22nd Annual San Luis Valley Women’s Conference

The San Luis Valley’s 22nd Annual Women’s Conference took place on Thursday, May 13, 2010 at Adams State College Center. This year’s theme was “Celebrating Self through Story, Movement and Sound.” Seven San Luis Valley women were honored: Janice Holman, of the Victims Advocate Program; Mary Lamb, volunteer with the Salvation Army and food bank; Joanna Visser, victims’ advocate and volunteer with the Tu Casa shelter for abused women; Erin Smith, volunteer with a number of area agencies; Margaret Jones, an RN who retired after many years of service to the San Luis Valley Medical Center; Donna Beck, volunteer with a number of agencies in the Antonito area; and Rhonda Ashurst, Women’s Conference planning committee member.

The event featured presentations by: storyteller Paula Brooke; poet Peggy Godfrey; musician Leigh Anne Phillips; mental health advocate Mary Van Pelt; Kelly Kerns, massage therapist and dancer; Angela Bedard, geneticist; Marcia van de Boogard, nutritionist; and Michelle Valdez, women’s health nurse practitioner.

Exhibit booths at the conference featured local artists and health information agencies. In addition, the Valley Wide Health Systems Heart and Eagle Mobile Unit was parked outside the Adams State College Student Union Building, with a physician providing patient education and medical tests at little or no charge.

The conference was sponsored by the San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center, Hospice del Valle, Alamosa State Bank, San Luis Valley HMO and San Luis Valley Federal Bank.
From the Director
Jack Westfall, MD
What the Heck’s an AHEC?

The Colorado AHEC is all about students. Colorado AHEC provides programs for elementary school children, introducing them to healthcare providers through an interactive and engaging puppet show. Our junior high activities include science fairs and interacting with standardized patients. High school students spend time in summer and year-long programs exploring health careers, visiting the Anschutz Medical Campus, working with our simulators, standardized patients and cadaver lab. We host residential health career camps. Just this year our college student programs kicked off the CREATE Health Summer Scholar program with college students from all over Colorado enjoying a month on campus exploring the vast array of health career jobs, receiving additional education in math and science and getting ready for professional school applications, personal statements and interviews. Once in the health professions schools the Colorado AHEC continues to offer programs for students, including scholarships.

From the Librarian’s Desk
July brings us two timely summer health observances: National UV Safety Month and National Fireworks Eye Safety Month. For information on keeping this sunny Colorado summer safe as well as fun, please visit these health information websites:

Nemours Kids Health Sun Safety
http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/outdoor/sun_safety.html

Environmental Protection Agency’s SunWise Program
http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/index.html

Prevent Blindness America
http://preventblindness.org/safety/fireworksafety.html

American Academy of Ophthalmic Executives
http://www.aao.org/aaoesite/eyemd/uv.cfm

Health Matters

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WCAHEC and Colorado Epilepsy Foundation Partnership Provides EMS Training

Western Colorado AHEC’s partnership with the Colorado Epilepsy Foundation is bringing new and exciting educational experiences to the Western Slope: Recently the Colorado Epilepsy Foundation was awarded a grant to become the trial state for a First Responders: EMS Personnel Training program. This training program is an in-depth study of Epilepsy and seizure management specifically tailored to emergency medical services (EMS), firefighters and others that may be the first on the scene in the event of an emergency.

There has been a great deal of interest in the program; trainings have already been scheduled for area ambulance and fire department employees, and additional trainings are being planned for this summer. We plan to schedule trainings with all of the first responders in all Western Slope communities.

As a pilot program, the success of our work in Colorado could see this particular training being adopted nationwide. We anticipate a great response to this program, providing increased awareness and understanding of Epilepsy, an often-overlooked neurological disorder that affects 47,000 Coloradans.

Introducing WCAHEC’s New Education Coordinator

Western Colorado AHEC (WCAHEC) would like to introduce Brandy Hinkle, our new Program Director and Education Coordinator. Brandy is a graduate of Montana State University. Her professional experience includes being a middle and high school teacher, a Prevention Educator for the Western Colorado AIDS project and a Health Educator for the Mesa County Health Department.

Brandy will be involved in grant-writing, public health projects and program management. She is looking forward to becoming a part of the Colorado AHEC network.

In addition to her work at WCAHEC, Brandy enjoys being outdoors, hiking, camping, and whitewater rafting which she has been able to do in the Mesa County region for the last five years. Brandy is a wonderful addition to the WCAHEC staff and we are looking forward to the exciting tasks that she will be taking on.
A Good Time Was Had By All...“Golden Stethoscope” Awards

On May 19th, University of Colorado Denver medical students honored their favorite preceptors at the first annual “Golden Stethoscope” award banquet. Held at the Red Lion Hotel in Denver, 26 doctors were nominated for the award which represented the gratitude of the students, as well as clinical excellence in the practice of medicine. The selection committee had the difficult task of elevating nine of those nominated to “awardee” status and presented them with an engraved crystal trophy to mark their achievement. The doctors honored were: Camela Billic, Best Family Medicine Preceptor; Matthew Breeden, Best OB/GYN Preceptor; Kerry Broderick, Best All Around Preceptor; Jeffrey Cook, Best Role Model Preceptor; Alberto Denegri, Best Patient/Physician Communication; Kristin Furfari, Best Internal Medicine Preceptor; Jason Haukoos, Best Emergency Medicine Preceptor; Peter Knott, Best Pediatric Preceptor; Laurence Robbins, Best Physical Exam Preceptor; and Shandra Wilson, Best Specialty Preceptor.

The event was sponsored by the University of Colorado, Denver School of Medicine in cooperation with the Foundations of Doctoring and Colorado AHEC. Featured speaker Dr. Steven Lowenstein, Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs praised the clinical faculty for their dedication to the practice of medicine and fostering students by their knowledge and example. Drs. Brittany Anderson, Wendy Madigosky and Jack Westfall welcomed the preceptors and guests to what all know will be an annual event. A special touch was added by the attendance of Dr. Richard Krugman, Vice Chancellor and Dean of the School of Medicine, who also expressed his appreciation to the clinical instructors honored at the event.

Central Colorado AHEC Executive Director Kris Wenzel took the lead in coordinating the event and remarked about the genuine pride that shone in the faces of the physicians as their students took the microphone and recounted the lessons they learned from their remarkable teachers!

Special Two For One at the Boys & Girls Club

Adam Fox, Health Outreach and Enrollment Coordinator for the J. Churchill Owen Boys and Girls Club in Denver invited Central Colorado AHEC (CAHEC) staff to participate in their 9Health Fair in the Classroom. Tamica Pinkey, CAHEC’s Youth Specialist Assistant, and School of Medicine student Shane Cook provided information and education about healthcare careers for more than 600 students. Students enjoyed the Health Care Career Challenge Wheel and interacting with Shane and Tamica. Shane contributed his expertise and time as part of his community service learning for the School of Medicine, meeting the need of this unique community of youth in sharing about healthy living activities and about a career in Medicine. The event was definitely a plus for all who participated.
How will the new Health Care reform legislation impact Colorado communities? This was the topic of a lunch meeting May 12 at the Fremont Campus of Pueblo Community College where approximately 20 people gathered to learn and participate in the discussion. The meeting was convened by Southeastern Colorado Area Health Education Center (SECAHEC) in partnership with Pueblo Community College, Fremont Campus, using funds from Colorado Trust Health Advocacy and Policy Grant.

Panel members included Iris Clark, Executive Director, SECAHEC; Cathy Corum, Nursing Coordinator of Pueblo Community College; Diane Madsen, Pueblo Community College Nursing Faculty; and Phyllis Hall, Hildebrandt Long-Term Care Center.

Using material developed for Colorado Conversations by TAG Strategies, participants learned that some 32 million individuals nationwide would become insured under the new federal healthcare legislation through various mechanisms. In Colorado by 2014, an estimated 200,000 will become insured: Colorado Medicaid eligibility for parents of dependent children, 27,618; Medicaid expansion, 119,104 in 2012 and 52,676 in 2014. An additional 63,851 Coloradoans, primarily undocumented immigrants and low income workers, will remain uninsured in 2014.

Panel members discussed the health care workforce issues that may accompany the increase in insured residents. Not only is it difficult to find experienced workers in the rural areas like Canon City, the capacity of the health professions programs is limited by the number of faculty available. Comments were made suggesting that efforts to retain workers and faculty were as important as recruiting them. Additionally, public education regarding the realities of rural healthcare is needed.

“These conversations have been helpful in raising awareness of health care issues in our rural communities,” notes Iris Clark. “SECAHEC continues to schedule conversations relating to health care access and coverage in our rural communities.”
Colorado Conversations for Better Health Care Policy

Thanks to a generous grant from The Colorado Trust, the San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center (SLVAHEC) is participating in the “Colorado Conversations for Better Health Care Policy” program, conducting meetings with San Luis Valley community members in an attempt to learn about their feelings and/or concerns regarding health care coverage in the state. As one audience member commented, “Good luck trying to zero in on this moving target.” That may have been a somewhat accurate statement; however, these “Conversations” have generated great discussions which may lead to the establishment of health advocacy groups.

Colorado Immersion Training in Community Engagement

The San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center (SLVAHEC), in collaboration with the Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center, participated in the Colorado Immersion Training in Community Engagement Program on May 4th through 6th in the San Luis Valley. The SLVAHEC welcomed four participants visiting the San Luis Valley from the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus: Ben Miller, PsyD, Assistant Professor, Department of Family Medicine; Linda Overholser, MD, Department of Internal Medicine; Tom Clagett, Colorado AHEC Student/Research Assistant; and Leli Pedro, DNSc, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing. Community engagement is essential to translating research into clinical practice and ultimately improving the health and well-being of the population. This program provided perspective, education and training to these academic researchers early in their careers in community engagement research as they toured rural towns across the valley. This program is within the scope of the parent CTSA program.

SLVAHEC Adopts New Logo

The San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center (SLVAHEC) was established in 1978 as one of the first Area Health Education Centers in the state of Colorado. It has certainly enjoyed a great working relationship with the healthcare workforce, numerous human service agencies, the business sector and citizenry of the valley. For 32 years, the SLVAHEC carried its agency brand on its logo developed by local staff members. In April 2010, the SLVAHEC officially changed its agency logo reflecting a more contemporary look (please see logo at the top of this page).
SLVAHEC Welcomes New Epilepsy Outreach Worker

San Luis Valley AHEC, in collaboration with the Colorado Epilepsy Foundation, is proud to welcome our new epilepsy outreach worker: Shawn Elliot, MSN, is now available to provide education and resource information services to the communities of the San Luis Valley. Her 21 years of nursing, mostly in pediatrics, will serve the San Luis Valley community well. Shawn will work with school districts, law enforcement, health care workforce, human services agencies and community groups in delivering education awareness on the illness of epilepsy. The SLVAHEC is excited to have Shawn on board.

Right: Shawn Elliot, MSN

Southern Colorado Clinical Nurse Scholars Program

A three-day program is being offered for nurses interested in teaching and/or precepting nursing students in the clinical setting. The program is highly interactive and uses “best practices” in educational theory and adult learning. Participants in the program will increase their level of confidence and competence in providing clinical instruction to nursing students who precept at their health care facility. The program is a collaboration between San Luis Valley AHEC, Southeastern Colorado AHEC (SECA-HEC), St. Mary Corwin Medical Center, San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center, Parkview Medical Center, CSU Pueblo, Pueblo Community College, Trinidad State Junior College, Adams State College, Otero Junior College and Lamar Community College. This program is offered in Pueblo through the SECAHEC and will be offered in Fall 2010 in the San Luis Valley. For more information call Iris Clark, SECAHEC, at 719-544-7833 or Charlotte Ledonne, SLVAHEC, at 719-589-4977.

The Colorado Trust Health Professions Scholarships

Thanks to a generous grant from The Colorado Trust, the Colorado AHEC System was able to select 20 Colorado healthcare professionals who are currently in a master’s level training (or higher) to receive a scholarship to help further their education. Four of those selected were from the San Luis Valley: Sandra Mohamed, RCN-Ob, BSN, SANE-A; Lynne Nash, RN, BSN; Kimberly Chacon, RN, BSN; and Denise Trujillo, RN, BSN were selected as recipients of the 2009-2011 Health Professions Scholars Program sponsored by the Colorado AHEC System and the San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center. A banquet took place on March 6, 2010 at the Downtown Denver Marriott to honor this year’s scholars.

Left to right: Sandra Mohamed, Lynne Nash, Freddie Jaquez of SLVAHEC, Kimberly Chacon and Denise Trujillo

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Centennial AHEC Partners with Big Horn Leadership

Representatives from a diverse group of rural agencies met recently in Sterling to discuss how to promote health and increase access to care in Northeastern Colorado. Leaders from Aims Community College, Centennial Mental Health, Colorado Plains Medical Center, Northeast Colorado Health Department, Northeastern Junior College, Plains Medical Center Rural Communities Resource Center and Rural Solutions spent a weekend learning, sharing and brainstorming in a meeting facilitated by Brenda Morrison of Big Horn and Chris Adams of TAG Strategies.

Nutrition and oral health, with an emphasis on preventive measures, were identified as priority concerns. Specific ideas ranged from working with schools to community gardens. Most participants have agreed to continue the discussion with Centennial AHEC’s Sally Henry and Denise Denton facilitating. The goal is a community action plan – or maybe two!

Our deepest thanks to The Colorado Trust’s Health Advocacy initiative for generously funding community discussions that will lead to better health for all Coloradans.

Introducing Centennial AHEC’s Daniels Scholar Emilia Cintron

Sally Henry, Executive Director, Centennial AHEC, is delighted to announce that Emilia Cintron of Ault is a 2010 Daniels Scholar! Emilia, a graduate of Evans High School, is a stand-out participant in our health careers program and will be a role model and counselor for future attendees.

One hundred ninety-four Colorado high school seniors who have demonstrated strong character and a determination to succeed in life were named this year’s Daniels Scholars and will receive funding to attend the college or university of their choice. The Daniels Fund mission states: “In the benevolent and entrepreneurial spirit of our founder, Bill Daniels, our mission is to partner with individuals, organizations, and communities to recognize inherent value, develop abilities, and provide opportunities in order to fulfill our collective potential.” Bill Daniels, a pioneer in cable television, had a passion for investing in deserving students to help them obtain a college education.

Emilia found Colorado AHEC’s 2009 Summer Health Careers Institute online while doing a search for nursing opportunities. Her demonstrated leadership skills, extensive community service and strong academic record combined with her confident presence in an intensive interview process led to this success. Additionally, at least four other agencies have rewarded her with college funding.

Emilia Cintron
Daniels Scholar

When she completes her Bachelors of Science in Nursing from University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Emilia will be just the second college grad in her family. The first was her older sister who graduated from CSU last year. Not only is Emilia herself excited, she says her mom is “freaking out!”
Introducing Southwestern Colorado AHEC

Colorado AHEC is delighted to announce the development of the new Southwest AHEC office (SWAHEC). Located in Durango, the SWAHEC office serves Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, LaPlata, Montezuma, Ouray, San Juan and San Miguel counties under the leadership of its new director, Emily Burns, MD, MSPH.

Emily brings a strong public health background to the leadership of SWAHEC. She is a board-certified preventive medicine physician and a faculty member in the Department of Epidemiology at the Colorado School of Public Health. She has been conducting epidemiologic and community-based smoking cessation research during the past four years and plans to continue several of her research projects. Having conducted her research via telecommuting from Durango for four years, Emily is looking forward to delving into her local community through AHEC work.

Several projects are currently underway in southwest Colorado which present exciting collaborative opportunities for SWAHEC. A Community Health Care Capacity Project funded through the Colorado Health Foundation is in the implementation stages of some cutting edge recommendations. Recommendations include establishing a regional health care alliance, planning for a Federally-Qualified Health Center, establishing community care teams, and developing a single source service eligibility program. SWAHEC is exploring grant funding and offering consultation to assist with this implementation process. Local interest is also high for increasing preceptorships in primary care settings as well as in public health. Emily is liaising with the Colorado School of Public Health to determine regional needs and projections for public health practicum sites. Additionally, Emily will be offering an Epidemiology/Statistics seminar at the Public Health 101 training presented by the Public Health Alliance of Colorado in Durango, Colorado on June 17, 2010.

In sum, SWAHEC is launching fairly rapidly, in large part due to the strong community efforts that already exist in this region. Emily's passion lies in bridging research and evidence with the community to augment both sides of the coin that she works on. This is the role that she will build for SWAHEC to improve the health of southwest Colorado and to strengthen the wonderful Colorado AHEC system.

For more information, you can contact Emily at emily.burns@swahec.org or 970-403-0037.
service learning opportunities, mentoring and tutoring to assure their success and the success of students throughout the pipeline. The Colorado AHEC works with diverse students from all over Colorado with the goal of getting them excited about health careers to provide the best care to Coloradans in rural and urban underserved communities. Our summer newsletter highlights many of these student programs and activities. You can learn about: Emilia Cintron and her plans to become a nurse; the Colorado AHEC collaboration with Rocky Vista University and University of Colorado School of Medicine at Cinco de Mayo; CPR at the Summer Health Careers Institute; medical students honoring their preceptors with the “Golden Stethoscope” awards; boys and girls club adventures; AHEC Colorado Trust scholarship winners; and CREATE Health scholars. Take a look. Read about these great opportunities. Send your students to these programs. Give us a call and get involved.

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 around 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 FASDay 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. Any time 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 at: 888-724-FASD (3273).
Colorado AHEC Cinco de Mayo Denver Health Professions Collaborative

During the 2010 Cinco de Mayo Denver festival, the Colorado Area Health Education Center (AHEC) partnered with Rocky Vista University of Osteopathic Medicine (RVU) and The University of Colorado School of Medicine to provide free adult and child health screenings. This collaborative event brought together students, faculty and staff from both schools to screen nearly 650 adults and 127 children. Under the supervision of faculty from both schools, students provided 174 hours and all volunteers provided 83 hours. Training for the event was offered at both Rocky Vista University and University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus.

In regards to student education, 100% of student volunteers surveyed agreed, “this experience increased my desire to work with an underserved population.” One RVU student commented, “The majority of patients I visited with had either zero medical care or very little coverage. This experience helped remind me why we all spend so much time studying and learning – there are people who need care and we can help in a simple, tangible way.”

As a free service, adults at the festival were offered on-site screening for blood pressure, blood sugar (glucose) and body mass index assessment. Youth participated in the interactive Heart Smart Kids cardiovascular risk assessment and parents were given a sheet with a few goals for improvement.

Of the nearly 650 adults screened, 43.5% were uninsured and 16.5% had not seen a health care provider in over two years. In our years of providing free health screenings at the Cinco de Mayo Denver festival, the Colorado AHEC continues to enhance the delivery of health care services throughout the state, with special emphasis on underserved populations.
Summer Health Careers Institute

One hundred high school students, including participants from 65 different high schools and over 58 Colorado communities, will attend The Summer Health Career Institute (SHCI) this year. Week one was held June 6-11th, 2010 on the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, in Aurora Colorado. Week two will be held July 18-23, 2010. Over 270 applications from around the state were received for this year’s Institute. Each Regional AHEC Center selects 20 students from the applications received from students in their region. The generous funding from The Colorado Trust Foundation allowed students the opportunity for unique exposure to numerous medical careers as well as housing at a nearby college.

The purpose of this institute is to provide rural underserved and underrepresented high school students an opportunity to learn about healthcare and science-based career opportunities. Students are given first responder training with real world simulations. One day of the week is devoted to career learning experiences, which allow students to shadow a preceptor in the career field of their interest. This experience is one of the most valuable and eye-opening for the students. Students are exposed to dentistry by practicing oral exams, to physical therapy through ultrasound and casting, and to surgery by practicing suturing. Financial aid, college application help, and pre-health advisors are just a few of the resources available to students throughout the week.

This one-week intensive program is part of a year-long program to mentor students as they pursue a health career pathway. Throughout the year students remain connected by way of a Facebook group that allows SHCI participants to stay in contact with each other, mentors and faculty advisors. Participants are provided opportunities to take part in activities in their region through their local Regional AHEC Center. For more information please visit our website at: (http://www.ucdenver.edu/life/services/AHEC/ProgramAreas/HealthProfessionsWorkforceInitiative/SummerHealthCareersInstitute/Pages/SummerHealthCareersInstitute.aspx).

Summer Health Careers Institute is generously sponsored by a grant from the Colorado Trust Foundation.