pueblo, Colorado. Dr. Bartecchi, an internal medicine specialist, provided all attendees with a copy of his book Living Healthier and Longer – What Works, What Doesn’t.

The event offered sessions on a variety of topics, including: Medicaid; maintaining good health and a support system for family and friends; writing one’s story; nutrition for seniors; finding the positive in all situations; dealing with stress, depression, alcoholism, addictions and change; and the importance of talking with one’s physician about prescription and over-the-counter medications.

The closing ceremony included a drawing for door prizes, recognition of our supporting partners and presenters, and the SECAHEC staff who organized and facilitated the event.

Pharmacy Preceptor Finds Rewards Go Both Ways

After 25 years of working with pharmacy students, Brian Feagans, RPh, MS, Pharmacy Clinical Manager at St. Mary-Corwin Medical Center in Pueblo, Colorado still enjoys the special relationship between preceptor and student. “We see our students as part of the team to take care of patients,” notes Brian. They learn by doing. Students often work side by side with physicians in the clinical setting and sometimes in a trauma setting. They answer questions, do research and track down adverse reactions. In addition, they get to look at a lot of patient drug profiles. “Six weeks is a short amount of time, but by the end they are getting pretty good and pick up most everything.” The education goes beyond the science of pharmacy. Brian equips his students to work in the real world, to communicate with doctors and others on the medical team. He helps his students understand how important it is to “know what you don’t know” and go get the right answer.

“You have to want to do it,” he said referring to his years as a preceptor. “It’s a special experience and the rewards go both ways.” He explained that he often learns from his students and feels they are well-prepared for their rotations. He also appreciates the diversity of the students coming from the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, saying the experience has enriched his understanding of the world.

Pharmacy preceptor Brian Feagans, RPh, MS with student Erin Samura

Students on pharmacy rotations typically stay in housing provided by Southeastern Colorado Area Health Education Center (SECAHEC).
Centennial’s Oral Health Initiative Serves 2,000 Rural Children

In its third year, the Eastern Plains Oral Health Initiative administered by Centennial AHEC educated 2,000 northeastern Colorado children about tooth care. The instructors, local dental hygienists, screened 1,000 of the children for oral disease and applied caries-preventive fluoride varnish. Additionally, nearly 250 second-graders received protective sealants on their permanent molars. Local health coordinators are so committed to this project they have recruited 100% of area schools as participants, and both superintendents and parents have written letters of gratitude.

Centennial AHEC developed this model rural school-based health outreach program by partnering with area health departments and the Rural Communities Resource Center. The service is provided in seven frontier counties, all with profound shortages of dental providers. Outside Plains Medical Center and Salud Family Clinic, federally-funded community health centers who are also partners in the project, there are fewer than 10 private dentists in the seven counties and only two of them take Medicaid or CHP+.

For many of these children, this initiative is the only dental care they receive and significant numbers are referred for follow-up care which may cost a thousand dollars or more. Centennial AHEC and all of its partners are very grateful to the Caring for Colorado Foundation for their generous funding, and are already scheduling next year’s sessions.

Centennial Champion Marc Ringel, MD Retires

Dr. Marc Ringel of Greeley has served Centennial AHEC in a variety of capacities since 1996. A diplomat of the American Board of Family Practice who came to Yuma, Colorado in 1976 as a National Health Service Corps Fellow, he has been a Centennial AHEC consultant, preceptor and board member. Regardless of the specifics, he has been there for us, advising and supporting activities addressing the profound workforce issues on the Eastern Plains. In fact, his AHEC work continued until the day before he retired when he graciously allowed a pre-med student to shadow him.

As a board member he keeps the needs of rural residents at the forefront, provides support through challenging times and commits the agency to high quality, evidence-based programming; he is our “go-to” person on rural healthcare. Marc, we thank you for all the time, talents and treasure you have offered the residents of rural Colorado, the medical profession and especially the Centennial AHEC. We wish you the best and are especially pleased you are staying on our board of directors.

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WCAHEC Education Programs, cont.

hospital bed so that our students would be able to attend class and complete their exam at the Hilltop Regional Center in Grand Junction. In the past our students would have needed to travel to Rifle or Delta Colorado to facilities approved for testing by the Colorado Board of Nursing to take their final exam. WCAHEC is very grateful to Mary DesOrmeau and all of the staff at the Grand River Hospital District for their donation and assistance.

WCAHEC is partnering with the home care agencies Volunteers of America, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, The Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado and Mesa Developmental Services on a new initiative to offer classes for parents of disabled children. Training as a nurse aide empowers parents to be more involved in meeting the medical needs of their children with disabilities. With this certification, they may be employed by the state of Colorado as paid nurse aides for their own children, as opposed to claiming disability benefits. To a parent who can potentially face numerous and costly medical bills from their child’s medical diagnosis, this is a great option. WCAHEC is helping these families to be more financially independent while advocating for their child’s health needs.

Thanks to our partnership with the Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado, all students attending our classes receive instruction regarding seizures, seizure disorders and epilepsy. The information provided includes general first aid for people of all ages diagnosed with seizures, along with specific instruction for special populations: parents of children disabilities (including information on neurologists, support groups and other community resources) and those providing eldercare (47,000 people have been diagnosed with epilepsy in Colorado alone, with 25% of new cases found in men and women over the age of 60).

WCAHEC will continue to provide practical, unique and creative medical education resources for our community. We will continue to strive for strong relationships with fellow organizations to insure that those that desire medical education are able to attain it. WCAHEC’s educational programs have positively affected many of our region’s citizens, both our program graduates and those they care for.
WCAHEC Preceptor “Pays It Forward”

WCAHEC’s Steven Cruse recently chatted with Scott Rollins, MD, a University of Colorado School of Medicine (CU) preceptor in Collbran, Colorado. Dr. Rollins, along with Erika Woodyard, MD, opened Plateau Valley Medical Center in 1994, and since that time they have managed a full-service family practice clinic and provided 24-hour emergency on-call service.

SC: What are the primary reasons that you and your colleagues chose to become preceptors of UC/AMC students?

SR: There were a few physicians along the way during my training that took the time to really inspire me. They stand out as pivotal teachers that helped me along more than they will ever know. I am deeply grateful for the time and interest they took on my behalf and feel obliged to “pay it forward.” We have a unique clinic situation that allows us to show students the breadth of rural family practice and experience life in a real rural setting.

SC: How has your experience with the UC/AMC affected your practice and your patients?

SR: There is nothing like teaching to reinforce my own knowledge. Reviewing the basics again and again is something all physicians appreciate. It is refreshing to work with eager students at a time when medicine is still much of an art – where the clinical science and the social and even the spiritual aspects of being a physician are still paramount. As we get into practice it is easy to get bogged down in the insurance, records, paperwork, business side of things and forget the pure wonder of our work – at heart we are artists and it is good to remember that every day!

Our patients are very familiar with having students around and I think they value the fact that we teach and stay involved in the education process. It gives them confidence that we continue to learn and stay abreast of current medical knowledge. We actually learn quite a bit from students and residents as they are able to bring to us current tidbits of medical knowledge from their studies.

We simply try to encourage students to stay focused on the art of medicine and stay true to their personal skills and future lifestyle goals as they are settling on specialty choices. I’ll never forget a student many years ago who told me “this was the best rotation I’ve had – and I know I don’t want to practice in a rural setting ’cause I’m a city boy through and through.” I had to laugh, but spending a month in the country was a new experience and taught him much – if it solidified his knowledge that an urban practice was right for him then we succeeded. We have had more students comment the other way stating they “have a new appreciation for both family practice and practicing in a rural setting.” Either way it is gratifying to know the rotation is special.”

In 2004 Dr. Collins was voted Colorado Family Physician of the Year. This prestigious award is given annually to one of only 1800 family physicians. The recipient is chosen by the Board of the Colorado Chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians. Selection is based on expertise and commitment to family medicine. Dr Rollins credits his strong partnership, outstanding clinical staff, family and the support of the Plateau Valley community for their role in helping earn this honor.

Western Colorado AHEC
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Evidence-Based Healthcare a Priority for SWAHEC

Southwestern AHEC (SWAHEC) is leaving no evidence unturned: Executive Director of SWAHEC, Emily Burns, MD, MPH, attended the 12th annual Rocky Mountain Workshop on How to Practice Evidence-Based Health Care in early August. Funded in part by a grant from Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the workshop focused on teaching the basics of, and developing further insights into, the conscientious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients and the delivery of public health programs and health services. Much of the information from the conference will be applicable to program planning and evaluation both at regional and system AHEC offices, as well as to our preceptors in the community. Emily is currently planning how to implement training and an education series about applying evidence-based health to practice. Look for a session at the Engaging Communities in Education and Research fall conference, a new medical student module about the US Preventive Service Task Force Guidelines, and an upcoming Preceptor Journal Club.

Be a Part of SWAHEC!

Wondering how you can be a part of new Southwestern AHEC region? There are a number of ways you can make a valuable contribution to health care in your region:

Become a preceptor: Providing opportunities for students to experience and learn in rural Colorado is an excellent way to develop a pipeline of qualified health professionals who will ultimately establish practices in our region. If you work in a health field and are interested in teaching and mentoring students who complete rotations in the SWAHEC region, please contact SWAHEC for more information.

Become a host family: We are always looking for host homes who have an extra bedroom for students while they are completing rural rotations in our region. This is a great way to receive a small amount of compensation and provide invaluable support to our students!

Become a board member: SWAHEC is currently recruiting board members from all counties in the region. This is a great opportunity for county-level leaders to contribute to a regional organization in order to improve health in our region.

Southwestern AHEC
http://www.swahec.org
P.O. Box 755, Durango CO 81302
Phone: 970.403.6848

Photo Credit: Durango Main Street
courtesy of Wikimedia Commons
SLVAHEC’s “Grow Your Own” Program Highlighted at NAO

The San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center (SLVAHEC) presented the findings from its 2008 survey from High School to Health Careers at the 2010 National AHEC Organization Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada on June 23, 2010. Freddie Jaquez, Executive Director of the SLVAHEC, presented the one-hour seminar. He explained what the “Grow Your Own” Summer Health Careers Institute/Student Health Careers Guild program is, and how one might go about conducting a survey as an evaluative tool to find out how effective such a program may be. Attendees from across the country learned of the positive outcomes of this dynamic youth health pathway program. The most significant finding from this survey was that 44% of the high school students participating in this program during the 25-year period covered by the survey are employed in a health occupation today. Mr. Jaquez told the group that “Grow Your Own” is based on the “Familia” (Family) concept, and he opened the seminar playing the guitar and singing the Hispanic cultural song “Las Mañanitas” to welcome the attendees to his presentation.

Seniors Benefit from SLVAHEC’s In-Home Chores Program

The San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center (SLVAHEC) has administered its In-Home Chores for the Elderly Program since 1980. The program makes a significant difference in the lives of seniors aged 65 and over in the San Luis Valley’s Alamosa, Costilla and Conejos counties.

With funding from the Area Agency on Aging (dba South Central Colorado Seniors) and a Conejos County Community Block Grant, homemaker and chore services are provided to needy seniors so that they may continue to live in their own homes with independence and dignity, putting off an eventual move to costly nursing services or nursing home.

The clients served by the program range in age from 60 to over 90; 13% are wheelchair-bound; 48% are in extremely poor health; only 30% are able to drive.
From the Director, cont’d.

Anschutz Medical Campus practicing math and science, and learning about healthcare careers, hanging out with health professional students and shadowing physicians, nurses, dentists, lab and x-ray techs. He is just sure he wants to be a dentist. That’s the AHEC.

Gave a talk to 20 students from rural Colorado about trauma in a critical access hospital. There was a junior from my hometown. We looked at dozens of x-rays of broken bones and pictures of farm implements. He wants to be a paramedic or a pharmacist; he just can’t decide. The extra math and science he received will prepare him for either. AHEC again.

Two students from campus came into my office and wondered if the Urban Track students could do the suture workshop with the Rural Track Students. One of them wants to work in a small town on the Western Slope and the other is committed to working at a Community Health Center in Denver. One is a medical student; one is a nurse practitioner student. Rural Track, Urban Track. AHEC.

Opened an attachment to my email this morning, and saw a photo of a family in Fort Morgan with a two-year-old getting an oral health check-up and fluoride varnish. Beautiful teeth, beautiful family. Cavity-Free at Three aims to help keep them happy. Then found a story about a school in rural eastern Colorado where every 2nd-grader is offered a free oral exam and dental sealants. Both AHEC.

Chatted with one of my colleagues in a rural mountain community about the medical student and physician assistant student they had in their clinic this month. The students took turns caring for patients in the clinic, and worked together with a family of four so they could get the patients out quicker. They learned together, planned together and met with the family together. Inter-professional and rural training. That’s AHEC.

That’s the AHEC: Getting kids interested in health careers, providing opportunities for rural, urban underserved and inter-professional training, filling the gaps in primary care and public health. Six Regional AHEC Centers in Colorado, all working to make Colorado healthier.

Colorado AHEC Program: Connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health. We hope you will be an AHEC partner.

FASDay: Raising Awareness

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is the leading known cause of preventable mental retardation in the United States. FASD occurs in approximately 10 per 1,000 births in Colorado (that equals 700 cases a year). This outranks Down Syndrome and Autism in prevalence. Every year on September 9th, International FASD Awareness Day is observed. Proclamations are issued in countries, states, provinces and towns all over the world. Bells are rung at 9:09 a.m. in every time zone, from New Zealand to Alaska. People all around the world gather for events to raise awareness about the dangers of drinking during pregnancy and the plight of individuals and families who struggle with FASD. The first FAS Day was celebrated on 9/9/99. This day was chosen so that on the ninth day of the ninth month of the year, the world will remember that during the nine months of pregnancy a woman should abstain from alcohol. Anytime is a good time to raise awareness about FASD. If you or someone you know is interested in hosting an event or helping with an event this September, please contact: COFAS- 1-888-724-FASD (3273).
2010 National AHEC Organization Center Organizing Conference

The National AHEC Organization conference, *AHEC’s Role in Healthcare Workforce Development: Pipeline to Retention* was held in Las Vegas, Nevada, June 20-24, 2010. Over 700 AHEC Program Directors, Center Directors and staff from all across the nation attended the conference. The Regional AHEC Center Directors offered a workshop on *Colorado Conversations: Using AHEC and Technology to Engage Your Community in Better Healthcare Policy*. Sally Henry (Centennial AHEC Executive Director) facilitated a roundtable discussion on *Serving on Non-profit Board of Directors* and Freddie Jaquez (San Luis Valley AHEC Executive Director) led a seminar titled *From High School to Health Careers*, highlighting a survey of pipeline program participants from the last 25 years in the San Luis Valley region.

Colorado AHEC at the NAO Networking Reception:

*Above, from left to right: Susan Evans and Kris Wenzel; Dan Navarro and Freddie Jaquez; Carol Giffin-Jeansonne and Natasha Schuman*

*Above, from left to right: Emily Jo Hasley; Beth Ingram; Marty Bachman; Sally Henry; Gloria Nussbaum*

Continued on page 11
2010 National AHEC Organization, cont.

Colorado AHEC had two poster presentations at the national meeting: Racheal Keller’s poster described the MyAHEC networking tool for Summer Health Career participants, and Karen Savoie’s poster, which discussed the Cavity-Free at Three oral health program for children.

Centennial’s Sally Henry Receives 2010 NAO Red Kelling Award

Congratulations to Centennial AHEC Executive Director, Sally Henry, who was awarded the 2010 Red Koelling Award for Service to AHEC. The Red Koelling Award for Service to AHEC is given in honor of Henry “Red” Koelling, MBA, who provided dedicated leadership to the South Carolina AHEC Program from its inception in 1972 until his retirement in 1990. This Award is given to an individual who exemplifies the spirit, leadership and work of this outstanding leader of the South Carolina AHEC Program.

Sally received the award during the 2010 National Area Health Education Center Organization (NAO) conference held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The theme for the conference was “AHECs Role in Healthcare Workforce Development: Pipeline to Retention.” The conference included keynote addresses and plenary sessions by national leaders in health care, concurrent and poster sessions with skilled presenters, pre-conference workshops, orientation for new directors, as well as small-group activities and committee meetings.
The Colorado AHEC System is Proud to Announce the Colorado Trust Health Profession Scholars for 2010-2012

Recipient | Institution / Discipline | AHEC Region
--- | --- | ---
Abeyta, Ian | University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Master of Public Health | Central Colorado
Adjei, Paulina | University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Beth El College of Nursing | Southeastern Colorado
Almgren, Bree | University of Northern Colorado, Family Nurse Practitioner | Central Colorado
Asche, Kenton | Rocky Vista University, College of Osteopathic Medicine | Centennial Colorado
Aung, Myo | University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, School of Pharmacy | Central Colorado
Buhring, Anissa | University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, PhD in Nursing | Central Colorado
Chavez, Catia | University of Colorado School of Public Health | Central Colorado
Coram, Cathy | University of Northern Colorado, PhD in Nursing Education | Southeastern Colorado
Crane, Lisa | University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Beth El College of Nursing | San Luis Valley
Cummings, Patrick | Colorado State University Pueblo, Adult Acute Care Nurse Practitioner | San Luis Valley
Edgar, Connie | University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Family Nurse Practitioner | San Luis Valley
Elliott, Shawn | University of Colorado College of Nursing | Central Colorado
Hernandez, Luis | University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Physician Assistant | Central Colorado
Knight, Piper | Regis University, Masters of Science in Nursing | Central Colorado
Laws, Summer | University of Colorado School of Public Health | Western Colorado
Mena-Mendez, Mario | University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, School of Pharmacy | Centennial Colorado
Potter, Joeseph | University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Dental Medicine | Central Colorado
Robles, Nick | University of Colorado School of Public Health | Central Colorado
Shetron, Ty | University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Beth El College of Nursing | Southeastern Colorado
Stutzman, Danielle | University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, School of Pharmacy | Southeastern Colorado
Temmer, Lauren | Red Rocks Community College, Physician Assistant | Central Colorado
Vigil, Hollie | University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, School of Medicine | Southeastern Colorado
Wills, Stephen | University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, School of Medicine | Central Colorado

Each recipient receives a scholarship of $30,000 over a two-year period to help with education costs. The scholarships were funded by a grant from The Colorado Trust Foundation to increase the health professions workforce in Colorado. Recipients all commit to practice in a rural or urban underserved Colorado community upon completion of their education. Since 2008, 62 scholarships, totaling 1.8 million dollars, have been awarded.
Lydia Pyle was selected as a Health Professions Scholar in 2008, and received a $30,000 scholarship funded by The Colorado Trust Foundation. The scholarship, which targets health profession students who plan to work in rural or urban underserved areas of Colorado, was established to increase the workforce in rural Colorado and to assist with the high education costs for health profession students. Lydia graduated with her class May 2009, completed her clinical hours, passed her National Certification Boards and didn’t stop there.

In June of 2009, Lydia researched and started the planning of a Parish Nurse Program at the First United Methodist Church (FUMC) in Greeley. In January 2010 she recruited a family nurse practitioner with whom she had graduated to help launch this program. Lydia’s employer, North Colorado Medical Center, donated exam room furniture and equipment, the FUMC donated materials and labor to construct the exam room and office area, and congregational members donated funds to purchase exam supplies and office furniture.

The clinic has offered vaccinations for seasonal influenza and H1N1, and has set up free monthly blood pressure clinics. They are working with Weld County Health Department in providing free diabetic education to the community, as well as working with the Area Agency on Aging to provide free classes to area residents aged 65 years and older. FUMC works with seven other churches, on a rotating basis, to provide food and shelter to the homeless for a week’s time. This program is called “Room at the Inn.” The Parish Nurses are available to help with free care should a child need to be seen for acute illness, such as earache, fever, etc. The intervention of a Parish Nurse can save the patient an Emergency Room Visit, and the only cost may be for a $4.00 prescription.

In June 2010, the Parish Nurse Clinic was named FUMC Giftz Clinic. The clinic will begin offering education as well as acute care to the area, via email connection to area churches in Greeley. A number of community partners provide care in the clinic: students from the Institute of Business and Medical Careers help with blood pressure clinics; University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus School of Pharmacy students assist with medication reviews; massage students staff a massage clinic; and nurse practitioners provide care in the acute care clinic. They are in the process of recruiting professors from University of Northern Colorado to deliver educational offerings on many different topics and have recruited a professor to help teach Lydia how to write grants. Lydia is in clinic three days a week, with the hope of staffing the clinic five days a week by January 2011.

Lydia’s vision is that by including the many churches in our program, this could help other churches in starting their own programs, and providing assistance to even more community members.
Interdisciplinary Rural Training Program Update

The Kaiser Interdisciplinary Rural Training and Service (IRTS) program is continuing to develop collaboration among the Colorado regional AHECs and learners from the MD, PA, Pharmacy, DDS and Nursing programs. This program has both off-campus and on-campus components. One essential feature of IRTS is to identify students from these various disciplines who are serving rotations in the same, or nearby, rural areas and get them together for shared learning and service experiences. Another feature is to introduce these students to the larger community since some may become interested in returning after their training is complete. The Colorado regional AHEC offices are essential partners in this effort since they are the focal point for student housing, know what service experiences are available locally and are in a position to mobilize community resources to welcome students. To facilitate this effort, a community-by-community directory of resources has been compiled to inform students about everything from local coffee houses to recreational opportunities and where to do laundry. In addition, the professional program leaders have all agreed that their learners should participate in service learning activities when they are on rural rotations and are making this part of their curriculum. These activities are many and varied, but include participation in health fairs, counseling local primary school students about healthcare careers, and speaking with community groups about current healthcare topics. On the UC/AMC campus, the MD and PA Rural Tracks are now formally combining some of their curriculum time, and the other programs are working on developing rural emphasis curriculum elements.

Rural Immersion Week in Delta Colorado

A group of 14 health professions students learned a great deal about work and life in a rural community by participating in the “Rural Immersion Week” program in June. The group, which consisted of five MD students, four nursing students, two pharmacy students, one psychology intern and two premed students, was led by Mark Deutchman MD, director of the Rural Track with local coordination by Evan Cummings, who teaches school in Delta.

On the first day, the students were oriented to the community by a number of local speakers, including the hospital CEO, county sheriff, a county commissioner, assistant superintendent of schools, mental health program supervisor, regional AHEC director and economic development council member. The speakers emphasized how community members in rural areas collaborate to solve problems and maximize resources. The students also learned that healthcare providers in small towns need to wear many hats and, in the process, can have a positive impact on both the lives of individuals and the community overall.

For the following three days, the students divided into interdisciplinary groups to explore healthcare, education, law enforcement, community and economy, public health and mental health. They met with individuals, businesses and groups in their respective areas of study throughout Delta County including the communities of Delta, Orchard City, Cedaredge, Hotchkiss and Paonia. They put together presentations that were shared on the fifth day before returning to Denver.

In addition to the small group activities, the entire group toured several local businesses including an organic farm, an orchard, the fish hatchery, the restored pioneer village and the coal mine. The coal mine tour included an extensive safety training session, followed by an underground tour. The group was also treated to a gumbo din-
Rural Immersion Week in Delta Colorado, cont.

The Rural Immersion Week was funded by a grant from Caring for Colorado, with additional funding from the Colorado Trust. The program was patterned after last year’s equally successful week in Sterling, Colorado. The program will be repeated in June, 2011, probably in the San Luis Valley. Interested students should contact Brenda.Baumgarten@ucdenver.edu.

Student comments included:

“I learned a ton; really helped my holistic view of rural practice.”

“...met some amazing community members and really got a great impression of this town.”

“It was a great learning experience and exploration of a rural area.”

Many said they would have liked to stay longer.