Health Professions Students Team Up at Health Fair

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus School of Pharmacy students Aaron Lee, Melinda Lam and Jordan Califano, along with University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus School of Medicine student Benjamin Briggs, used their Service Learning Education projects to help increase epilepsy awareness and promote health careers to local students in Pueblo, Colorado. SECAHEC Health Education Coordinator Shanae Gutierrez and the professional students participated in the first annual health fair held at Pueblo’s Cesar Chavez Academy (CCA).

In addition to staffing a table which provided information on epilepsy awareness and healthcare careers, the students provided entertaining education to CCA’s kindergarten through second-graders: Benjamin Biggs, a third-year medical student, read the students Dotty the Dalmatian has Epilepsy, and Aaron Lee and Melinda Lam performed Careers in Health – The Great Hospital Adventure.

Jordan Califano, a third-year pharmacy student, assisted Shanae Gutierrez in presenting Take Charge of the Facts to a group of sixth- and seventh-graders. The presentation included a DVD, informational session, and a quiz. The students appeared very interested in the information and enjoyed competing for the correct answers to the quiz in order to win prizes provided by SECAHEC.

Aaron, Benjamin, Melinda, and Jordan enthusiastically promoted health careers during a Q & A session. The staff, student body and SECAHEC appreciated the professional students for donating an entire day of their time.
From the Director:

What the Heck’s an AHEC?

Service Learning

Each year the Colorado AHEC Education Program supports 1,000 health professional students as they perform clinical rotations throughout Colorado. Pharmacy, Nursing, Physician Assistant, Physical Therapy, Medicine, Dental and Public Health students have the opportunity to leave the Anschutz Medical Campus and spend four to twelve weeks learning their profession from a community preceptor in large and small communities throughout Colorado. These Colorado AHEC rotations consistently receive high marks from students who appreciate the volunteer faculty commitment to teaching, the warmth of the local community, and the one-on-one education they receive.

Colorado AHEC rotations are much more than professional education in the health care office. These rotations are about learning the context of the patient in the broader community, to learn about the local culture, values and organizations.

Each Colorado AHEC student is offered the opportunity to participate in a Service Learning Education activity in the community. Regional Colorado AHEC Center partners with local community organizations, schools and practices to provide an opportunity for students to reach out to the community and provide additional service. Service

From the Librarian’s Desk

FindIt: New HSL Search Engine

Beginning February 1, 2011, the Health Sciences Library (HSL) on the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus offers a new search engine called FindIt. This next-generation search engine for the Anschutz Medical Campus offering unprecedented “one-stop shopping” for a large majority of the electronic resources HSL makes available to the campus. In FindIt, journal article search results are displayed alongside books, and provides tools to refine your search quickly and easily. To use FindIt, visit the HSL website at: http://hslibrary.ucdenver.edu/

Please note that if you are not affiliated with the Anschutz Medical Campus, you may request items from the Health Sciences Library via its Interlibrary Loan service: http://hslibrary.ucdenver.edu/interlibrary/

Colorado AHEC rotation sites

Health Matters

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Cheyenne Wells Church Women Take Over Cooking Co-op

In October, the United Methodist Church Women established the Feeding the Flock program to insure continuance of the Plains Partnership’s Co-op Cooking Program in Cheyenne County. The women of the church, along with Connie Dickie and Pastor Gene Erickson, felt the program was important to members of their community. Each month, community members gather to learn about nutrition, prepare take-home meals (for a small fee), and socialize. While participants actively assist in preparation of nutritious meals, the meeting also provides time for fellowship; this effort helps to reduce social isolation that often accompanies aging.

Service Learning Education Enriched by Local Teacher

James DePue Outstanding Teach and CAHEC Community Advocate

James DePue of Wray, Colorado, is full of passion for the classroom, and there is evidence to prove it. With numerous letters of support and parent recommendations, DePue, who teaches General Biology as well as College-level Human Anatomy and Biology at Wray High School, was chosen for two major awards in 2010: Outstanding Colorado Biology Teacher by the National Association of Biology Teachers; and 2010 Science Teacher of the Year, by the Colorado State Fair. DePue’s five years of teaching experience, along with his dedication to school and community is exemplified in comments made by parents of students. Comments such as: “He leads by example,” and “He is a dynamic and effective classroom presence with a lifelong impact on students,” exemplify DePue’s passion and dedication.

DePue’s enthusiasm has extended into CAHEC territory, and Emily Jo Hasley, CAHEC’s Educational Coordinator, explains DePue’s involvement with CAHEC: “James DePue has accepted medical students into his classroom for Service Learning Education projects every time I have asked him – 100% of the time for over three years.”

No matter what unit his class happens to be studying, DePue has invited University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus School of Medicine students to join right in, often allowing them to simulate physical assessments or present case studies. This allows the high school students to have a more enriched, hands-on learning experience. DePue also takes advantage of this time to let his students inquire first-hand as to why the visiting students decided on a career in medicine, what they studied in high school that enabled them to enter their chosen field of study, and what it takes to get into the medical programs that are offered in today’s colleges. This experience is valuable to high school and medical students alike, and comments about the experiences from both student groups are always extremely positive.

CAHEC thanks James DePue for being a wonderful, committed partner to our Service Learning Education program.
Southwestern Colorado AHEC (SWCAHEC) is pleased to announce the addition of Teri Williams, BSN, CNOR, to our team as Outreach Coordinator based in Ridgway, Colorado. Williams received a Bachelor’s degree in Science and Nursing from the UCCS. After 25 years of moving around the county and the world, Teri and her husband decided to retire from the Army and pursue building their dream home in Ridgway, Colorado. Teri’s hobbies include riding and training horses (she has three mustangs), looking for interesting rock formations and geology, 4WD trail making, snow mobiling, skiing, reading, researching, making new friends and meeting interesting people. Teri has a strong passion for students and linking them into the world of health care. SWCAHEC is very excited to welcome Teri as a member of our team.

Southwestern Colorado AHEC (SWCAHEC) held its first local board meeting in Durango, Colorado on December 8, 2010. We are pleased to welcome five new board members:

- Ian Chartier, MA, Four Corners Health Care Center
- Dianna Fury, MD, Southwest Memorial Primary Care
- Linda Mozer, RN/BSN, MA, Pagosa Mountain Hospital
- Amanda Preston Araujo, CNP, MS, Southwest Women’s Health Associates
- Cheryl Roberts, RN, MHA, Ouray Public Health

We have a great starting group of board members who will be strong leaders for SWCAHEC. We are still looking for representatives from several regional counties to round out the board during the next four to six months.
Making A Difference Through Service Learning

On Thursday December 9, 2010, University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine student Christine Black spoke with approximately 85 kindergarten students at Marsh Elementary School in Monte Vista, Colorado. Through the Service Learning Education program, she taught children about germs and proper hand-washing techniques. Christine then used glow-germ and a black light to gauge how well the students washed their hands. This project was facilitated by Lisa Lucero, SLVAHEC Student Services Coordinator and Linda Moore-Owsley, SLVAHEC Board Member and teacher at Marsh Elementary. Ms Moore-Owsley said “Christine is a very personable young lady who made a difference in these young minds. The children enjoyed a fresh face and information that affects them and something they can do something about in their own lives. Christine was great!”

SLVAHEC Participates in World AIDS Day Activities

World AIDS Day, observed December 1st worldwide, was created not just to raise money, but also to increase awareness and education, as well as fight prejudice. The theme for World AIDS Day 2010 was Universal Access and Human Rights. According to UNAIDS estimates, there are now 33.4 million people living with HIV, including 2.1 million children. During 2008 some 2.7 million people became newly-infected with the virus and an estimated 2 million people died from AIDS. Nearly half of all people infected with HIV contract the disease before age 25, and are killed by AIDS before they reach 35.

SLVAHEC, in collaboration with Adams State College, hosted numerous activities for AIDS Awareness Week. Three NAMES quilt pieces were on display, including one made by San Luis Valley community members in 1995 to honor their family members who died of AIDS. The annual candlelight vigil was held and HIV testing was available at no charge. This effort was supported by the Southern Colorado AIDS Project.

The events were sponsored by Adams State College and associated clubs, SLVAHEC, San Luis Valley Mental Health Center, San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center, Southern Colorado AIDS Project and Valley Wide Health Systems.
Octoberfest Health Career Fair

Southeastern Colorado Area Health Education Center (SECAHEC) partnered with Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC) to provide area high school juniors and seniors with information on health careers. Nine high schools and 167 students gathered on the sunny October morning for the event.

Felix Lopez, President of TSJC and Kristi Harshbarger, Health Education Coordinator with SECAHEC welcomed the students. The event included 21 vendors waiting to share their experiences in their chosen profession with the young adults in the community, as well as representatives from colleges in the area to assist provide information on academic pathways for students interested in a specific health profession. Vendors included Colorado AHEC, University of Colorado Denver’s School of Pharmacy and School of Public Health, Trinidad ambulance and fire department, Adams State College, La Veta Physical Therapy, and Mt. Rafael Hospital. Trinidad State Junior College also provided a tour of the nursing department, classrooms, and demonstrations in the labs.

Guest speaker Clay Hart, RN from Mt. Rafael Hospital, shared his years of experience as an ER manager/disaster and trauma nurse. He provided insight to the students on the importance of education, his career, and the impact he has on individuals on a daily basis.

The day concluded with lunch in the cafeteria sponsored by Southeastern Colorado Area Health Education and door prizes from participating vendors and SECAHEC. For more information on health career fairs, contact Kristi Harshbarger at 719-544-7833.

SECAHEC Paving “Pathways” for High School Students

Southeastern Colorado Area Health Education Center (SECAHEC) is paving healthcare career “pathways” for high school students in our 16 southeast counties. Kristi Harshbarger, SECAHEC Health Education Coordinator, has been working closely with area high school counselors to provide a fun, interactive, and informational presentation to students and staff in the Southeastern Colorado Region during regular classroom hours.

Pueblo County High School counselors and students kicked off this new program and were amazed at the career opportunities available. This new presentation allows the students to envision themselves in a healthcare field of interest, as they take a future preparation self-discovery survey which provides career choices that compares their strengths with their personalities and interests. This presentation and survey assist students in academic planning for success in a healthcare career.

These presentations are designed to expose rural students to an array of health career possibilities and ultimately help them toward selecting a career in healthcare. To schedule a presentation, contact Kristi Harshbarger at 719.544.7833 or kristi.harshbarger@secahec.org.
Dr. Charles Raye of Pueblo, Colorado was named the SECAHEC Hero on September 25 at the “Engaging Communities in Education and Research” conference in Vail, Colorado.

Growing up in Trinidad, Colorado gave Dr. Raye a special understanding of the path from a rural high school to an established medical career. He notes that the SECAHEC programs fit well with his personal and professional interests in helping students from rural areas succeed in establishing medical careers.

Dr. Ray is the Program Director of Southern Colorado Family Medicine Residency, Chief of Staff at St. Mary Corwin Hospital and long-time SECAHEC board member. During his 15-year tenure as a board member, he has served multiple times as president. His leadership has seen the organization through a number of transitions, including the purchase of a duplex for student housing and the enhancement of programs for attracting rural youth to medical careers. Thanks to Dr. Raye’s role in both SECAHEC and the family residency program, the two organizations have enjoyed a close working relationship. As a graduate of the University of Colorado, he fulfills an important link between the University and SECAHEC programs.

Project TEACH Returns to Pueblo

Project teach (Teaching Equity to Advance Community Health) is “on the road again” and will be offering a free training once more at Colorado State University Pueblo on February 23 and 24, 2011. The program provides one-to-one training and capacity-building to community-based organizations addressing healthy living and access to health care. Modules include: 1) Regional Health Statistics; 2) Community Engagement and Cultural Competence; 3) Program Evaluation; 4) Access to Healthcare; 5) Evidence-Based Interventions; and 6) other topics to increase your capacity to obtain funding for your projects. Project TEACH is funded by a grant from the Office of Health Disparities at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. For more information, please contact SECAHEC Health Educator Eve Muniz Valdez, RN at 719.544.7833.

Asthma Toolkit Project Continues

Springtime will bring another breath of fresh air to the many providers interested in providing their patient populations an evidenced-based program to diagnose, educate and provide care for those with an asthma condition. Healthcare providers in many rural Colorado counties have been trained in using the Asthma Toolkit, and outreach to more practices continues. We have great feedback from counties that did have the training, education and equipment to assess and develop a partnership with their asthmatic patient population. The Asthma Toolkit Project is a collaboration between SECAHEC, National Jewish Health and High Plains Research Network, in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. For more information please contact SECAHEC Health Educator Eve Muniz Valdez at 719.544.7833.
**Invisible Wounds of War: Traumatic Brain Injury Workshop**

During February 2011 WCAHEC, in conjunction with the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Learning and the National Intrepid Center of Excellence, will be hosting *Invisible Wounds of War*, a seminar on traumatic brain injury (TBI). This powerful program provides essential information on TBI and psychological health for healthcare professionals who care for veterans who served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan.

Currently, more than half of all new combat veterans receive care in the civilian healthcare system. This workshop, which is designed for primary care physicians, mental health professionals and others who work with active military, veterans and their families, is intended to see that health care professionals are better-trained to identify and respond to the treatment and cultural needs of returning service members.

This event features two keynote speakers: James P. Kelly, MD, Director of the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) in Bethesda, Maryland. Dr. Kelly is a neurologist and one of America’s top experts on TBI. Dr. Kelly will present up-to-date, accurate information on TBI and rehabilitation to civilian and military audiences across the nation. He is a dynamic speaker who excels at engaging and interacting with his audience. Harold Kudler, MD, is a psychiatrist whose expertise in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) stems from his clinical and research work with combat veterans, ex-prisoners of war, and survivors of other traumatic events. He is Associate Director of Veteran Integrated Service Network 6’s Mental Illness, Research and Clinical Center on deployment of mental health and past Chair of the VA Undersecretary’s Special Committee on PTSD.

*Invisible Wounds of War* will take place on February 24 and 25, 2011 in Grand Junction, Colorado. CME, CNE, and CEU credits will be available. Registration materials and additional information are available at www.wcahec.org or 970.434.5474.

**WCAHEC Welcomes New Program Manager**

Please join WCAHEC in welcoming our new Program Director, Robert (Rob) Dolan. Rob joined WCAHEC in November 2010. His background includes working with Mesa County Department of Human Services providing program coordination, direct case management and support for troubled adolescents and their families. In addition, he has worked as an elementary and middle school instructor, a school district administrator and as a program administrator for an educational consortium managing Federal grants and coordinating services for 10 separate school districts across a 10,000 square mile, intermountain region of Colorado. Rob obtained his BA in Education from Westminster College in Salt Lake City, Utah, and earned his M.Ed. from Adams State College in Alamosa, Colorado. A resident of Western Colorado for over 30 years, Rob loves to swim and, along with constant companion border collie, Molly, revels in all forms of human-powered outdoor activity readily found in our AHEC region.
Refresher Course: RNs Return to Practice in Colorado

The Registered Nurse Online Refresher Course (RNR) was launched by Central Colorado AHEC to promote healthcare professions and to serve Colorado nurses with a desire to return to nursing practice “anywhere and anytime.” A refresher course is required by the State Board of Nursing in order to re-enter clinical practice and renew a nursing license. In accordance with the Board of Nursing, the RNR is an online course focusing on medical surgical content. A person must complete the online component and pass the written exam, at which point they will receive a temporary nursing license allowing them to complete clinical hours. Requirements include completing 80 to 120 clinical hours supervised by a preceptor, and passing the designated skills checklist in order to be granted an unrestricted nursing license from the State Board of Nursing.

A survey was sent to RNR students who had completed the course to assess the outcomes and functionality of the program. The students were asked if the refresher course had adequately prepared them to re-enter nursing practice, using a scale with 1 being “Did not prepare me;” 2 being “I felt somewhat prepared;” and 3 being “I felt very prepared.” The average rating score was 2.5. Regarding clinical experience, 60.7% of the students did not encounter problems finding a clinical placement.

The content of the online program is reviewed every two years for accuracy and alignment with current practice. This survey will help us enhance and modify the program so it will continue to serve nurses and most importantly their patients served. Direct ideas and comments to Gloria Nussbaum, Program Director at Gloria@centralcoahec.org

Colorado Trust Health Professions Scholar Bree Almgren

Colorado Trust Health Profession scholarship recipient Bree Almgren, RN, BSN plans to use her scholarship from the Colorado Trust to pursue training as a family nurse practitioner. Born and raised in rural Nebraska, Bree is familiar with the life and trials of rural America. Bree has been drawn to a career of service to this population. Personal experience has given her the roots of her passion, and this scholarship has given her the means to achieve her goals. Bree’s teaching of nursing students in Delta, Colorado and volunteering at the Montrose Medical Mission for four years solidified her education path. As a Nurse Practitioner she will be able to provide direct care to rural and underserved people. Knowing that this type of nursing will not bring a top-dollar salary, nor will her hours be short and convenient, Bree sees this as an attractive lifestyle. She will be where she wants to be, with those she cares deeply about. Bree represents the ideal scholarship recipient. Scholars in medicine, nursing, pharmacy and other health professions receive two-year, $30,000.00 scholarships to assist them in their tuition payments. In return, they agree to work in rural or urban underserved areas for a minimum of two years. For further information about the Colorado Trust’s scholarship program, please see our website, www.centralcoahec.org.
Learning Education is a mix of education and service to the organizations, and allows our students to learn much more than they give. Colorado AHEC Service Learning Education projects are chosen from a host of options, each one unique to the local needs and opportunities. Students may teach a class at the local high school, volunteer at a health fair, provide services at a homeless shelter, or staff the registration and exhibits at a local healthcare fundraiser. High school and college students who participate in Colorado AHEC summer programs participate in service learning as well. Colorado AHEC seeks to help instill a sense of community service in all our programs and activities.

Throughout this issue of *Health Matters* you will get a glimpse of some of our Service Learning projects; a health fair in Pueblo, medical talks in a Wray high school, germs and health in a kindergarten. Look for Colorado AHEC students in your town. Invite them to your organization. Help get them out of the office and into your community. Colorado AHEC is service learning. We hope to serve you soon.

Jack Westfall, MD

*Program Director, Colorado AHEC Program*

**FASD: January is Birth Defects Prevention Month**

If you are a women of childbearing age, whether you are planning a pregnancy or not, it is important to know the facts about how alcohol, drugs and tobacco can affect the developing fetus. Did you know that half of the pregnancies in the United States are unintended? If you are not planning a pregnancy, it is recommended that women of childbearing age take steps to avoid exposing a fetus to alcohol and other harmful drugs. This means taking steps to prevent unintended pregnancies, changing harmful behaviors or both.

Many individuals who are exposed to prenatal alcohol suffer across the lifespan. They often have difficulty with education, social/emotional/behavioral development, lack cause and effect thinking and struggle as adults to live independently and have stable employment.

How can you help prevent this disorder? First, if you are a woman of childbearing age, drink below risk levels, or prevent unintended pregnancies. If you are pregnant, don’t drink or get help if you are unable to stop drinking. If you are a friend or relative provide support around the behavior changes needed to prevent this lifelong disability. To get the facts or if you need more information, go to www.ucdenver.edu/life/services/AHEC/ProgramAreas/cofas

What are the birth defects caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy? Alcohol use during pregnancy is the leading known cause of preventable developmental disabilities in the United States. Alcohol is a teratogen that is harmful to a developing fetus. Many forms of birth defects can occur, including: mental retardation; developmental disabilities; malformations of the skeletal system, organs, nerves and brain; abnormal facial features; small size.
What the Heck is CREATE Health?

CREATE Health aims to serve as Colorado’s expert on the health career pipeline – serving as the center of knowledge as to: a) which organizations are offering what types of health career development and educational programming; b) what elements in these programs prove most effective; and c) what resources are needed to enhance and better coordinate the health career and educational pipeline in Colorado. Funded by a grant from The Colorado Health Foundation, the program is run by Project Director Vincent Atchity, Ph.D.

The larger project of CREATE Health will begin to take form early in 2011, as the director begins to assemble the CREATE Health Advisory Council.

The advisory council for CREATE Health will consist of members representing many different regions of the state. In composing the council, the aim is to build on pre-existing interest in health career pipeline development and to extend that interest into other influential sectors so that the state’s need may be more widely understood, and our goals promoted widely.

The CREATE Health project got underway in summer 2010 with the inauguration of the month-long intensive portion of the CREATE Health Scholars Program, coordinated by Jennifer Hellier, Ph.D. The aim of this health career college enrichment program is to provide year-round support and encouragement for undergraduate rural and/or ethnically and culturally diverse students hoping to pursue graduate education in medicine, dentistry, and/or behavioral health. The 21 attendees of last summer’s program were undergraduate students from throughout the state of Colorado. During the program, the students enhanced their basic math and science core knowledge, improved their essay and personal statement writings, and immersed themselves in hands-on practica (e.g., dissection, suturing, cadaver lab, CPR and first aid training, and EMT training) and volunteer activities. The experience that the CREATE Health Scholars enjoyed the most was the job-shadow day. The scholars were matched with University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus physicians,

Above and right: CREATE Health students enjoy hands-on learning

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What the Heck is CREATE Health?

surgeons, neurologists, pharmacists, physician assistants, researchers and third-year dentistry students, giving the scholars the opportunity to learn about a day-in-the-life of each of their chosen professions.

In Summer 2011, The CREATE Health team will build on this auspicious beginning; two sessions of the CREATE Health Scholars Program are currently planned, including a larger cohort in each session, from a wider range of Colorado colleges.

CREATE Health is also in the process of designing, building, and implementing a data management system that will serve as the inventory of Colorado’s health career pipeline initiatives and track the movement of students through the pipeline.

Centers of Excellence in Rural Training

The mission of the Centers of Excellence in Rural Training (CERT) program is to increase the number and variety of healthcare professionals who choose to live and work in rural areas of Colorado. Colorado is largely a rural state (43 of our 64 counties are rural or frontier). While 20% of our population is rural, only about 12% of our physicians live in rural areas, and similar disparities exist for other healthcare professions. A mission of the professional schools at the Anschutz Medical Campus (and the School of Medicine’s Department of Family Medicine in particular) is to increase the number of physicians who locate in rural areas. Providing professional students the opportunity to “fully experience” rural culture increases the likelihood that they will choose a career in rural healthcare. That experience must be with rural providers who are enthusiastic about their own practice and lifestyle and are eager to teach. The community must also be welcoming to students and be interested in attracting them back after they complete their training.

Through the CERT program, resources provided by the community are enhanced with resources provided by the Health Sciences Center to supercharge the learning environment of selected rural sites.

For more information about the CERT Program, please contact Mark Deutchman, MD, Rural Track Director at Mark.Deutchman@ucdenver.edu

Please Note: The CERT Program was featured in the Fort Morgan Times in December 2010. To read the article, please visit: http://www.fortmorgantimes.com/ci_16903446