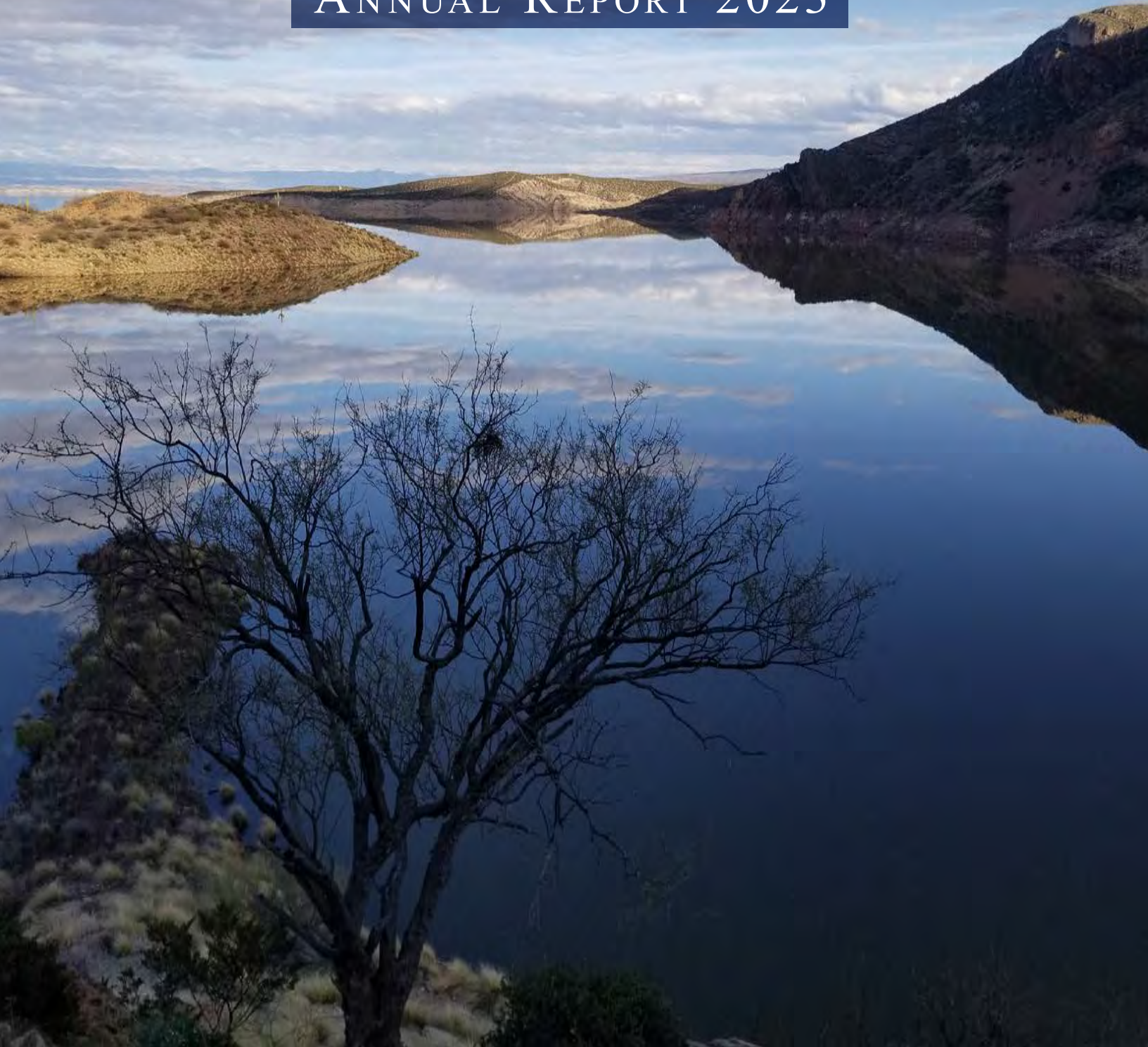




THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Arizona AHEC
Area Health Education Centers

ANNUAL REPORT 2023





Arizona AHEC Program Mission Statement:

To enhance access to quality health care, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of health care professionals through academic community educational partnerships in rural and urban medically underserved areas.

We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O’odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.

Congress authorized the Federal Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program in 1971 (PL III-148 § 751 PHSA). There are now 56 AHEC Programs and 235 Regional Centers in 48 U.S. states and territories. In 1984, Andy Nichols, MD, founded the Arizona Area Health Education Center (AzAHEC) Program in Tucson with the first AzAHEC Regional Center opening in Nogales. Today, six AzAHEC Regional Centers support health professions education through Community Based Experiential Training (CBET) rotations, continuing education events, and local health workforce development.

AzAHEC Program Personnel

Dan Derksen, MD, Senior Advisor and Principal Investigator
Leila Barraza, JD, MPH, Director and Co-Investigator
Jennifer Zuñiga, BA, Associate Director
Sonia Cota-Robles, JD, PhD, Evaluation Specialist
Edgardo Figueroa, BA, Program Manager
Nicole Paredes, MEd, Program Manager
Amanda Perkins, MEd, CPA, Assistant Finance Director
Colleen Reed, BA, Program Coordinator, Sr.
Marni Valenzuela, MPH, Program Manager

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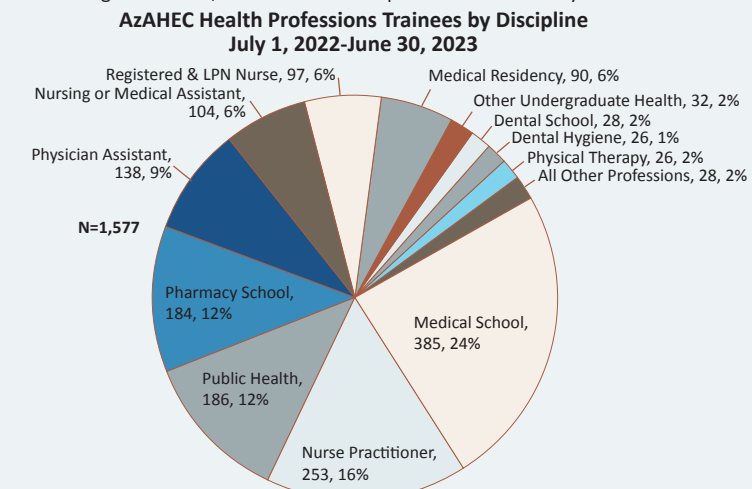
12,243 individuals participated in the following activities:

Nearly 1,600 trainees participated in 3,055 Rural and Urban Underserved Health Professions Community Based Experiential Training (CBET) Rotations

From July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, the Arizona AHEC Program supported the following unduplicated CBET Rotations in AzaHEC Regional Centers, Rural Health Professions Programs and Residency Programs for nearly 490,000 contact hours:

Trainee Academic Discipline/Program	# of unique Trainees*	# of Field Experiences
Dental Resident	5	5
Medical Resident	90	348
Pharmacy Resident	4	4
Podiatry Resident	2	2
Dentistry	28	30
Dietitian	3	3
Medicine	385	894
Pharmacy	184	368
Nurse Practitioner	253	488
Nurse Midwife	4	4
Physical Therapy	26	27
Physician Assistant	138	396
Public Health	186	194
Social Work	4	5
Other Graduate Health-Related Disciplines	3	3
Dental Hygiene	26	32
Nursing or Medical Assistant	104	106
Phlebotomy Technician	3	3
Registered Nurse & Licensed Practical Nurse	97	111
Other Undergraduate Health-Related Disciplines	32	32
Total	1,577	3,055

*Unique health professional trainees receiving AzaHEC field experience support through AzAHEC Regional Center, RHPP or South Campus Medical Residency.



In 2022–23, AzaHEC Program Office, the six AzAHEC Regional Centers and nine Rural Health Professions Programs at UArizona, NAU, and ASU have continued to provide community-based interprofessional education in new and innovative ways. I congratulate them on their unwavering commitment to rural and urban underserved communities across the State of Arizona.



Michael D. Dake, MD
Senior Vice President for Health Sciences

Youth (K–16) Health Career Preparation Programs in Rural and Urban Underserved Areas: 4,854 participants

Participants in Health Career Preparation Programs included 765 Grade 9–16 students in health career structured programs, inclusive of students sponsored or co-sponsored by AzaHEC Regional Centers and by UAHS Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Summer Programs. Health Career Preparation Programs have an established curriculum and meet with participants for a minimum of 20 hours to learn about health career opportunities. Participants in *Health Career Events* included 4,089 students and adults (parents, teachers and others) who participated in short-term events, including health career informational sessions sponsored or co-sponsored by AzaHEC Regional Centers.

Health Professions Continuing Education Participants: 4,748 Trainees

Participants at 143 continuing education and professional development events included 4,748 physicians, dentists, public health and allied health professionals, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and physician assistants. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of these events resulted in the issuance of Continuing Medical Education, Continuing Nursing Education, or other required continuing education credits for 3,092 health professionals to maintain health professional licensure.

Community Health Education Events: 1,064 Participants

Regional Centers coordinated and supported health information activities and events for 1,064 local community members throughout Arizona’s rural and urban underserved communities.

Since 1984, the Arizona Area Health Education Centers (AzaHEC) Program has served Arizona through health professions workforce recruitment, training and retention in its rural and urban underserved communities.

The 2022–23 AzaHEC Annual report highlights progress and achievements over the last 12 months. A total of 1,577 health profession trainees completed 487,144 training hours at over 40 universities and residency programs. Trainees participated in 3,055 Community Based Experiential Training (CBET) rotations in collaboration with Arizona’s six AHEC Regional Centers, nine Rural Health Professions Programs (RHPPs) from the state’s three public universities, and graduate medical education (GME) residency programs at Banner University Medical Center South (BUMC-S) and North Country HealthCare (also known as the Colorado Plateau Center for Health Professions).

The AHEC Scholars Program (ASP), a two-year interprofessional education program that selects RHPP students for additional community experiential learning, congratulated ninety-five (95) AHEC Scholars from the 2021–23 cohort who completed the program in May 2023. In Fall 2023, seventy-six (76) AHEC Scholars from the 2022–24 cohort will begin their second year of the program and are scheduled for completion in May 2024. Recruitment is in progress for AzaHEC’s sixth cohort (2023–25) of Scholars. Each cohort gained greater knowledge through interprofessional curricula with specific didactic and community-based training activities focused on rural and/or urban underserved communities.

Continuing education events for working health professionals remains a core AzaHEC activity. Each Regional Center identifies and addresses this need, resulting in 143 continuing education events across all regions offered to 4,748 health professionals over the last year.

The AzaHEC Regional Centers hosted health career programs with a structured curriculum for 765 students in Grades 9–12. The AzaHEC Regional Centers provided health education information to 4,089 elementary through high school students and to 1,064 community members on

Sincerely,

Leila Barraza, JD, MPH
Director and Co-Investigator, AzaHEC Program
Associate Professor, Zuckerman College of Public Health
The University of Arizona Health Sciences



Colorado Plateau Center for Health Professions (CPCHP) Medical Residency Director Dr. Sarah Coles and Dr. Erinn Gallagher (L) were mentors to the inaugural Future Faces of Family Medicine Program.

health-related topics.

On June 1, 2023, AzaHEC welcomed a new Regional Center, the Center for Excellence in Rural Education (CERE-AHEC) on June 1, 2023. CERE-AHEC will support the eastern Arizona counties of Graham, Greenlee, and Graham.

AzaHEC ended its fiscal year by receiving exciting news of a \$5 million non-lapsing appropriation by the State of Arizona for a Graduate Medical Education (GME) initiative. The initiative will provide support to establish GME primary care residency programs at qualifying community health centers, rural health clinics, Indian Health Service and tribal-run (P.L. 638 Self-determination) health facilities that support and expand the number of primary care (i.e., family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, pediatric internal medicine, psychiatry, obstetrics and gynecology, geriatrics, and general surgery) residency positions in Arizona’s rural areas and health professional shortage areas (HPSAs).

On behalf of the Arizona AHEC Program, we thank our federal partners, providers and collaborators and educators from across the state in carrying out our mission “To enhance access to quality health care, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of health care professionals through academic community educational partnerships in rural and urban medically underserved areas.”

Daniel Derksen, MD
Senior Advisor & PI, AzaHEC Program
Associate Vice President
Office of the Senior VP for Health Sciences
The University of Arizona

AzaAHEC Program Overview

About the Arizona AHEC Program (AzaAHEC)

- Initiated in 1984 with the first AzaAHEC Regional Center opening in Nogales to recruit, train and retain a primary care workforce committed to helping underserved populations.
- Expanded in 2022 to a total of six AHEC Regional Centers serving all 15 Arizona counties and 22 American Indian Tribes.
- Housed in the UArizona Health Sciences Office of the Senior Vice President as a Sponsored Project.
- Enacted under Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §§ 15-1643, 15-1644, 15-1645, and 5-572(C).
- Funded by federal and required non-federal matching funds.
- Continued to meet the required non-federal match with State of Arizona lottery funds resulting from a citizen ballot initiative directing support to the AzaAHEC Program and Regional Centers.

Structure

The University of Arizona (UArizona) in Tucson administers the AzaAHEC Program and has formal contracts with the AzaAHEC Regional Centers located strategically statewide. The AzaAHEC Program and Regional Centers conduct the mission, goals, objectives, and work plan by creating, coordinating, and implementing a scope of work each year designed to address the health professions education and training needs within each Regional Center service area. Following federal guidelines and as required by state procurement guidelines, the Regional Centers undergo a periodic formal competing continuation Request for Proposal process staggered such that one or two RFPs are evaluated per year.

The AzaAHEC Program Director (Leila Barraza, JD, MPH) consults regularly with the AzaAHEC Advisory Commission, who represent health educators, health professionals, and community members serving and/or living in rural and urban medically underserved Arizona communities. Other committees involve faculty, staff, and students at participating health professions colleges at Arizona's three public universities under the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) authority: Arizona State University (ASU), Northern Arizona University (NAU), and UArizona. Formal reports are submitted regularly to the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) and annually to ABOR and the Arizona State Legislature.

AzaAHEC Focus Areas 2022–23

The AzaAHEC Program and Regional Centers expanded state-wide efforts to strengthen Arizona's health professions workforce pathways to practice including students in Grades K–16, post-secondary health professions students, and health professionals from many disciplines. Regional Centers supported activities to promote health awareness in their communities.

Health Professions Trainee Education: The AzaAHEC Program, Rural Health Profession Programs (RHPPs), AzaAHEC Regional Centers, and Graduate Medical Education (GME, aka residency training) supported clinical rotations throughout Arizona. Dedicated, experienced preceptors and strong academic partnerships with colleges and universities provided high quality community-based education. Some trainees received housing, travel, and other related expense support for experiences in remote areas.

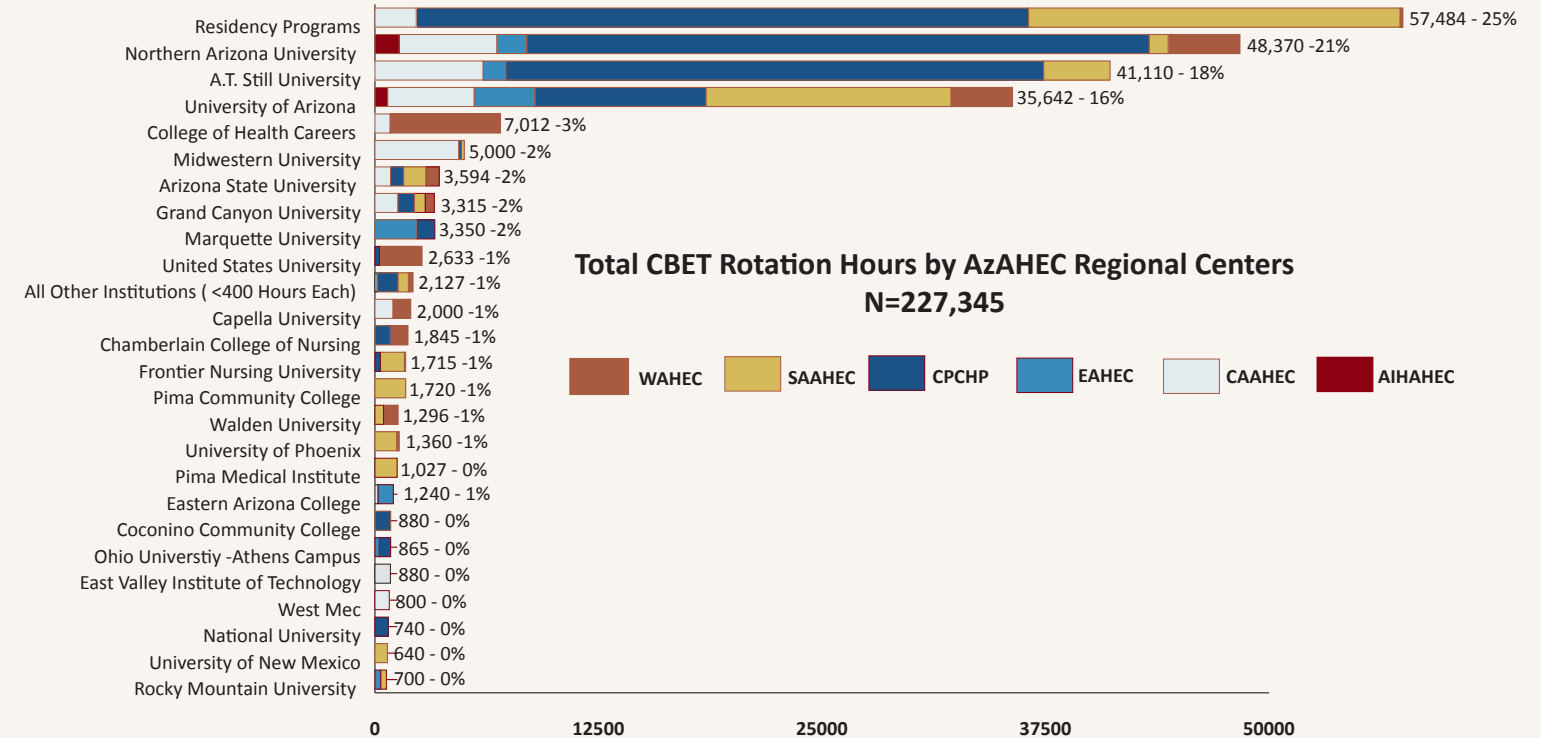
AzaAHEC Scholars: The 2021–23 Scholar cohort completed their two-year program; a 2022–24 Scholar cohort was accepted and had community immersion experiences at their assigned AzaAHEC Regional Center. In addition to their health profession trainee education, Scholars get advanced, interprofessional community-based experiences in AHEC Regional Center communities and Rural Health Professions Programs. Faculty mentors nominated by AzaAHEC Regional Centers provided AzaAHEC Scholars with continuity and guidance throughout the two-year program. Undergraduate health profession students from Northern Arizona University Dental Hygiene Program and University of Arizona College of Nursing comprised a pilot undergraduate AzaAHEC Scholars program with community immersion opportunities at various Regional Center communities.

Youth (K–16) Health Career Programs: The AzaAHEC Program and Regional Centers supported structured activities to introduce Arizona's youth to health professions, working with local high schools and community organizations to support health career structured programs (e.g., Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) chapters). Summer programs included Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (OEDI) and the Med-Start Health Careers. Regional Centers participated in information events that introduced students in Grades K–12 to health careers.

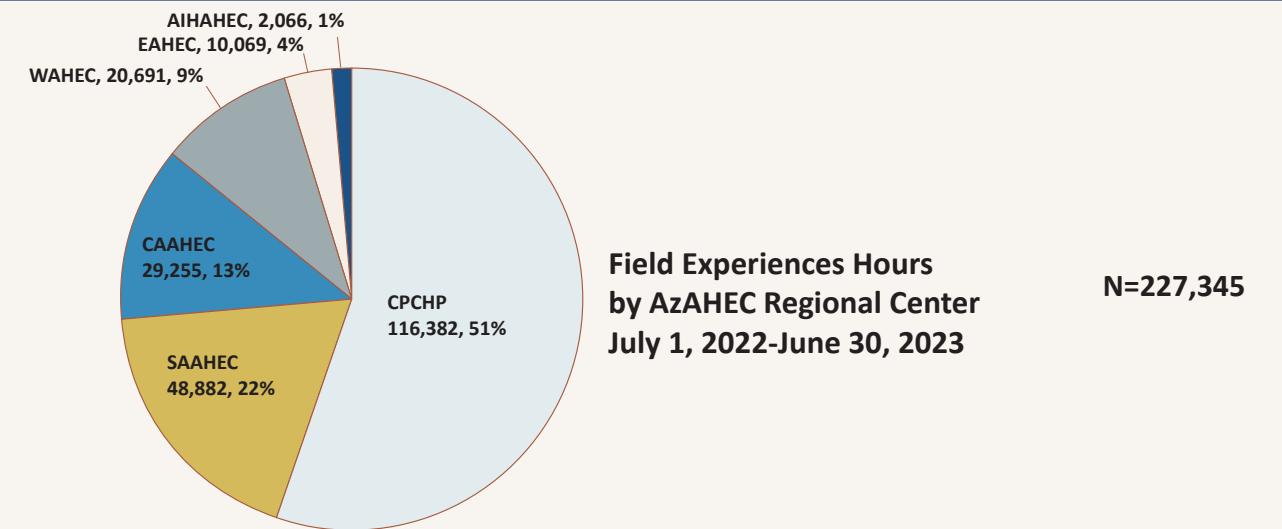
Continuing Education (CE/CME) for Health Professionals: Regional Centers provided CE/CME events that supported licensure requirements for health professionals. Regional Centers sponsored professional development events that increased the knowledge of health professionals.

Community Health Promotion: Regional Centers coordinated and supported health education activities and events for local community members throughout Arizona's rural and urban underserved areas.

Rotation Hours by AzaAHEC Regional Center and Academic Partners July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023



Total CBET Rotation Hours by AzaAHEC Regional Centers
N=227,345

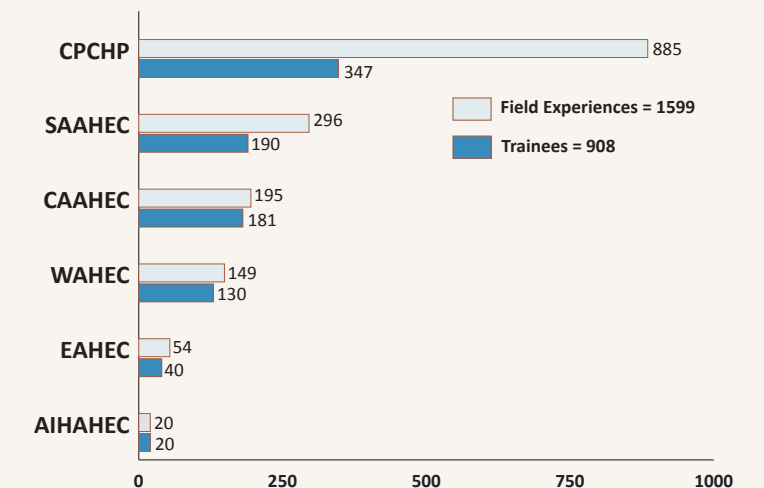


Field Experiences Hours by AzaAHEC Regional Center
July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023
N=227,345

Rotation Hours, Number of Rotations and Number of Trainees by AzaAHEC Regional Center July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Regional Center	Total Rotation Hours	Field Experiences	Unique Trainees
CPCHP	116,382	885	347
SAAHEC	48,882	296	190
CAAHEC	29,255	195	181
WAHEC	20,691	149	130
EAHEC	10,069	54	40
AIHAHEC	2,066	20	20
GRAND TOTAL	227,345	1,599	908

AzaAHEC Trainees and Field Experiences by AzaAHEC Regional Center July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023



Approximately 10% of trainees receive support from an AzaAHEC Regional Center and from an RHPP or South Campus. Tables and charts above reflect hours and rotations for unique trainee within Centers.

The AzaHEC Rural Health Profession (RHPP) Overview

The Arizona State Legislature authorized the Rural Health Professions Program in 2007 through state statute (ARS § 15-1754). It is now a core component of the AzaHEC Program to address shortages of health professionals in rural and urban underserved Arizona communities. In 2022–23, 760 students at UArizona, ASU and NAU RHPPs received a total of 1,452 rural and underserved community based experiential training (CBET) for a total of 308,390 hours.

RHPPs provide rural training experiences for health professions students in the public universities under the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR): UArizona Health Sciences Colleges of Nursing, Pharmacy, Medicine (COM-Tucson and COM-Phoenix), and Public Health; ASU Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation; and the NAU School of Nursing, Department of Physical Therapy, and Department of Physician Assistant Studies.

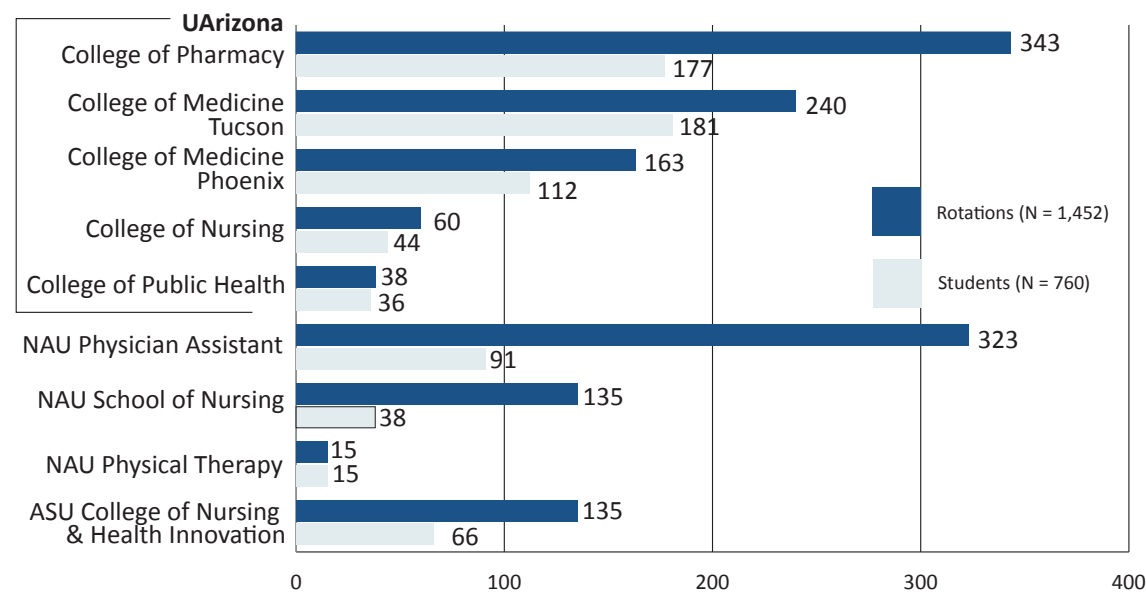
The AzaHEC Program supports urban, medically underserved training experiences to address primary care provider shortages. RHPPs prepare health professions students for practice in Arizona's rural communities. While RHPP student participation is voluntary, statutorily,

UArizona selects 15 medical, four pharmacy and ten nurse practitioner students; ASU selects four; and NAU selects two nurse practitioner students for RHPP. The number of participating RHPP students and programs has grown significantly above these statutory requirements.

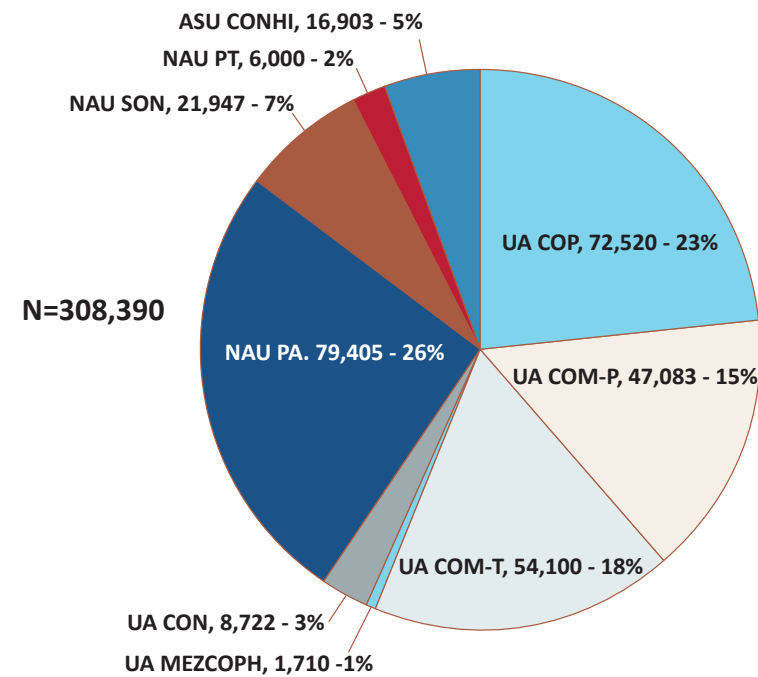
"I did most of my internships in rural Arizona and enjoyed working with diverse populations. I enjoyed having a manageable patient population and getting to know my patients beyond just being their provider. I have always wanted to work with the medically underserved populations, because I grew up in similar conditions. Being part of the rural health program...gave me a great exposure of the health issues that rural Arizona faces and greatly influenced my choice to work in a rural area."

Veronica Azemawah, PharmD

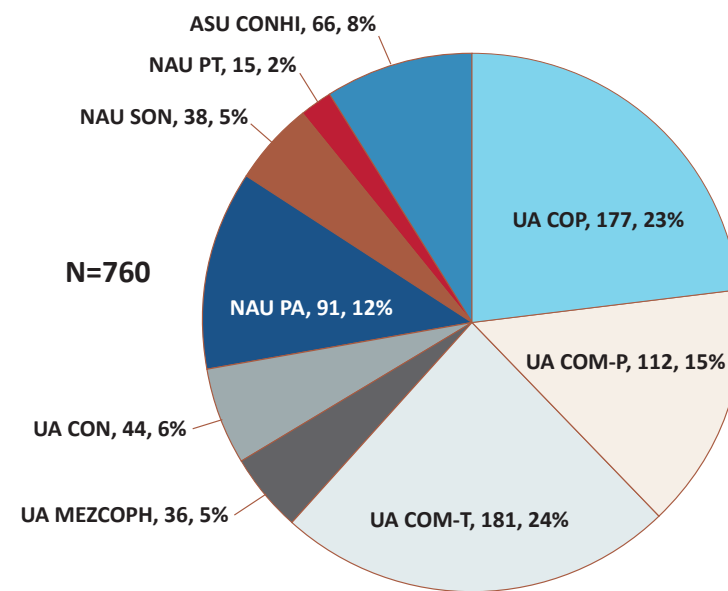
AzaHEC Trainees and Rotations by Rural Health Professions Program July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023



Rotation Hours by Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP) July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023



Unique Trainees by Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP) July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023



Approximately 10% of trainees receive support from an AzaHEC Regional Center and from an RHPP. Charts on these two pages reflect hours and rotations for unique trainee within RHPPs.

Tuba City Housing

AzaHEC leases a four-bedroom, two bath modular home from the Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation Housing Office so trainees have housing during their clinical rotations at this location. During 2022–23, 12 RHPP and other UArizona Health Profession students were housed for a total of 315 nights. This included 10 medical students and two pharmacy students. Living in the community enhances the AzaHEC trainee experience working interprofessionally in a tribal community. Housing activity is expected to continue to increase as in-person rotation restrictions are lifted post-pandemic.



AzaAHEC Scholars Program

The Arizona Area Health Education Center (AzaAHEC) Scholars Program (ASP) is a two-year interprofessional program providing health profession students with advanced community-based experiences in rural and underserved settings in the AzaAHEC Regional Center service areas.

Graduate-level participants are selected from the AzaAHEC Rural Health Professions Programs (RHPPs). To qualify, Scholars must be enrolled in an RHPP and meet all academic and didactic training requirements of their graduate-level health professional program. Scholars are matched into interprofessional groups at one of the AHEC Regional Centers where they have 80 hours annually of community-based experiences in rural and underserved settings in addition to academic requirements. For the 2021–23 cohort, 84 RHPP graduate-level students completed the ASP in Spring 2023. For the 2022–24 cohort, 76 RHPP graduate-level students will continue with the ASP and are expected to complete the program in Spring 2024. Faculty Mentors who are practicing health professionals support and direct interprofessional cohorts at each Regional Center. In fiscal year 2022–23, 21% of RHPP students participated in the ASP.

For the 2021–23 cohort, undergraduate-level students were selected to participate in a two-year ASP. Eleven undergraduate students from UArizona College of Nursing and NAU Dental Hygiene Program participated in and completed the ASP. To qualify, undergraduate Scholars achieved all academic and didactic training requirements of their undergraduate-level health professional program. Scholars were then assigned to activities at multiple AHEC Regional Centers where they had 80 hours annually of community-based experiences in rural and underserved settings in addition to their academic requirements. This group of scholars were mentored jointly by faculty from these two programs.

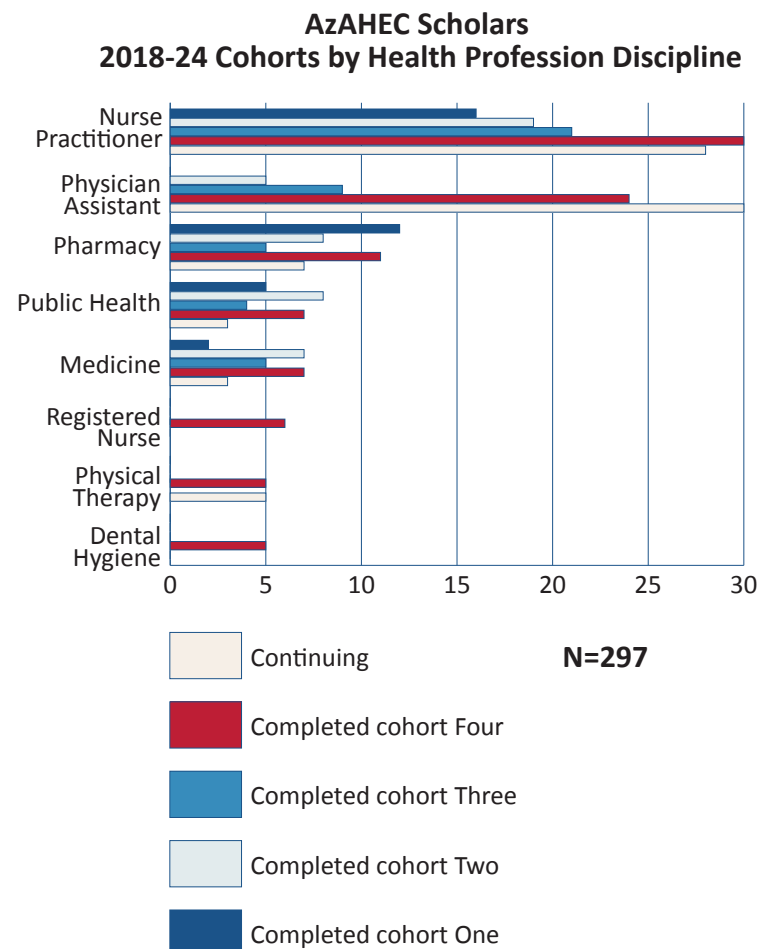
“I am working in a practice that serves two rural locations [in Arizona].... I work as a pediatric NP serving the primary care needs in the pediatric population. Being an AHEC Scholar contributed to my mindset when looking and applying for jobs, I wanted to work where I could make a bigger impact.”

– AHEC Scholar 2022–23 Cohort

Since inception of the ASP a total of 392 scholars have either completed the program or are currently enrolled in the program as follows:

- A. Thirty-five (35) scholars completed the first (2018–20) cohort.
- B. Forty-seven (47) scholars completed the second (2019–21) cohort.
- C. Forty-four (44) scholars completed the third (2020–22) cohort.
- D. Ninety-five (95) scholars completed the fourth (2021–23) cohort. This included 84 graduate Scholars and 11 undergraduate Scholars.
- E. Seventy-six (76) scholars are in the fifth (2022–24) cohort and are expected to complete the program in May 2024.
- F. One hundred and nine (109) scholars are in the sixth (2023–25) cohort and are expected to complete the program in May 2025.

Further expansion of the ASP at all Regional Centers continues. Beginning with the 2023–25 Cohort, the American Indian Health AHEC (AIH-AHEC) ASP program will be open to both RHPP graduate programs and undergraduate students from the NAU Nursing and Public Health Colleges.



AHEC Undergraduate Scholars Program

Denise Muesch Helm, RDH, Ed.D.,
Professor, Northern Arizona University Department of Dental Hygiene

Patty Goldsmith, MS, RN, PHNA-BC,
Faculty, University of Arizona College of Nursing

Modeled after the graduate AHEC Scholars Program, the Undergraduate Arizona AHEC Scholars Program (ASP) exposes health profession students to immersions, seminars, and interprofessional experiential learning. Undergraduate students from Northern Arizona (NAU) Department of Dental Hygiene and University of Arizona (UArizona) College of Nursing participated in this pilot program as part of the 2021–23 Cohort. NAU and UArizona faculty serve as program directors and faculty mentors.

Eleven undergraduate students from the 2021–23 Cohort completed the ASP in Spring 2023. During the program, they had immersion experiences at AzaAHEC Regional Centers and experienced the unique characteristics of these communities and their community partners. As an example, one immersion arranged through Western Arizona AHEC Regional Center had undergraduate Scholars participate in “Lake Havasu Veterans’ Stand Down” in Fall 2022. The event provides homeless and at-risk veterans with food, clothing, health screening and referrals for health care, housing, employment and other essential services. The Scholars participated in the Oral Cancer Screening portion of the program.

The ASP is an opportunity for health professional students to learn about working in rural and medically underserved communities. Beginning in fiscal year 2023–24, the undergraduate AHEC Scholars will be placed with graduate AHEC Scholars at the American Indian Health (AIH) AHEC Regional Center.

“I absolutely loved getting an inside view in underserved communities because it made it more real to me. I appreciated the more hands-on events; they really help me with my learning.”

– Undergraduate AHEC Scholar 2021–23 Cohort

Evaluations

AzaAHEC evaluates programs based on activity participation reported by partners and through surveys collected from participants in four activity types:

1. Health profession trainees (students and residents) who participated in rotations
2. Health profession students who participated in the AHEC Scholars Program (ASP)
3. Licensed and other health professionals who received Continuing Education (CE) or Continuing Medical Education (CME)
4. High School and Undergraduate students who participated in structured pipeline programs

Evaluation indicates that AzaAHEC programming reaches diverse populations and leads to positive outcomes.

Highlights of 2022–23 survey responses include:

- ▶ The majority of respondents to the Post-Rotation Survey (71%) indicated that the rotation increased their likelihood of selecting practice in a rural or medically underserved area.
- ▶ Of the AHEC Scholars who completed the two-year program in 2022 and responded to the Post-Program Survey, the majority reported increases in interprofessional collaborative competencies. The large majority (97%) reported that they intend to become employed or pursue further training in a medically underserved setting, and (72%) also reported that they intend to become employed or pursue further training in a rural setting. Analysis of surveys from respondents to the One-Year Post Graduation Surveys for AHEC Scholars indicated that four were working in rural Arizona and eight were working with an Arizona medically underserved community.
- ▶ The large majority (94%) of respondents to the Continuing Education (CE) survey indicated they were “likely” or “very likely” to implement the CE material into their practice.
- ▶ Grades 9–16 respondents to the Post-Pipeline Program Survey reported that they had increased their knowledge of health careers “very much” (53%) or “pretty much” (30%), and 70% reported that they were “very interested” in pursuing a health career. A minority (37%) showed an increased interest in going into a health career between the beginning and end of the pipeline program, but an additional 42% reported “very high” interest at both the baseline and the program end surveys.

Eleventh Annual Interprofessional Rural Health Professions (RHPP) Conference

The Eleventh Annual Interprofessional Rural Health Professions Conference was held on April 14–15, 2023. Originally moved to an online platform in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this event continues to be offered virtually to provide maximum attendance flexibility by health professional students already on rural and underserved clinical rotations at sites located throughout Arizona. Satellite, in-person viewing locations will continue to be supported.

A total of 255 individuals attended the conference. Seventy-four (74%) percent were RHPP students and 61% of these were additionally enrolled in the AHEC Scholars Program.

Satellite Locations

Two satellite viewing locations were held in Phoenix for individuals to gather in-person and participate in the conference. On Friday, April 14, Northern Arizona University School of Nursing (NAU SON) hosted 21 attendees, including RHPP students, faculty and staff. On Saturday, April 15, Arizona State University Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation (ASU CONHI) hosted 49 attendees, including NAU SON RHPP and ASU CONHI RHPP students, faculty, and staff.

Friday, April 14th – Poster Showcase

The Poster Showcase featured 25 posters submitted by students and health professionals from across Arizona. Each 2022–24 ASP cohort group collaborated on a poster focusing on their community immersion region. Poster topics included community health needs assessments, interprofessional health professions research, healthcare research among the underrepresented minority (URM) population, behavioral health, healthcare evaluation, and current issues in primary care. Posters submitted with a video presentation component were presented in a facilitated Zoom session.

Saturday, April 15th— Main Session

Health professionals provided presentations during the main session. Gloria G. Irigoyen-Montijo, BS, CFP, CHWC, CYT at El Rio Health, gave an interactive presentation “Fostering Resiliency — What is resilience and how is it related to healthcare careers?” Tommy Begaye, PhD, MPH, from UArizona, presented “American Indian Health: Integrating Clinical Practice with Indigenous Sacred Wisdom to Empower Tribal Communities.” Barret Michael, PhD, CAPIER at ASU CONHI, spoke on “Tapping into Humility to Promote Interprofessionalism.” Carlos Gonzales, MD, UArizona COM-T, provided a closing blessing.

On Saturday, April 15, the six graduate and two undergraduate AHEC Scholars 2021–23 Cohort groups made podium presentations on the following topics:

- ASP CAAHEC Group – Mental Health Matters
- ASP CPCHP Group 1— Transportation Impacts of Hospital Relocation in Flagstaff, Arizona
- ASP CPCHP Group 2 — Rural Healthcare Improvements Through Innovation and Collaboration
- ASP SAAHEC Group— Resource Awareness in South Tucson, AZ
- ASP EAHEC Group— Implementing a Telehealth Program in Tonto Basin, Arizona
- ASP WAHEC Group— Filling the Gaps: Mental Health Resources for Families of Children Experiencing Anxiety in San Luis, Arizona
- ASP-U Group 1— Oral Cancer Screening at the Lake Havasu Veterans’ Stand Down
- ASP-U Group 2— El Rio Community Health Outreach

Regional Center and RHPP Directors served as poster judges. Prizes were awarded for four posters:

Ronald Weinstein Award for Excellence in Video Presentation:

Analysis of Statistics Utilized in Primary Articles in a High Impact Journal: A Prelude to Practical Pedagogy in Biostatistics

Authors: Asahi Murata and Emma Kar

Outstanding Poster (1st Place) (tie): *Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Incidence of Complicated Appendicitis: A Retrospective Study*

Authors: Tamlyn Hall, Zola Trotter, Bikash Bhattharai, Katherine Barlow, Colin Hurkett, and Eric Jackson

Community Connectedness Classification and Association with Health Behaviors in Southern Arizona: A Geospatial Analysis

Authors: Carlie Felion, Kimberly Lind, Christopher Krupnik, Chris Segrin, and Meghan Skiba

Excellent Poster (2nd Place): *An Introductory Guide to the Operating Room*

Author: Colton Cowan

Preceptor Recognition

Community preceptors are critical components in the success of trainee experiences in rural and urban underserved areas of Arizona. AzaHEC is deeply grateful for the contribution of 751 preceptors for the 410,471 hours of clinical rotations from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.



Ken Miller

**University of Arizona (UArizona)
College of Medicine-Tucson (COM-T)
Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP)**

Anna Landau, MD, MPH, DTM&H, RHPP Director
Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine

2022–23 Program Highlights	
RHPP Students supported	181
RHPP Rotations supported	240
RHPP Rotation Hours supported	54,100
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	3
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	0

The **COM-T RHPP** is the oldest rural health program in the state and provides robust, meaningful community-based educational experiences to medical students, exposing them to rural life and medicine and enhancing the rural health workforce. The UArizona COM-T and AzaAHEC Program support rotations in rural and underserved locations, supplementing housing, travel, and stipends for these student rotations. In 2022–23, 181 students spent over 54,000 hours completing 240 clinical rotations in rural and underserved communities across Arizona. Rotations focused on primary care specialties including family medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine, obstetrics/gynecology and general surgery, and included electives in emergency medicine. COM-T students rotated in 37 unique sites throughout the state, of which 32 were in medically underserved communities. Community based preceptors participate in the RHPP initial (first year) summer rotations and those occurring in subsequent years.

Each year, 30–35 first year students are selected to participate in RHPP. During the spring semester of their first year, they participate in the “Issues in Rural Health” weekly seminar series. Topics help them navigate and succeed in their rural health rotations and beyond including presentations on rural health policy, rural health ethics, cultural humility, and generational trauma in Native American communities.

The students are then assigned to preceptors in rural, border, and tribal communities across the state, on Native American reservations, in mountain and in desert areas for a four to six-week rotation during the summer after their first year. Students compile profiles of their assigned communities and present to their fellow classmates about the demographics and unique characteristics of

the community. During their rotations, students submit regular reflections on their clinical and life experiences at their rural sites. Students often report that their experiences in these rotations and with their preceptors shape the trajectory of their medical careers. Many build relationships with preceptors who serve as life-long mentors and often return to these sites to complete required third and fourth year clerkship rotations. To complete the RHPP Certificate Program, students are required to complete another four to-six-week rotation for a total of ten weeks in rural Arizona.

Students can choose to complete the **Rural Health Distinction Track (RHDT)**, a natural extension of the RHPP certificate program, requiring an additional six weeks to total 16 weeks spent in rural rotations. They also complete a capstone paper or project, usually in the form of a literature review, research and references on a topic pertinent to their rural, border or indigenous health care experiences. The May 2023 graduating class included 23 RHPP certificate students, 21 of whom completed the RHDT program and graduated with Distinction in Rural Health. Several of these students are in the Primary Care Scholarship Program and following residency will return to work in underserved areas in the state.

AzaAHEC Scholars Program (ASP) — three of the 23 COM-T RHPP students also completed the ASP. They engaged interprofessionally at AzaAHEC Regional Centers with pharmacy, public health, nurse practitioner, physical therapy, and physician assistant students from the three Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) public universities (UArizona, NAU, ASU). All RHPP students gave podium presentations at the RHPP Interprofessional Conference in April 2023.

Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC) – is an innovative program integrating traditional clerkship blocks into a continuous and simultaneous experience over the course of nine months based around continuity of care for a patient panel. UArizona COM-T has students participating in the Payson LIC, with plans to extend the program to other locations.

**University of Arizona (UArizona)
College of Medicine-Phoenix (COM-P)
Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP)**

Jonathan Cartsonis, MD, RHPP Director

2022–23 Program Highlights	
RHPP Students supported	112
RHPP Rotations supported	163
RHPP Rotation Hours supported	47,083
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	4
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	3

The **COM-P RHPP** provides clinical rotation opportunities for students to work in Arizona’s rural and urban underserved communities. The UArizona COM-P and AzaAHEC Program supported 112 RHPP students for 163 rotations in 2022–23 for a total of 47,083 rotation hours, a 30% increase from 2021–22. Rotation sites included Tsehootsooi Medical Center (Fort Defiance), Tuba City Health Care (Tuba City), Wesley Health Center (Phoenix), Whiteriver Indian Health Service Hospital (Whiteriver), Mount Graham Regional Medical Center (Safford), Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center (Globe), Gila River Health Care HuHu Kam Memorial Hospital (Sacaton), North Country HealthCare (Flagstaff), and Phoenix VA Health Care System (Phoenix).

The **Rural Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC)** began in 2020–21, and continues to grow with our **Community Based Education Training (CBET)** rotations. LIC is an evidence-based rural curriculum that prepares students for the clinical demands of residency. They learn patient care in the same rural setting for months at a time from master educators who teach and mentor them. Students follow their own patient panel — including infants, the elderly, pregnant women, and families, for primary, preventive, acute, and chronic care. Students advance their professional and clinical skills while learning about the rural health system and their own role in community health.

Payson was the first COM-P LIC site, starting with three students in academic year 2021, growing to seven by 2023. New LIC sites include at North Country HealthCare and their Colorado Plateau Center for Health Professions (CPCHP) in Flagstaff, at the Gila River Indian Community in partnership with Gila River Health Care in Sacaton, and the Regional Center for Border Health in San Luis. Our LIC programs and sites continue to grow in collaboration with UArizona COM-Tucson.

With Arizona’s rapid population growth and the retirement of established physicians, Payson has seen an opportunity to grow its medical community. Ponderosa Family Care, MHA Foundation, the AzaAHEC Program and Regional Centers, and UArizona COM-P partnered to support medical students for several months of continuous clinical training in the area, with the expectation that the trainees would be recruited to practice in the region. The rewards of these effort are already evident — in 2022–23, a COM-P RHPP alumnus was successfully recruited as a health provider in Payson. The graduate is now part of the LIC Payson teaching faculty, enhancing their capacity to host medical, NP, and PA students.

Banner Payson will launch a family medicine residency starting in July 2024. Primary care teaching health center programs in other states retain 75 to 80% of their graduates who practice in primary care, more than half in health professional shortage areas. Payson’s evolution into an exemplary medical education model requires continuous, stable support from the community and the AzaAHEC Program and serves as a template for other rural communities.

AHEC Scholars Program (ASP): Seven COM-P RHPP students additionally participated in the ASP. These students engaged interprofessionally at AzaAHEC Regional Centers with pharmacy, public health, nurse practitioners, physical therapy and physician assistant students from all three Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) public universities (UArizona, NAU, ASU) in community immersions and monthly seminars. At the RHPP Interprofessional conference in April 2023, the four AzaAHEC Scholars from the 2021–23 Cohort and the three from the 2022–24 Cohort joined their colleagues from across all regions in poster and podium presentations.

**University of Arizona (UArizona)
College of Nursing
Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP)**

Christy Pacheco, DNP, FNP-BC,
RHPP Director, Clinical Assistant Professor

2022–23 Program Highlights	
RHPP Students supported	44
RHPP Rotations supported	60
RHPP Rotation Hours supported	8,722
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	8
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	4

UArizona CON RHPP participation remains robust with 51 students enrollees, including 10 newly admitted to the program. Of these, 44 students completed 60 community based experiential training (CBET) rotations. These Doctoral Nurse Practitioner (DNP) students encompass specialties from family practice to behavioral health. Twelve RHPP students actively participated in the AHEC Scholars Program (ASP), including eight in the 2021–23 Cohort and four in the 2022–24 Cohort. Five RHPP students graduated in December 2022.

Clinical Education: Students completed primary care clinical rotations in rural and medically underserved areas across Arizona in settings from federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) to private practices. The UArizona CON RHPP supported clinical rotations and travel for rural rotations. Supervision included evaluation and telehealth objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs) focusing on rural and medically underserved rotations. On-campus clinical intensives focused on primary care clinical skills and assessment. Students conducted DNP Quality Improvement (QI) Projects at their clinical sites and engaged site stakeholders to improve quality and/or access to care.

Longitudinal Site Development: Four students completed year-long continuity rotations in 2022 and three students in 2023, including site-directed QI projects. Collaboration continued with Native American community partners for workforce development and clinical placements which began with an INCATS on-campus networking and partnering summit in 2022.

IPE Events: 24 graduate health professions students from medicine, DNP, and pharmacy participated in an Interprofessional Mock Code Event in the Spring of 2023 under the direction of community and faculty clinicians

and facilitators from the Colorado Plateau Center for Health Professions AHEC Regional Center at North Country HealthCare.

Didactic Opportunities: Coursework and seminars provided an evidence-based foundation to better understand needs and resources of rural and medically underserved populations. Six DNP students completed the NURS 774 Rural Community Health course, focusing on health status, outcomes, and disparities. Five students in NURS 638 Conceptual Foundations for Rural Health course conducted community health assessments through the lens of the social determinants of health. DNP QI projects ranged from increasing access to women’s health screenings to mental health. Virtual and on-campus seminars facilitated discussion on rural rotation and practice issues and doctoral projects.

RHPP Conference: 19 UArizona CON RHPP students attended the Annual Interprofessional Rural Health Professions Conference, to network, learn and share information about rural and medically underserved populations, community projects, doctoral project findings, and poster sessions. RHPP students received guidance in developing posters focusing on health topics of interest to rural and medically underserved populations. AHEC Scholars presented community assessment findings and interventions. Through technology, the eight AzaAHEC Scholars from the 2021–23 Cohort joined their colleagues from across all regions in podium presentations, and the four AzaAHEC Scholars from the 2022–24 Cohort joined their colleagues from across all regions in poster presentations.

Outcomes: Five students who graduated during this reporting period completed a graduation survey. Their plans included working in an Arizona Medically Underserved Area (MUA), joining UArizona CON as faculty with a focus on expanding mental health services to rural communities; joining the Southern Arizona Veterans Administration (VA) NP residency program focusing on rural Arizona veterans and providing women’s health and obstetrics care to underserved Southern Arizona women.

**University of Arizona (UArizona)
Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health (MEZCOPH)
Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP)**

Marc Verhougstraete, PhD
RHPP Director, Associate Professor

2022–23 Program Highlights	
RHPP Students supported	36
RHPP Rotations supported	38
RHPP Rotation Hours supported	1710
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	7
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	3

The Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health’s The UArizona MEZCOPH RHPP is housed in the Arizona Center for Rural Health (AzCRH). The AzCRH and RHPP core mission is to improve the health and wellness of Arizona’s rural and underserved populations. Partnership with the AzaAHEC Program and the six AzaAHEC Regional Centers serve as multidisciplinary platforms for MEZCOPH student active learning and reflection, assuring health equity while working to reduce health disparities throughout Arizona.

Marc Verhougstraete, Associate Professor, Jen Peters, Program Manager, Arizona State Office of Rural Health (AzSORH), and Mona Arora, Assistant Research Professor lead the MEZCOPH RHPP. Marc and Jen have extensive experience leading the RHPP service-learning courses that support community-engaged experiences and provide a framework for understanding the assets, challenges, and issues facing Arizona’s rural and underserved communities. Marc served as a faculty mentor for the Southern Arizona AHEC Scholars 2021–23 Group. Mona identifies new opportunities for RHPP student involvement.

Students gain expertise by working in rural and urban underserved communities. From July 2022 through June 2023, 36 MEZCOPH RHPP students participated in six graduate-level service-learning courses. Courses include an undergraduate enrollment option (PHPM 497D), a 16 week course (PHPM 597C – 2 credits), seven week course offerings (PHPM 497D, PHPM 597D, and HPS 597A, and HPS 597B), and a flexible schedule course (HPS 597B MILAGRO). Each course is presented in a hybrid format with in-person immersions and online readings, lectures, and group discussions of course themes, learning objectives, and competencies. During the reporting period, the multidisciplinary MILAGRO

course was offered twice in collaboration with the UArizona College of Nursing.

The UArizona MEZCOPH RHPP connected with rural communities and supported education on responding to environmental health, climate change, infectious disease, COVID-19 and other rural concerns. Natasha Rapp served as a climate and health curriculum coordinator including lectures on climate change, health, and health equity for students in the RHPP service learning courses. A new service-learning course on climate change and health in rural communities is under development.

Since 2018, the UArizona MEZCOPH RHPP had nearly 200 public health graduate students participate in service-learning courses and activities, totaling about 9,000 contact hours.

Internships: Three students completed internships in the reporting timeframe on environmental health disparities in rural communities. They measured exposures, defined interventions, and developed education materials for Southern Arizona communities.

AHEC Scholars Program (ASP): The two-year ASP provides MEZCOPH RHPP students with community-based experiential training (CBET) in rural and underserved Arizona communities, alongside students from the other AzaAHEC RHPPs. In fiscal year 2022–23, ten MEZCOPH RHPP students actively participated in an ASP interprofessional group assigned to one of the six AzaAHEC Regional Centers. These Scholars conducted community assessments and presented their findings at the 2023 Rural Health Interprofessional Conference. Seven AzaAHEC Scholars from the 2021–23 Cohort and three from the 2022–24 Cohort joined their colleagues from across all regions in podium and poster presentations. Seven 2021–23 Scholars completed their program in May 2023.

**University of Arizona (UArizona)
R. Ken Coit College of Pharmacy (COP)
Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP)**

Elizabeth A. Hall-Lipsy, JD, MPH,
*RHPP Director
Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and Assessment
Associate Professor of Practice
Director PharmD Forward Programs*

2022–23 Program Highlights	
RHPP Students supported	177
RHPP Rotations supported	343
RHPP Rotation Hours supported	72,520
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	11
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	7

The UArizona RKC-COP considers developing the pharmacy workforce to address the access challenges of Arizona’s rural and medically underserved communities as a key priority in its mission. Access to healthcare services is directly related to health outcomes. How a state’s healthcare workforce is distributed affects access to care, particularly in rural and remote areas. Arizona’s rural communities face considerable challenges in accessing pharmacy care. Only 7% of Arizona’s pharmacists practice in urban areas, while 15% of Arizona’s population lives in rural communities. RKC-COP works to address workforce distribution issues through its RHPP and Professional Certificate in Pharmacy Related Health Disparities. These dramatically impact student exposure and decisions to practice in rural and underserved communities.

Students selected for the RHPP/Professional Certificate are placed in rural communities during three points in their professional pharmacy education: (1) the summer between first and second year for a four-week introductory community or institutional rotation, (2) the summer between second and third year for a four-week introductory community or institutional rotation, and (3) during fourth year for a six-week advanced pharmacy practice rotation. Over the last ten years, supported by AzaAHEC Program funding, the UArizona RKC-COP RHPP expanded from four to 33 first-year student participants per year. Total RHPP participation is now 27% of the RKC-COP Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) student body. Moreover, 2022–23 funding supported 18 AHEC Scholars Program (ASP) participants in our College.

Despite substantial challenges in recruiting, identifying, coordinating, and conducting clinical rotations during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the UArizona RKC-COP RHPP recruited 41 new participants from the class of 2026 and 40 students completed their first rural rotation during the summer of 2023. During the 2023 funding year, 177 students completed 343 rotations, comprising 72,520 hours of pharmacy training in rural and urban underserved Arizona communities.

RKC-COP RHPP students enrolled during the 2022–23 funding year all pursued the Professional Certificate track, (n=155), 41% represent a racial minority group, 26% identify as Hispanic/Latinx, 41% are from a rural community (population less than 50,000 people) and 69% are from an underserved background. Underserved background is defined as identifying with one or more of the following: (1) first in their family to attend college, (2) received a scholarship or loan for disadvantaged students, (3) relied on federal or state assistance programs (i.e., free or reduced lunch, subsidized housing, food stamps, Medicaid); or (4) lived in an area where there were few medical providers at a convenient distance.

The RKC-COP RHPP was enhanced to include a Professional Certificate in Pharmacy Related Health Disparities in 2010 to improve student retention, structure and support. In 2023, 33 students earned the certificate, joining the 236 who previously completed the certificate, a total of 269 RHPP graduates. In addition to clinical rotations, the certificate requires two classroom-based courses taught by college faculty: Community Assessment for Pharmacy Students and Health Disparities in the United States. As a result of the community assessment course, 200 students conducted community assessments of their RHPP rotation site communities and presented their findings in posters, written, and oral reports at the Annual Interprofessional Rural Health Professions Conference and shared them with the AzaAHEC Regional Centers. During rotations, students participate in AzaAHEC Regional Center community programs and events such as PharmCamp, health fairs, vaccination campaigns, and other outreach activities.

In May of 2023, 33 students from the 2023 RHPP cohort received their Certificate in Pharmacy Related Health Disparities. Among these graduates, ten students sought and were selected for competitive post-graduate pharmacy residencies, two of these residencies were in rural communities and three were in underserved communities.

The RKC COP partnered with Canyon Vista Medical Center in Sierra Vista to establish a rural pharmacy residency program. The first resident accepted to the program is a class of 2023 RHPP graduate.

Among the other 23 graduates, six accepted employment at a rural Arizona pharmacy, one is pursuing employment through the Indian Health Service, one is employed by the US Air Force, six accepted positions at Tucson community pharmacies, seven work in Phoenix area community pharmacies, two moved out of state, and two were undecided at the time of data collection.

In a survey of these graduates, 86% reported intending to pursue employment in an underserved community and 56% plan to pursue rural employment. Employment tracking for all RHPP alumni revealed that since the AzaAHEC funding award, 34% of graduates have been employed in a rural setting and 65% are employed treating underserved patients. The College is especially proud to report that 29% of RHPP alumni practice in rural Arizona, and 24% of our RHPP alumni now act as rural preceptors for our current pharmacy students.



Arizona State University (ASU) Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation (CONHI) Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP)

Diane E. Nuñez, DNP, RN, ANP-BC, FNAP
RHPP Director, DNP Program Director, Clinical Professor

2022–23 Program Highlights	
RHPP Students supported	66
RHPP Rotations supported	135
RHPP Rotation Hours supported	16,903
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	14
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	18

The ASU Edson CONHI RHPP provides clinical opportunities for Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students to practice in underserved areas throughout Arizona, while fostering interprofessional community-based experiences that cultivate student interest in careers in underserved settings. This contributes to the AzaAHEC mission to develop a culturally competent, diverse healthcare workforce, reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes throughout Arizona.

Clinical Placements, Interprofessional Education, and Preceptor Support: Students experienced clinical and community rotations and activities including networking, outreach, community service, and education in social determinants of health, cultural humility, and community assessment. The aim of this approach was to promote student knowledge and expertise in the unique challenges of working in rural and urban underserved communities. RHPP students take DNP 603: Healthy Equity and Social Justice, as one of the program electives. Clinical experiences included longitudinal rotations which fostered deeper community engagement and patient care continuity. Students completed direct patient care and some students completed quality improvement projects at the designated sites. Preceptors were offered resources from the ASU Center for the Advancement of Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research (CAIPER) <https://ipe.asu.edu/>.

Orientation, Networking, and Clinical Placement: The RHPP student orientation included an overview, site descriptions, regional travel information, block rotations, housing, and other support. The AzaAHEC Program Office provided the AHEC Scholars Program (ASP) orientation. Throughout the year, the ASU CONHI RHPP students and ASP Scholars participated in networking events to share their clinical and community experiences with their peers.

The Center for Advancing Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research (CAIPER) provided e-learning modules for all RHPP students and preceptors such as interactive case studies, clinical scenarios, self-checks and reflection that are easily accessible in remote locations. Participants received Certificates of Completion demonstrating interprofessional education (IPE) competence, and content sequenced to best meet student and health professionals learning needs. Dr. Barret Michalec, CAIPER Director, provided a keynote lecture at the annual conference with a presentation titled: Tapping into Humility to Promote Interprofessionalism. The clinical experiences and sustainable projects supported deeper engagement that promoted seeking employment in one of the AzaAHEC Regional Center service areas upon graduation.

The virtual 11th Annual Interprofessional Rural Health Professions Conference was a huge success. ASU RHPP students attended via a remote viewing space with RHPP directors, faculty, and preceptors at the Edson College of Nursing. Meals and refreshments were provided. Students had the opportunity to network, enhancing their conference experience. Students reported enjoying the interactive nature of the of the conference and seeing the posters and guest presenters both in person and online.

ASU exceeded its ASP recruitment goals, with 18 students in the 2022–24 and 14 in the 2021–23 cohorts. Scholars



ASU CONHI's AHEC Scholars Cohort Class of 2021–2023

completed the IPE curriculum which included community immersions, monthly seminars, and year-round teamwork to complete a community assessment and intervention project. Both cohorts presented their community work at the RHPP conference. Six graduates from the 2021–23 cohort are currently employed in rural or underserved areas, four are still seeking employment, and four are continuing DNP students. ASP students shared their experiences at a luncheon and ASP medallion presentation event honoring them.

Outcomes: The ASU Edson CONHI RHPP supported students assigned to rural private practice, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Community Health Centers (CHCs) and in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) across the six AzaAHEC Regional Center service areas and exceeded our project targets. The DNP students represented all primary care specialties including Adult-Gerontology, Family Health, Family Psychiatric Mental Health, Pediatrics, and Women's Health. RHPP student demographics indicated:

- 52% grew up in a rural area,
- 61% reported disadvantaged background,
- 22% currently live in an area with few providers at a convenient distance,
- 56% grew up in Arizona,
- 26% are minority, and,
- 8% reported being bilingual in Spanish and English

RHPP successes included providing RHPP students with clinical experiences and community immersions, fostering collaboration between AzaAHEC Regional Centers and community stakeholders, meeting regularly with AzaAHEC Regional Center directors and RHPP program staff on student placement strategies and increasing preceptor training, recruitment and retention. Barriers and opportunities were identified, discussed feedback used to improve DNP student rotation experiences and meet advance practice academic requirements while students work and complete DNP projects in these regions. These projects developed as a natural evolution of the students RHPP practice experience, coupled with the ASP community assessment, fulfilling both their educational obligations and the community needs.

Evaluation and Expected Outcomes
 RHPP students and ASP Scholars provided unique narratives at program completion describing their experiences and how they met the project outcomes. These provided a rich highlight of how the experience impacted their

professional development and future employment goals. Students were able to explain interprofessional models of health care and describe the influence of social determinants of health on rural and underserved populations and communities, promoting a desire for employment in these areas.



Amber Hooper, Copper Queen Community Hospital

**Northern Arizona University (NAU)
Department of Physician Assistant (PA)
Studies
Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP)**

Bettie Coplan, PhD, PA-C
RHPP Director, Associate Professor

2022–23 Program Highlights	
RHPP Students supported	91
RHPP Rotations supported	323
RHPP Rotation Hours supported	79,405
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	24
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	30

The NAU PA RHPP prepares students to practice in diverse settings throughout Arizona, with special emphasis on rural and other underserved communities. Established four years ago, the collaboration with AzaAHEC Program and AzaAHEC Regional Centers has substantially strengthened the PA program’s ability to engage students in experiences that promote our mission. To date, over 80% of the PA program’s graduates practice in Arizona, with a majority practicing in primary care or medically underserved areas.

The NAU PA Program spans 24 months starting with a 12-month didactic phase followed by a 12-month clinical phase with required rotations in family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, women’s health, behavioral and mental health. All NAU PA students participate in our RHPP; consequently, all of our students complete rotations in rural/medically underserved areas.

During the 2022–23 academic year, 53 students completed the clinical phase of the program. Two more will graduate in the fall of 2023. The AzaAHEC Program funds the NAU RHPP for educational technology to support clinical decision making, student travel and relocation expenses, and clinical rotation placements. In collaboration with AzaAHEC Program and Regional Centers, the NAU PA RHPP supported 323 clinical rotations for an average of more than five, four-week rural/medically underserved rotations per student.

Class of 2023 Highlights: At the time of NAU PA graduation in August of 2023:

- 30% (16) had accepted PA positions. Of those positions:
 - 81% (13) are in Arizona
 - 25% (4) are in rural/urban underserved clinics
 - 8% (4) had accepted fellowship positions (which are optional for PAs) in Arizona
- Of the 33 who had yet to accept a position:
 - 79% (26) planned to apply in rural and/or urban underserved areas

To graduate from the NAU PA Program, all students must complete a scholarly capstone project. For the AHEC Scholars Program (ASP), the community assessment and scholarly projects they complete fulfill the PA capstone project requirement. As in prior years, student feedback indicates that Scholars highly value the community engagement, interprofessional learning, networking opportunities, and ASP support. The positive experiences contributed to significant expansion of the NAU PA ASP cohort from nine in the graduating Class of 2022 to more than 40 in the Class of 2025 who are currently in the didactic phase of the PA program.

AHEC Scholars Program Highlights:

Class of 2023 (24 scholars) and Class of 2024 (30 scholars):

- 50% (27) grew up in rural communities (population < 50,000 people)
- 54% (29) are the first generation in their family to attend college

Class of 2023, at the time of graduation in August of 2023:

- 82% reported feeling confident in their ability to practice in rural/non-rural medically underserved settings
- 95% accepted or were seeking positions in Arizona
- 68% accepted or were seeking positions in rural or other medically underserved areas



NAU SON’s 21–23 AHEC Scholars and NAU SON Staff/Faculty (left to right) Becca Harris, Dr. Adrien Gupton, Ryan Mette, Jamie Biggers, Jocelyn Noriega, Mary Vejnaska, John Wilcox, Kara Everhart, Dr. Shelley Vaughn. See NAU SON Description on adjacent page.

**Northern Arizona University (NAU) Physical
Therapy Program (PT)
Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP)**

Andrea Trujillo Lerner, PT, DPT
RHPP Director, Director of Clinical Education

2022–23 Program Highlights	
RHPP Students supported	15
RHPP Rotations supported	15
RHPP Rotation Hours supported	6,000
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	5
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	5

The NAU-PT RHPP has been a part of AzaAHEC Program since 2021 and has increased student participation in rural clinical experiences by more than 200%. It accepted five AHEC Scholars starting in August of 2023, coinciding with their first year of Doctoral PT School and graduate in 2024. These students reside at both the Flagstaff Mountain and Phoenix BioScience Core Campuses.

In the Summer and Fall of 2022, the NAU PT program graduated 11 RHPP students who worked across Arizona including in Payson, Fort Defiance, White River, Prescott, Bisbee/ Douglas and Cottonwood. The students completed 10 weeks of terminal clinical experience in rural or medically underserved areas (MUAs), and each received a financial stipend to offset the cost of housing.

**Northern Arizona University (NAU) School of
Nursing (SON)
Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP)**

Shelley Vaughn, DNP, FNP-BC,
RHPP Director, Assistant Clinical Professor

2022–23 Program Highlights	
RHPP Students supported	38
RHPP Rotations supported	135
RHPP Rotation Hours supported	21,947
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	8
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	6

The NAU-SON RHPP provided clinical rotations for 38 students for nearly 22,000 hours in rural and urban underserved areas including the VA clinic (Miami-Globe), El Rio Community Health Center (Tucson), North Country HealthCare (Payson, Flagstaff), Gila Valley Clinic

In late December, a clinical preceptor from the White River Indian Hospital, Charles “Chuck” Cole, was nominated and won the Clinical Instructor of the Year award from the Phoenix BioScience Core Campus. He was nominated by Karen Cameros from the Class of 2022 and a PT RHPP student.

In May 2023 there were five NAU PT RHPP students headed out on terminal clinical experiences in rural/MUAs in Sierra Vista, Yuma and Safford. Some PT students complete more than one clinical experience in a rural/MUA.

NAU PT is recruiting students from the Class of 2024 to participate in our RHPP rural terminal clinical experience. Interest is strong and far reaching. There are recruit the new PT admits (Class of 2025) in early summer for the RHPP and for the AHEC Scholars Program for the new cohort.

NAU PT is in the initial stages of discussion and strategy to create a consistent collaboration with a rural clinical site to host multiple students per year. Challenges include garnering support from NAU and staffing/clinical issues from rural healthcare facilities.

The NAU strategic plan “elevating excellence” aligns well with the mission and goals of AzaAHEC Program and that of the PT RHPP. We look forward to continuing our collaboration to assure health equity and access to health care throughout Arizona in partnership with the AzaAHEC Program and Regional Centers.

(Safford), Ponderosa Family Care (Payson), Equality Care Center (Phoenix) and Kaplan Family Care (Sierra Vista).

Of the 38 NAU-SON RHPP students, 14 participated in the AzaAHEC Scholars Program (ASP) during FY 2022–23. These students engaged interprofessionally at AzaAHEC Regional Centers in conjunction with pharmacy, public health, medicine, physical therapy and physician assistant students. The curriculum included community immersions, monthly seminars and year-round teamwork.

Student participation in the 11th Annual Interprofessional Rural Health Professions Conference in April 2023 was a huge success. The NAU-SON RHPP and NAU PA RHPP students attended the conference co-located at the NAU Phoenix BioMed Campus. Through technology, the eight NAU-SON AzaAHEC Scholars from the 2021–23 Cohort and the six NAU-SON AzaAHEC Scholars from the 2022–24 Cohort joined their colleagues in podium and poster presentations.

University of Arizona College of Medicine-Tucson (COM-T) Family Medicine Residency

Sommer Aldulaimi MD, FAAFP

Director of Rural Health, Co-Director of Global Health Programs

Although 20% of the US population live in rural areas, only 11% of physicians work in rural areas. Rural areas average almost 20 fewer physicians per 100,000 population than urban areas (National Rural Health Association). Historically it has been challenging to train and retain physicians to practice rural areas. However, residents (graduate medical education or GME) who trained in rural areas had a five-fold higher chance of practicing in a rural area after training (Journal of Graduate Medical Education 2022).

The UArizona COM-T South Campus Family Medicine (FM) residency mission is to train physicians to work in rural and underserved areas in Arizona and beyond. This focus continues even after the two COM-T FM residencies merged into the UArizona Family Medicine Residency, but with separate tracks and match numbers. Our South Campus FM track continues to recruit residents committed to future practice in rural and underserved sites. This track provides our residents with advanced procedural, obstetrical and ultrasound training. AzaAHEC Program funding supports FM resident training in preparation for rural clinical practice and continues to send them to rural sites for 22 weeks minimum for rotations in rheumatology, border health, and others.

Spending significant time in rural areas allows our FM residents to experience the profound professional and personal benefits of living and working in Arizona's underserved and rural communities. The rural rotations attract some of our best residents, and why many stay to practice in Arizona's rural and underserved areas — often where they rotated as a resident. Our South Campus FM and internal medicine (IM) residents continue to see their rural rotations as a key element of their training. The FM and IM residencies at Banner University Medical Center South are most grateful for the AzaAHEC Program support of their rural training in Arizona.

During the 2022–23 academic year, we sent first-, second- and third-year FM residents to rural rotations in family medicine, obstetrics, gynecology, pediatrics, emergency medicine and community medicine at Fort Defiance, Polacca, Safford, Tuba City, Whiteriver, Payson, Douglas, Casa Grande, Bisbee and Nogales. We expanded sites in

Nogales and Copper Queen (Bisbee) as border health sites. FM residents rotate in Sells and San Xavier for part of their musculoskeletal experience. We continue to expand our rural sites and are excited about new rotations, including with the new American Indian Health AHEC Regional Center (AIH-AHEC).

FM residents completed 71 rural rotations and went to 12 rural sites during 13 blocks. The IM residents completed three rural rotations at two sites.

Each year, the AzaAHEC Program supports courses to help prepare FM residents for rural practice, including Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP), Advanced Obstetrical Life Support (ALSO), an introduction to medical Spanish and a “Point of Care Ultrasound (POCUS)” curriculum. The POCUS curriculum has been highly rated by the residents who report being more competent in ultrasound and using their skills in rural and urban underserved areas.

The South Campus track rural health curriculum includes border-health, wilderness and disaster medicine, POCUS and basic public health. We plan to add more case-based presentations, rural faculty presentations, and more wilderness medicine. We continue to present and publish on training physicians for rural practice. The quality of rural preceptor training is one of the most valued parts of the rural rotations and very highly regarded by residents. Evaluation feedback from both IM and FM residents is very positive. Residents select the recipient of the Rural Preceptor of the Year Award. Dr. Clayton Hargis, DO, from Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center in Safford, AZ received the 2023 award.

The South Campus Track continues to see a high percentage of their graduates stay in Arizona to work in underserved and rural areas. Over the last three years, 58% of our graduates practice in rural areas in the U.S.; 30% now work in an AzaAHEC Regional Center service area and are now training our residents, with 45% of those practicing in rural Arizona. This is one of the highest percentages we have had to date.

Eighty-nine percent of our FM residency graduates from the last three years work in federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), 60% of them in Arizona. Three residents from last year's graduating class decided to do fellowships this year, and one signed a contract to join our site in Safford to practice full-spectrum family medicine including surgical OB.

Each year, we continue to work with rural health facility staff in sharing rural practice opportunities as our residents begin their search for a permanent physician position. Because a high percentage of our residents practice in rural areas, we were honored to receive the National Rural Training Track Collaboration Rural Recognition for three of the last four years!



University of Arizona South Campus Family Medicine Resident Feedback:

“A highlight of being part of my South Campus family medicine residency at University of Arizona has been the ability to participate in our rural rotations longitudinally over our three years here. Rotating at my rural rotations during my medical training has been an invaluable experience and opened my eyes to the possibilities of practicing rural medicine within the full scope of family medicine practice. I rotated at Ft Defiance with the Indian Health Service, Safford, and Nogales and I truly enjoyed all these rotations. Growing up in the city, I would have not considered going into rural medicine upon graduation if it were not for these opportunities to rotate and AHEC support. I look forward to continuing my practice working along a bordertown during my upcoming fellowship and am considering rural positions for my post-training employment.” -Maria Ruiz (FM PGY3)

Colorado Plateau Center for Health Professions (CPCHP) Family & Community Medicine Residency

Marica Martinic, MPH, Director, Colorado Plateau Center for Health Professions (CPCHP)

CPCHP and North Country HealthCare (NCHC) graduated our first class of family medicine physicians from the NARBHA Institute Family & Community Medicine Residency Program this June. After ten years of planning and its launch in 2020, we are thrilled to celebrate Drs. Tasha Harder, Alex Lam, Elizabeth Curtiss, and Dan Shtutman who are all now board certified in family medicine and plan to stay in Arizona to practice.

Dr. Harder joined our residency faculty in October 2023. She coached for Girls on the Run at CPCHP during her undergraduate program at Northern Arizona University (NAU). She completed her medical school training at the NCHC Flagstaff training site for AT Still University School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona (ATSU-SOMA). It is such a joy to retain our graduates in Arizona and have them precept our students and residents.

**BLAISER/Frontera Summer Internships
University of Arizona (UArizona) Health
Sciences (UAHS)
Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
(OEDI)**

Francisco Moreno, M.D., Associate Vice President for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, (UAHS) Professor of Psychiatry, UArizona College of Medicine-Tucson (COM-T)

Alejandra Zapien-Hidalgo, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor, COM-T Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (UAHS-OEDI) managed the BLAISER and Frontera ten-week summer internships with stipends awarded to 40 undergraduate students. These internships prepare students for graduate health programs, provide research experiences, and help undergraduate students gain deeper understanding of health disparities along the U.S–Mexico border. Critical issues include the lack of diversity in the health workforce and the need for meaningful education and work opportunities for economically and educationally disadvantaged students from inner city, rural, border, and tribal communities.

The selection process is competitive, with 183 applications received. Selection criteria included a minimum GPA of 3.0, a strong interest in health disparities and health sciences, and self-reported educational or economic disadvantages. Preference was given to first-generation college students from rural or US–Mexico border areas. The selected cohort had diverse backgrounds. By ethnicity, students were 58% Hispanic/Latinx. By race, students were 34% White/Caucasian, 12% African American/Black, 4% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 8% Asian, 10% Multiracial, and



BLAISER|FRONTERA visit the Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers in Phoenix, AZ with CAAHEC

32% were from another race. In other demographics, 30% of the students were from rural communities, 24% were from border regions, and 8% were veterans.

The BLAISER/Frontera summer programs facilitated meaningful connections between students and faculty mentors from UArizona Colleges, including Medicine (Tucson-Phoenix), Public Health, Nursing, and Pharmacy. Interns engaged in biomedical and public health research aligned with their stated areas of interest. The program included academic support, such as MCAT and GRE preparation courses in partnership with UArizona Think Tank. A research instructor provided methodological support for student projects and a writing skill instructor provided feedback on their personal statements and their graduate program application essays.

The program had Phoenix and Tucson cohorts and both included a service-learning component. In Tucson, students collaborated with the Southern Arizona AHEC (SAAHEC), visiting Benson, Arizona, and engaging in activities such as cleaning streets and attending panels with community healthcare providers. In Phoenix, interns visited “The Zone” in partnership with Central Arizona AHEC (CAAHEC), where they distributed essential supplies to the houseless population. Students were trained to recognize opioid overdose and administer naran. The experiences provided valuable insights into healthcare challenges in rural and urban underserved settings.

The interns mentored students in the Med-Start Health Careers Program and participated in panel discussions and presentations, furthering their impact on the community.

On the post-program survey, 62% of students reported feeling more optimistic about their academic and long-term futures, with many expressing a newfound interest in public health and a commitment to serving medically underserved communities.



MedStart participant, David Valenzuela from Basha High School in Gilbert, AZ practices CPR Techniques in a simulation lab.

Med-Start Health Careers Program

Francisco Moreno, MD., Associate Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion University of Arizona (UArizona) Health Sciences (UAHS) Professor of Psychiatry, University of Arizona College of Medicine-Tucson (COM-T)

Lydia Kennedy, M.Ed., Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI)

Med-Start is a six-week summer academic enrichment program for 11th grade (junior) Arizona high school students interested in health careers. The program is a partnership between the Arizona Area Health Education Centers (AzaHEC) and UAHS-OEDI. Since 1969, Med-Start has attracted and prepared high school juniors from rural, border, tribal, and other educationally and economically disadvantaged communities for higher education and future careers in the health professions.

This year Med-Start completed its 54th year with 43 students who received five college credits (three in English, one each in chemistry and math). Med-Start received 230 applications, with 46 selected, 44 enrolled and 43 who completed the program. Selection criteria included evidence of interest in pursuing a health career, top academic performance, leadership experience, and community involvement.

Students were recruited and interviewed in collaboration with the AzaHEC Program Office in Tucson, and five AzaHEC Regional Centers: the Central Arizona AHEC (CAAHEC) housed in the Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers based in Phoenix; the Southern Arizona AHEC (SAAHEC) housed by El Rio Health based in Tucson; the Western Area AHEC (WAHEC) at the Regional Center for Border Health (RCBH) in Somerton; the Colorado Plateau Center for Health Professions (CPCHP) at North Country HealthCare in Flagstaff; and the American Indian Health AHEC (AIH-AHEC) also based in Flagstaff.

Students participated in tours of the UAHS Health Sciences Innovation Building in Tucson, UArizona College of Medicine-Phoenix, Grand Canyon University, Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, Midwestern University, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine, and AT Still University. Hands-on clinical activities included suturing, ultrasound, pharmacy compounding, scrubbing for surgery techniques, dental teeth molding and fillings, nail removal, intubation, optometry, DNA Cancer research, CPR/FA techniques, cadaver lab with identifying anatomy and certification to STOP the Bleed.

Students learned about a health professional careers with weekly career chats from practicing health professionals. They completed a financial literacy course on Spending Plans, Savings, and Ways to Invest in Themselves, and how to create and use a budget. Counselors and students taught them how to review their meal card balance and calculate how much to spend daily on meals.

During week two, Med-Start students met with representatives from the AzaHEC Regional Centers. Over the course of six weeks, the students collaborated with each other, a Med-Start Counselor, and their AzaHEC Regional Center representatives to develop their community health projects. On July 14, the students presented their AzaHEC Regional Center Research projects:

- **AIH-AHEC:** *Comparative Oncology: What Other Species and Humans Can Teach Us About Cancer*
- **SAAHEC:** *Good Health, New Vitality Information, Diabetes Prevention, New Child & Family Health Program: Powerful Families, Get Active at El Rio!*
- **CPCHP:** *What Causes the Majority of Winter Sports Accidents*
- **WAHEC:** *The Effects of Social Media on Youth*
- **CAAHEC:** *Diet and Mental Health: Links Between What We Eat and How We Feel*

An important Med-Start goal is to expand the health professions pathway choices and knowledge for diverse and culturally intelligent students by encouraging Arizona, rural, and tribal nation high school students to pursue higher education. These students are from economically or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented disadvantaged populations. Of the 43 students, 29 of the students were female (68%), 13 male (30%), and one non-binary (2%). Latinx/Hispanic students of all races comprised 63% (27) of participants; 19% (8) students were American Indian (Latinx and non-Latinx combined), 2% (1) African American and 7% (3) were Asian. Most students, 70% (30), were economically disadvantaged, 13 (30%) were from rural Arizona communities.

Arizona Health Workforce Data System: Pathways to Practice

Bryna Koch, DrPH, Susan Coates, MBA and Charles Drake, MS, MA

University of Arizona (UArizona) Center for Rural Health (AzCRH)

Education, training, retention, and support for the health workforce in rural and underserved areas are essential to carrying out the AHEC mission. Health workforce research and analysis inform decisions on policies and programs aimed at supporting health workforce pathways from education to practice.

With support from AzAHEC, AzCRH sustains the Arizona Health Workforce Data System (AzHWDS) project. The data warehouse supports our core report, the Arizona Health Workforce Profile Report. Our FY 2023 core workforce profile report includes updated workforce data for behavior analysts, counselors, marriage and family therapists, nurses, physician assistants, physicians, psychologists, social workers, and substance abuse counselors and includes new data for the dentist and dental hygienist workforce.

Some of the products created or updated by the health workforce team in FY 2023 include:

- Quantifying Arizona’s Primary Care Shortages
- Arizona Health Workforce Profile: Physician Specialty
- Graduate Medical Education in Arizona
- Timeline: Developing Arizona’s Healthcare Workforce Minimum Dataset

The workforce team maintains the Geographic Information System Hub that provides interactive maps including the Arizona Rural Health Safety Net Map and the Graduate Medical Education 2023 Residents and Sites Map.

Throughout the year our team assisted UArizona Health Sciences (UAHS) and its six colleges, community health centers, not-for-profit organizations, and other health workforce stakeholders to analyze data and answer workforce data questions to guide program and grant development and inform legislative and institutional policy deliberations. The team continued collaborating with the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), Health System Designation, Primary Care Office and started a new workforce-focused effort with the ADHS Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Systems.

Bryna Koch also presented the work of the team at the following conferences and meetings:

- ADHS Maternal and Infant Mortality Summit, August 2023.
- Arizona Public Health Association Spring Meeting, February 2023.
- UArizona GIS User Group meeting, May 2023
- 49th Annual AzCRH conference, June 2023.

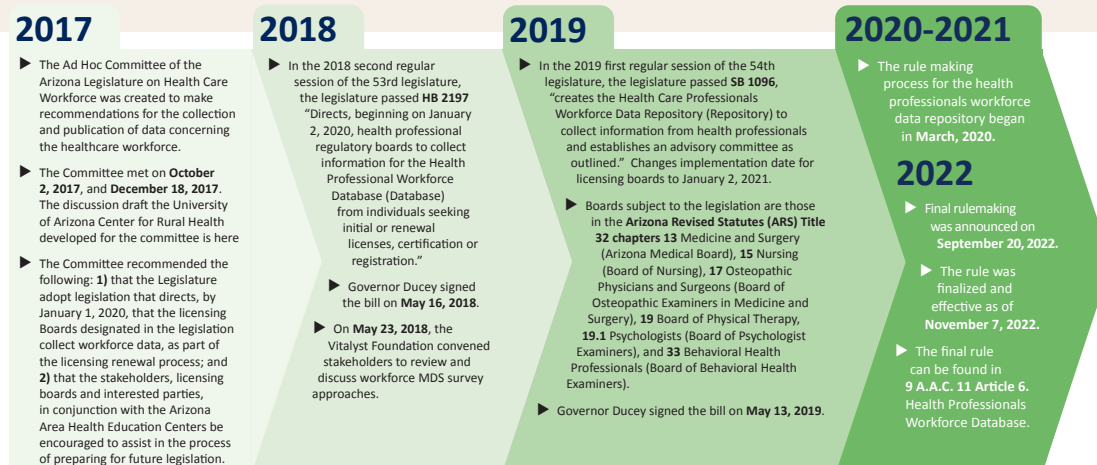
Additional Resources:

- AzCRH Health Workforce Data and Analysis
- AzCRH Workforce Reports and Briefs
- AzCRH Interactive Visualizations
- AzCRH ArcGIS Hub



TIMELINE: DEVELOPING ARIZONA HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE MINIMUM DATA SET (MDS)

Since 2017, Arizona healthcare stakeholders have collaborated to support the development of a system to provide timely, accurate, and standardized data about the healthcare workforce in our state, a minimum data set (MDS). Data on the healthcare workforce, including their primary work location, clinical hours, plans for retirement etc. is more important than ever as we observe the impacts and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on healthcare workers.



American Indian Health–AHEC (AIH-AHEC)

Jeff Axtell, M.Ed., Director

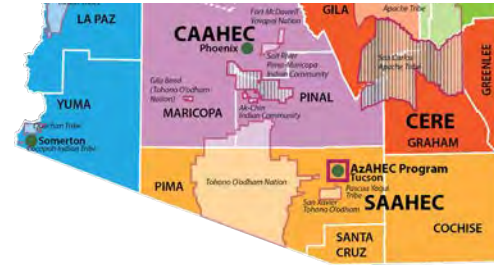
These are a sampling of how our Arizona Indigenous Peoples say Hello to one another in their cultural and unique languages: Ya’ah’teh, Maik’w, Loloma, Dagot’ee, Kam Yuu, Ha’u, Ya hoch, Kwichkamaduum, Skehg tash, Lios em chania, Keshi.

2022–23 AIH-AHEC Program Highlights	
Health Professions Unique Trainees	20
Health Professions Training Experiences	20
Health Profession Trainee Hours	2066
Structured Pipeline Participants	2
Health Career Event Participants	688

The AIH-AHEC, was established in September 2022, and is housed in the Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care (AACIHC). It serves the 22 Federally Recognized Tribal communities across Arizona. AIH-AHEC is focused on developing an American Indian health system with better representation from our Tribal communities. The mission is to improve the number of Indigenous youths entering the healthcare workforce, assisting college and graduate level students with educational and clinical experiences, and providing support for those health professionals currently working in Tribal healthcare facilities.

The AIH-AHEC, in close collaboration with its two Tribal partners, San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation (SCAHC) and Gila River Health Care (GRHC), implemented the AHEC essential services to improve the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals within their communities. AIH-AHEC embraces the “Grow Your Own” strategy to increase the number of young students from Tribal communities interested in becoming healthcare workers, returning to their home communities, and expanding the American Indian healthcare workforce.

The AIH-AHEC hired Jeff Axtell as Director in November 2022 and secured the Intergovernmental Agreements with its two partners in January 2023. The initial months of the established the infrastructure and viable processes for conducting AHEC functions within a state government organization. One success was the



establishing an Independent Fiscal Intermediary agency to assist AIH-AHEC with student stipend disbursements through a prepaid debit card. This allows our students to cover clinical rotation costs in real time, and eliminates that fiscal barrier.

In year one, AIH-AHEC focused on developing youth pathway programs and identifying community based education and training (CBET) opportunities for undergraduate and graduate health care students. We developed new collaborations with other agencies to expand awareness and increase opportunities for Indigenous students and healthcare providers.

Community Based Education and Training (CBET): AIH-AHEC collaborated with the Northern Arizona University (NAU) American Indian Nursing program to support 17 students in CBET rotations at Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities in Arizona. This focus on Indigenous students serving in Tribal Communities is exactly why the AIH-AHEC was created.

Another success is the Internship created at the Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care culminating in the student being hired on as the AIH-AHEC Youth Program Coordinator. AIH-AHEC CBET activities continue to grow and expand as the infrastructure, awareness, and opportunities within Tribal Healthcare facilities advance.

Pathways Programs: the AIH-AHEC participated in the MED-Start program in the Summer 2023 for high school students entering their senior year. Students worked on a research project entitled, “Comparative Oncology: What Humans and Sheep can Teach each Other.”

The AIH-AHEC’s Tribal partner programs reached nearly 700 Indigenous students through K–8 Youth Pathways programs focused on healthcare career activities. Highlights included:

- The Gila River Health Care’s “Medical Health Career Education Summer School Program” that introduced 415 K–8 students from five Gila River Indian Community schools in a four-week summer program with healthcare careers as part of the curriculum.

- The San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation (SCAHC) conducted a Summer Student Program in partnership with Harvard which provided an enrichment session for 91 students and young adult community members ages 16–22. The four-week summer program introduced participants to a wide variety of health care careers and increased youth participant knowledge and skills to better help their community!

AIH-AHEC Strategic Plan Development: One first-year objective was to develop a three-year strategic plan to guide our activities and outreach. A strategic planning committee with more than 45 participants drafted a AIH-AHEC Three-Year Strategic Plan to be finalized in October.

Growth: the American Indian Health-AHEC is preparing for an impactful year two now that many of the resources, staffing and program infrastructure has been put into place. The coming year promises to deliver more programs and opportunities for Indigenous youth and Tribal health care workers to continue to advance our American Indian Health Workforce.

“One of my favorite moments during my clinical experiences is speaking my native tongue, which is Navajo. There is a certain feeling of pride and accomplishment when I can mix my culture and nursing knowledge to provide patient care. I plan on going back and working in my own community when I graduate. Clinical experiences have helped me practice my Navajo language skills and also my nursing skills”

-T.L., Nursing Student, NAU



Shirley Boni, San Carlos Apache Health Care

**Central Arizona Area Health Education Center (CAAHEC)
Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers (AACHC)**

Ana Roscetti, MPH, Director

CAAHEC is based in Phoenix and serves the communities of Maricopa, West-Central Pinal, and South-Central Yavapai Counties. CAAHEC supports all aspects of the health professions pipeline, from K–12, health profession trainees (students and residents), and practicing providers. CAAHEC is embedded in the Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers (AACHC), a HRSA-designated Primary Care Association for Arizona with membership of 24 federally qualified health center (FQHC) systems operating in over 200 sites statewide. All are in rural and/or underserved areas in Arizona.



Two Scholars gave a podium presentation on “Mental Health Matters”.

Pipeline Program: CAAHEC expanded its pipeline programming to more schools and K–12th grade students reaching a total of 1,986 students engaged in HOSA, health professions structured programs and health career focused activities. CAAHEC launched its inaugural Research Mentor Program in the Spring of 2023, in partnership with Creighton University, where high school students were paired with medical student mentors to learn about research concepts including analyzing abstracts and journal articles. Mentors helped students prepare for a culminating presentation to faculty, mentors, staff, and parents about their chosen research topic. The Promoting Academic and Career Exploration (PACE) Conference held in April 2023 reached 160 high school students shared information on career pathways in medicine and health care, interactive workshops, health career speakers, and financial aid and scholarship programs. CAAHEC supported clubs and camps including Med-Start, Summer Scrubs, Summer Academy, Youth Engagement for Success (YES) Camp, Cardiology Camp, INSPIRE, and Summer Health Institute. CAAHEC supported student certifications in CPR and Basic First Aid (127 students), Narcan Training (83 students), and Stop the Bleed (105 students). Other high school student support included two health career speaker series, nine campus visits, six “Day of Service” job shadow days, one college fair, and one career fair.

Community Based Education and Training (CBET): CAAHEC placed, supported 181 students for clinical and non-clinical rotations in FY 2023, an increase from 167 students in FY 2022. CAAHEC provided housing support to 19 students rotating in CAAHEC’s service area, including seven Family Medicine residents and 12 medical students. CAAHEC partnered with the UArizona College of Nursing (CON) to support a series of summer and spring intensive community immersions in Nogales, Arizona to provide primary care and prevention services including COVID-19 vaccinations. CAAHEC supported the UArizona CON Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Training Series for nursing students and professionals. SANE Trainings consist of two and a half days of

lectures and 20 hours of intensive clinical skills training on sexual assault examination.

Continuing Medical Education (CME), Continuing Education (CE), Professional Development: CAAHEC is an approved provider for the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) CME, California Board of Nursing (CABRN) CE, and the National Association of Social Work (NASW) CE. This year, CAAHEC secured CE approval from the National Health Education Specialist Certification (NCHEC), Commission on Dietetic Registration (CRD), Association of Child Life

Professionals (ACLCP), HR Certification Institute (HRCI), and Society for HR Management (SHRM). CAAHEC continues to seek opportunities to expand CME and CE accreditation from other accrediting bodies.

Preceptor Development Training: CAAHEC identified the need to support community preceptors to expand clinical training sites for health professions students. CAAHEC hosted a preceptor development training in June 2023 reaching 28 health professionals.

2022–23 Program Highlights	
Health Professions Unique Trainees	181
Health Professions Training Experiences	195
Health Profession Trainee Hours	29,255
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	15
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	16
Structured Pipeline Participants	245
Continuing Education/Professional Development Participants	2,399
Health Career Event Participants	1,741

CAAHEC had a successful FY 2023, exceeding its performance metrics with 181 students placed and supported for 195 community based experiential training (CBET), 245 high school students engaged in health professions clubs, and 1,507 health professionals reached through 25 continuing education events. CAAHEC reached 892 health professionals through 12 professional development events and 1,741 youths in 35 health career focused pipeline activities.

AHEC Scholars Program (ASP): CAAHEC supported 31 graduate-level ASP Scholars this year: 16 Year One Scholars (Cohort 2022–24) and 15 Year Two Scholars (Cohort 2021–23). In collaboration with the Community Health Center of Yavapai and local community members, CAAHEC delivered meaningful immersion experiences highlighting the community of Prescott, Arizona and its surrounding areas. The April 2023 Interprofessional Rural Health Professions Program Conference highlighted our Scholars’ work: Year One Scholars gave a poster presentation on “Community Needs Assessment of North Yavapai County: Prescott, Chino Valley, and Paulden” and Year

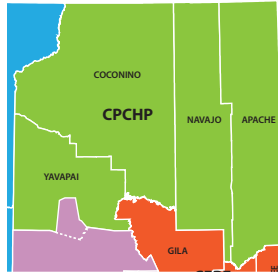


Attendees participating in the RHPP Conference at Arizona State University Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation (ASU CONHI)’s Satellite Viewing Location

The Colorado Plateau Center for Health Professions (CPCHP)

North Country HealthCare

Marica Martinic, MPH, Director, CPCHP, North Country HealthCare



2022–23 Program Highlights	
Health Professions Unique Trainees	347
Health Professions Training Experiences	885
Health Profession Trainee Hours	116,382
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	26
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	16
Structured Pipeline Participants	69
Continuing Education/Professional Development Participants	1,402
Community Health Education Participants	902
Health Career Event Participants	209

CPCHP had a successful year fulfilling our scope of work and increasing the breadth and depth of our service to the community. Key accomplishments this year included graduation of the first family medicine residency class (see Page 22), finding new ways to support preceptors across the region, establishing and expanding health career exploration and preparation programs.

Supporting Preceptors—Recognizing the need to elevate the quality of teaching in our vast service area and promote preceptor recruitment and retention, CPCHP established three workgroups to tackle key components of preceptor support in northern Arizona:

- The Preceptor Appreciation workgroup developed a timeline, budget and plan to recognize preceptors on a regular basis and coordinate efforts throughout the year, focusing on positive, individual feedback from students. We know that timely appreciation can help programs retain their preceptors, without whom the training programs cannot function.
- The Preceptor Development Program workgroup designed tools, resources, and best practices into a simple and accessible preceptor training program with a planned launch in December 2023. We aim to give all preceptors what they need to feel supported and encouraged to teach.
- The Geographic Training Strategy workgroup developed strategies to increase training opportunities in rural communities and reduce some of the training burden for preceptors in high-demand specialties like pediatrics

and obstetrics. The workgroup also developed tools to assist with student onboarding and clarity of expectations, to streamline teaching in rural areas.

Future Faces of Family Medicine—we launched the Future Faces of Family Medicine (FFFM) at the beginning of 2023. This after-school program brings together high school students from underrepresented minority, low-income, and/or first-generation backgrounds and family medicine resident physicians from the NARBHA Institute Family & Community Medicine Residency Program based at North Country HealthCare (NCHC). Resident mentors work directly with students to guide them in their pursuit of a future career as a physician or other healthcare professional. FFFM students participate in workshops such as ultrasound, heart dissection, suturing, social determinants of health and financial aid for higher education. Eight high school students from local schools joined the inaugural program this spring. The next session will occur in the fall of 2023 with the addition of physician shadowing in North Country HealthCare clinics.



Dr. Erinn Gallagher using a pig heart to teach FFFM participant, Addison Paris, about the human heart.



Dr. Alisse Ali-Joseph running with her daughter, Homma, in the annual Girls on the Run 5K.

Girls on the Run of Northern Arizona (GOTRNA) Expands to Tribal Communities—For the first time since fall 2019, Girls on the Run is hosting its program on the Navajo Nation and expanding to the Hopi Reservation. The path to serving girls on Navajo and Hopi is multifaceted and requires strong partnerships with people and organizations to best serve the Indigenous communities. GOTRNA proud of the foundation it built, including:

- Celebrating Native American Heritage Month at the Girls on the Run 5K, blessing and land acknowledgement, a Prayer Stick Runner, youth Corn Runner and the Yoyhoyam-Little Rain Cloud dancers on the 5K course.
- Learning from and working alongside Dr. Alisse Ali-Joseph, who is a GOTRNA mom, Oklahoma Choctaw citizen, and assistant professor of Applied Indigenous Studies at Northern Arizona University.

Tuba City Regional Health Care High School Exploration Program—Indigenous Pride Health Workers (IPHW) is a seven-week summer program for Native American high school students that includes shadowing and volunteering at Hopi Health Care Center, doing a community assessment, and participating in an immersive

camp at NAU. This program has been operating for over 20 years and has shown success in preparing Native American students for health careers. We had the opportunity this past summer to replicate this program on the Navajo Nation in partnership with Tuba City Regional Health Care.

Eight high school students participated in a four-week summer program, the Tuba City Regional Health Care High School Exploration program, or HSEP. Students took part in similar activities as the IPHW program, including job shadowing and volunteering. For three days, both programs came together for a residential camp at NAU. Students learned about the admissions process and free tuition opportunities as a Native American in Arizona. They experienced the on-campus resources available to Native American students, received their BLS and First Aid certification, and participated in health career exploration with local professionals. We look forward to continuing this summer program and possibly increasing the length of the camp for both programs.

Southern Arizona Area Health Education Center (SAAHEC)

El Rio Healthcare

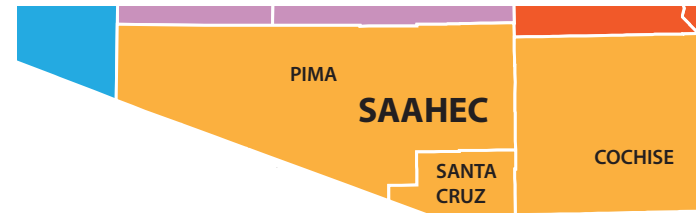
Felipe Perez, MD, Director

SAAHEC at El Rio Health was established in 2021 and serves Santa Cruz, Cochise, and Pima Counties. Our mission is to improve access to comprehensive, affordable, quality, and compassionate healthcare in Southern Arizona’s rural and medically underserved communities by increasing the supply, diversity, distribution, and training of healthcare professionals. SAAHEC supports all aspects of the health professions pipeline to practice including K-16, health professions learners, and practicing health professionals, and supports new initiatives to advance the AHEC mission.

2022–23 Program Highlights	
Health Professions Unique Trainees	190
Health Professions Training Experiences	296
Health Profession Trainee Hours	48,882
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	16
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	30
Structured Pipeline Participants	238
Continuing Education/Professional Development Participants	548
Community Health Education Participants	50
Health Career Event Participants	1,282

Health Professions Programs: SAAHEC facilitated 296 clinical training experiences for 190 unique graduate, undergraduate, and technical health profession trainees. Trainees included Family Medicine residents and Medical, Nurse Practitioners (NP), Medical Assistants, Dental and Pharmacy students.

AHEC Scholars Program (ASP): SAAHEC’s ASP 2021–23 cohort focused on the City of South Tucson and the 2022–24 cohort was split into groups that focused on four communities: Benson, Sierra Vista, Vail, and Nogales, Arizona. Scholars in interprofessional teams conducted a needs assessment and intervention and measured the impact of their efforts. An important concept included in the ASP curriculum is to focus on community assets and build community partnerships to foster realistic and sustainable changes desired by the community.



The 2021–23 SAAHEC Scholars presented their poster, “Resource Awareness in South Tucson, AZ” at the 2023 Interprofessional RHPP Conference. The 2022–24 SAAHEC Scholars gave a podium presentation for each of their respective communities and their needs assessments. Eighteen SAAHEC 2021–23 Scholars completed the program in 2023, and 30 SAAHEC 2022–24 Scholars are scheduled to complete the program in 2024.

Pipeline Programs: Training the next generations of healthcare workers requires early introduction to healthcare career opportunities. SAAHEC partnered with JTED, Cochise Community College, Pima Community College, and UArizona’s MedStart, BLAISER and Frontera programs to introduce the next generation to healthcare careers by creating meaningful experiences through presentations, externships, and shadowing opportunities. SAAHEC developed a weeklong summer program, Summer of Community Health Exploration Academy



Summer of Community Health Exploration Academy (SOCHEA) participant, Danitza Clark, during a tour of University of Arizona’s Health Sciences Innovation Building.

(SOCHEA) for high school students interested in health professions. SAAHEC supported 238 students in high school 9th–16th structured pipeline programs. SAAHEC participated in multiple health career and community outreach events reaching 1,282 students in grades K–16th from Pima, Cochise, and Santa Cruz counties.

Continuing Education and Professional Development:

In January 2023, SAAHEC officially joined the ranks of accredited continuing medical education (CME) providers in Arizona who are recognized for meeting the high level of quality established by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME). SAAHEC received its initial accreditation status from the Arizona Medical Association (ArMA) after a rigorous, nine-month, three-phase application process. As an accredited provider, SAAHEC can certify educational activities for the Category 1 credit of the American Medical Association’s Physician’s Recognition Award (AMA PRA)—the most widely recognized term for physician CME in the nation and recognized around the world by various countries’ physician certifying boards.



Summer of Community Health Exploration Academy (SOCHEA) participants, Natalee Almand and Carlos Garcia, during a tour of University of Arizona’s Health Sciences Innovation Building.

Guided by an interdisciplinary CME committee of providers from El Rio Health, Chiricahua Community Health Centers, and Mariposa Community Health Centers and others, SAAHEC actively supports, plans, and executes gap-specific, accredited CME activities tailored to the unique local practice environments of Southern Arizona’s primary care providers. Since receiving its two-year provisional accreditation status through ArMA, SAAHEC gave seven accredited CME events to nearly 300 healthcare professionals across Southern Arizona. SAAHEC was instrumental in the re-imagining, re-launch, and regional expansion of El Rio’s Health Research Poster Fair by creating added value through CME accreditation, event planning, and technology/virtual platform expertise.

Create Tomorrow: At El Rio Health, one of our organizational cultural beliefs is to “Create Tomorrow.” SAAHEC embraced this belief aligned with our goal to help foster partnerships in the communities we serve to address the healthcare needs of rural and underserved communities.



Summer of Community Health Exploration Academy (SOCHEA) participants Carlos Garcia, Danitza Clark and Natalee Almand.

**Western Arizona Area Health Education Center (WAHEC)
Regional Center for Border Health (RCBH)**

Joena Ezroj, M.Ed., Director

WAHEC is based in Somerton, Arizona and serves Yuma, La Paz and Mohave Counties. It is housed in the Regional Center for Border Health (RCBH), Inc. WAHEC celebrated its 35th anniversary and worked with community stakeholders to deliver health professional training and supported the health professions pipeline including K–16 students.

2022–23 Program Highlights	
Health Professions Unique Trainees	130
Health Professions Training Experiences	149
Health Profession Trainee Hours	20,691
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	14
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	14
Structured Pipeline Participants	171
Continuing Education/Professional Development Participants	383
Community Health Education Participants	112
Health Career Event Participants	30

Health Professions Participants: WAHEC facilitated 149 field experiences for 130 graduate, undergraduate and technical health profession trainees. Trainees included Medical Residents, Dietitians, Social Workers, Certified Nursing Assistants, Family Nurse Practitioners (FNP), Radiological Technicians, Registered Nurses and Medical Assistants. Trainees in the WAHEC region came from 15 different academic and residency programs.

Beginning in June 2023, WAHEC began collaboration with UArizona College of Medicine-Phoenix (COM-P) to implement a Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC) for two third-year medical students. The program immerses medical students in simultaneous clinical experiences across multiple medical specialties. The students learn about clinical skills and patient management through rotations at the RCBH San Luis Walk-In Clinic which offers a variety of specialties in a multidisciplinary, coordinated approach to patient care and addresses the social determinants of health for better patient health outcomes.

Pipeline Program Participants:

In 2022–23, WAHEC supported six health professional clubs which provided opportunities for high school students to explore and prepare for health careers. These structured pipeline programs reached 171 students across the WAHEC region, including at San Luis High School, Kofa High School, Lake Havasu High School, Antelope Union High School, and at PPEP TEC high schools in San Luis and Somerton. WAHEC participated in the Med-Start Program with other AzaAHEC Regional Centers. Med-Start students from the WAHEC Region presented their project on “The Effects of Social Media on Youth.”

Continuing Education and Continuing Professional Development: WAHEC provided continuing education events to 383 health professionals, on the topics including “Inclusive Practices: Children with Disabilities”, “Applied Behavior Analysis: What is it?”, and 26 attended “How to Identify and Image Patients at High Risk for Breast Cancer” and received Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits.

AzaAHEC Scholars Program (ASP): WAHEC supported 28 graduate-level ASP Scholars, including 14 each for the 2021–23 and the 2022–24 ASP cohorts. WAHEC’s 2021–23 ASP cohort focused on healthcare and behavioral health disparities in children in Yuma County and gave a podium presentation at the 11th Annual RHPP Conference on “Filling the Gaps: Mental Health Resources for Families of Children Experiencing Anxiety in San Luis, Arizona.” WAHEC’s 2023–24 ASP cohort focused on the Cocopah Nation and presented a poster at the Conference on “A Community Assessment of Cocopah Community.”

Community Health: WAHEC provided community health education to 112 community members, including on the topic of “Behavioral Modification Training.”



Eastern Arizona Health Education Center (EAHEC)

Jeri Byrne, BA, MS, Director

EAHEC was based in Globe, Arizona. It terminated its contract with the AzaAHEC Program in December 2022. The Center for Excellence in Rural Education (CERE-AHEC), see page 37, now supports the eastern Arizona counties. As an Arizona AHEC Regional Center, EAHEC supported community stakeholders in the delivery of health professional training.

2022–23 Program Highlights	
Health Professions Unique Trainees	40
Health Professions Training Experiences	54
Health Profession Trainee Hours	10,069
2021–23 AHEC Scholars supported	13
2022–24 AHEC Scholars supported	0
Structured Pipeline Participants	0
Continuing Education/Professional Development Participants	16
Community Health Education Participants	0
Health Career Event Participants	139

Health Professions Programs: EAHEC facilitated 54 health profession experiences for 40 health profession trainees including Registered Nurses (RNs), Medical (MD) and Physician Assistant (PA) students. This included two medical students from UArizona College of Medicine – Phoenix (COM-P) who participated in Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC) rotations in Payson.

Continuing Professional Development: In collaboration with Banner Payson Hospital, EAHEC reported 16 health professionals who participated in professional development events.

AHEC Scholars Program (ASP): The 2021–23 AzaAHEC Scholars cohort focused on Tonto Basin as part of their community immersion experience. The 2023 Interprofessional Rural Health Professions Program Conference held in April 2023 highlighted their work with a podium presentation on “Implementing a Telehealth Program in Tonto Basin, Arizona.” Thirteen Scholars completed the ASP in Spring 2023.



Ann Garn

**Center for Excellence in Rural Education (CERE)
Mogollon Health Alliance (MHA) Foundation, Payson**
Jennifer Smith, MBA, MS, C.Ped, Executive Director

CERE is honored to partner with the AzaAHEC Program as the newest AzaAHEC Regional Center beginning June 1, 2023. CERE is a subsidiary of MHA Foundation founded in 1958 in Payson, and whose mission promotes health and education in the region. Over the years, MHA has contributed tens of millions of dollars in community support to advance its mission. CERE’s AzaAHEC service area includes Gila, Graham, and Greenlee Counties.

Community Based Experiential Training (CBET): To facilitate a robust CBET program, CERE worked diligently to build relationships with nearly three dozen academic and clinical partners. Clinical training sites were established in Globe, Safford, Thatcher, and Payson. Each site hosts a range of health professions rotations, from allied health to medicine and advanced practice providers.

CERE’s longstanding relationships (via its parent organization, the MHA Foundation) with the University of Arizona (UArizona) Colleges of Medicine (COM) in both Phoenix and Tucson afford us opportunities to provide exceptional support to the Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC) program. Third-year medical students from both institutions enjoy 9 to 12-month rotations in the Payson area. CERE is thrilled to support this program through a unique housing opportunity, compliments of a half-dozen houses owned by the Foundation and dedicated to the purpose of housing medical and allied health students during CBET rotations.

CERE leadership as well as the clinical leadership at our training sites, see our students holistically and are committed to meeting their basic human needs wherever possible. As a result, CERE offers a unique food stipend program for CBET rotation participants. Stipends allow us to support more students in their very rural rotations, where they



find limited options to meet their needs.

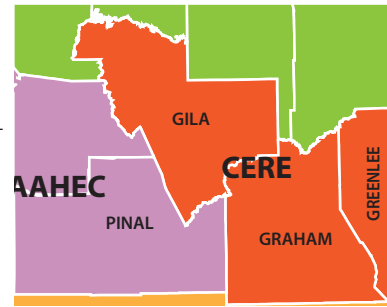
9–16 Pipeline Programs:

Collaborative relationships were developed between CERE and the local school districts, community colleges, Northern Arizona Vocational Institute of Technology (NAVIT) and Cobre Valley Institute of Technology (CVIT). NAVIT and CVIT work with community colleges in the region to provide allied health courses to both high school students and adult learners. CERE will offer support to their respective HOSA and other health related clubs.

CERE looks forward to working with local health care providers and faculty to provide summer and school break club opportunities to students in grades 9–12.

Continuing Education: CERE is becoming accredited to offer continuing education (CE, CME) to health providers practicing in our service area. In the meantime, CERE will continue to provide support for CE/CME events offered in collaboration with Banner Payson Medical Center and other local, independent providers.

Community Health-Related Events: In collaboration with the MHA Foundation, CERE will offer support to multiple community health related events. The first was a Women’s Wellness Forum for nearly 300 local participants. This fall, the Foundation will host its annual Health and Care Fair, wherein hundreds of local citizens have access to free and greatly reduced cost medical testing and meet local health providers. Quarterly, CERE partners with both the MHA Foundation and local fire departments to offer CPR training to the community.



AzaAHEC Financial Review for Fiscal Year 2022–23

Amanda Perkins, M.Ed, CPA
Assistant Director for Finance, AzaAHEC Program

The AzaAHEC Program earns Federal funding from Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), Bureau of Health Professions through a competitive Model AHEC grant. It requires 1:1 matching non-federal funds. Statutory state funding is from the Arizona State Lottery for the AzaAHEC Program (ARS § 5-572C) under the jurisdiction of the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR). It is in year two of its five-year federal funding cycle.

The AzaAHEC Program is administered through the University of Arizona Health Sciences (UAHS) Office of the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences (OSVPHS), Michael D. Dake, MD. Leila Barraza, JD, MPH, is Director of the AzaAHEC Program, and as of 10/1/2023 serves as PI of the HRSA Model AHEC grant. Daniel Derksen, MD, serves as the AzaAHEC

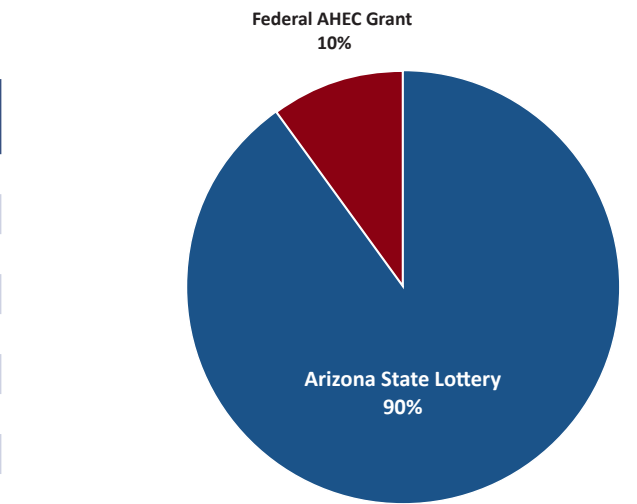
Program Senior Advisor, as part of his role as the OSVPHS Associate Vice President (VP) for Health Equity, Outreach & Interprofessional Activities. He served as Principal Investigator (PI) of the HRSA Model AHEC grant from 7/1/2020 through 9/30/23. Jennifer Zúñiga is the AzaAHEC Program Associate Director.

Federal and state funding supports AzaAHEC Regional Centers (AIH-AHEC, CERE-AHEC, CAAHEC, CPCHP, SAAHEC, and WAHEC) via annual reimbursement subcontracts administered through the AzaAHEC Program Office following University of Arizona, state, and federal requirements. AzaAHEC supports the Arizona statute-required Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP) (ARS § 15-1754).

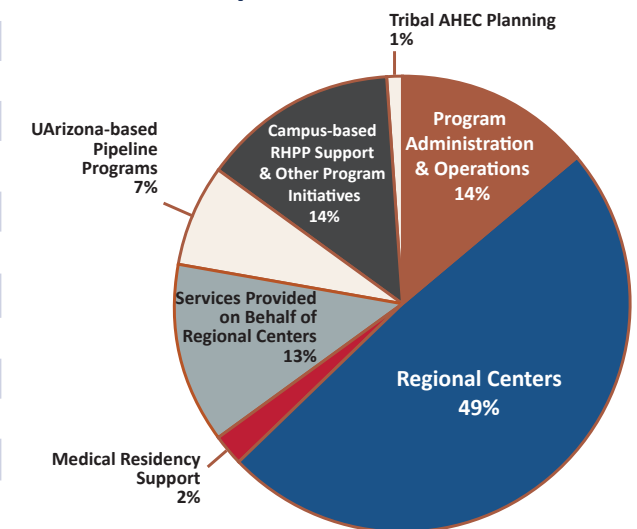
AzaAHEC Employment Data 2022–23: Arizona AHEC Programs employ 136 people statewide, operating as important economic forces in their communities.

Item / Initiative	FTEs	“Person Count”
AzaAHEC Program Office	8.58	14
AIH-AHEC	2.75	6
CERE-AHEC	0.29	3
CAAHEC	4.91	19
CPCHP	5.68	8
EAHEC	1.33	6
SAAHEC	4.75	5
WAHEC	5.30	8
RHPP COM-PHX	0.94	4
RHPP COM-TUS	0.65	4
RHPP CON	0.55	4
RHPP COPH	0.72	12
RHPP COP	0.40	2
RHPP ASU Nursing	0.70	5
RHPP NAU Nursing	0.26	2
RHPP NAU Physical Therapy	0.08	1
RHPP NAU Physician Assistant	0.68	7
NAU Dental Hygiene	0.20	1
North Country Residency Program	0.41	1
South Campus Primary Care Residencies	0.20	3
BLAISER/FRONTERA	0.69	4
Med-Start Program	1.54	12
Establishing an Arizona Health Workforce Data System	2.40	5
TOTAL	44.01	136

AzaAHEC Funding Sources 2022–23



Expenditures 2022–23



Arizona AHEC Regional Centers

American Indian Health AHEC (AIH-AHEC)

801 E. Jefferson Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85034
928-714-6925
Jeffrey Axtell, Director

Center for Excellence in Rural Education AHEC (CERE)

431 S. Beeline Highway Ste. 1
Payson, AZ 85541
928-472-2588
Jennifer Smith, Executive Director
Service Region: Gila, Graham, Greenlee Counties

Central Arizona AHEC (CAAHEC)

Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers (AACHC)
700 E. Jefferson
Suite 100
Phoenix, Arizona 85034
602-253-0090
Ana Roscetti, MPH, Director of Workforce, AACHC (until 9/14/2023)
<https://aachc.org/workforce-caahec/>
Service Region: Maricopa County, Pinal and south-central Yavapai Counties

Colorado Plateau Center for Health Professions (CPCHP)

c/o North Country HealthCare
2920 North Fourth Street
Flagstaff, AZ 86004-1816
(Mailing) PO Box 3630, ZIP: 86003
928-522-9855
Marica Martinic, Director
<https://coloradoplateauchp.org/>
Service Region: Apache, Coconino, Navajo Counties and eastern portions of Yavapai County

Southern Arizona AHEC (SAAHEC)

c/o El Rio Health
1230 S. Cherrybell Strav
Tucson, AZ 85713
520-309-4019
Felipe Perez, Director
www.southernazahec.org
Service Region: Cochise, Pima, Santa Cruz Counties

Western Arizona AHEC (WAHEC)

Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.
950 East Main Street, Bldg A
Somerton, AZ 85350-0617
PO Box 617
928-315-7910
Joena Ezroj, Director
<https://www.rcfbh.org/western-arizona-ahec.html>
Service Region: La Paz, Mohave, Yuma Counties

ARIZONA AHEC PROGRAM FY 2022–23

Advisory Commission Members

Michael Allison

Retired, Native American Liaison, Arizona Department of Health Services Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs

Kristina Diaz

Residency Program Director, Yuma Regional Medical Center

Amanda Klein

Scientific Director, Critical Path Institute

Kristen Grimes McCabe

Interim Infection Control Officer, San Carlos Apache Healthcare

Ed Paul

Director, Family Medicine Residency Program, North Country Healthcare

Randall Flores

Clinical Pharmacist, Chiricahua Community Health Centers

Jessica Madrid

Nurse Practitioner, San Carlos Indian Hospital

Ex Officio

Suganya Karuppana

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Mike Oxtoby

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Daniel Preston

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The Arizona Area Health Education Center (AzAHEC) Program is administered through the University of Arizona (UArizona) Health Sciences (UAHS) Office of the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences (OSVPHS). UAHS Colleges include the College of Medicine–Tucson (COM-T), COM–Phoenix (COM-P), College of Nursing (CON), R Ken Coit College of Pharmacy (RKC-COP), the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health (MEZCOPH), and the College of Health Sciences (CHS).

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Arizona AHEC Annual Report

Managing Editor: Jennifer Zúñiga, Associate Director, Arizona Area Health Education Centers

Design: Ann Garn, Arizona Center for Rural Health

Leila Barraza, JD, MPH, Director, AzAHEC Program

Daniel Derksen, MD, Senior Advisor, AzAHEC Program, Associate VP, OSVPHS

Landscape photos by Shirley Boni, San Carlos Apache Health Care; (Cover, p 26)

Ann Garn, Arizona Center for Rural Health; (p 29)

Amber Hooper, Copper Queen Community Hospital; (p 16)

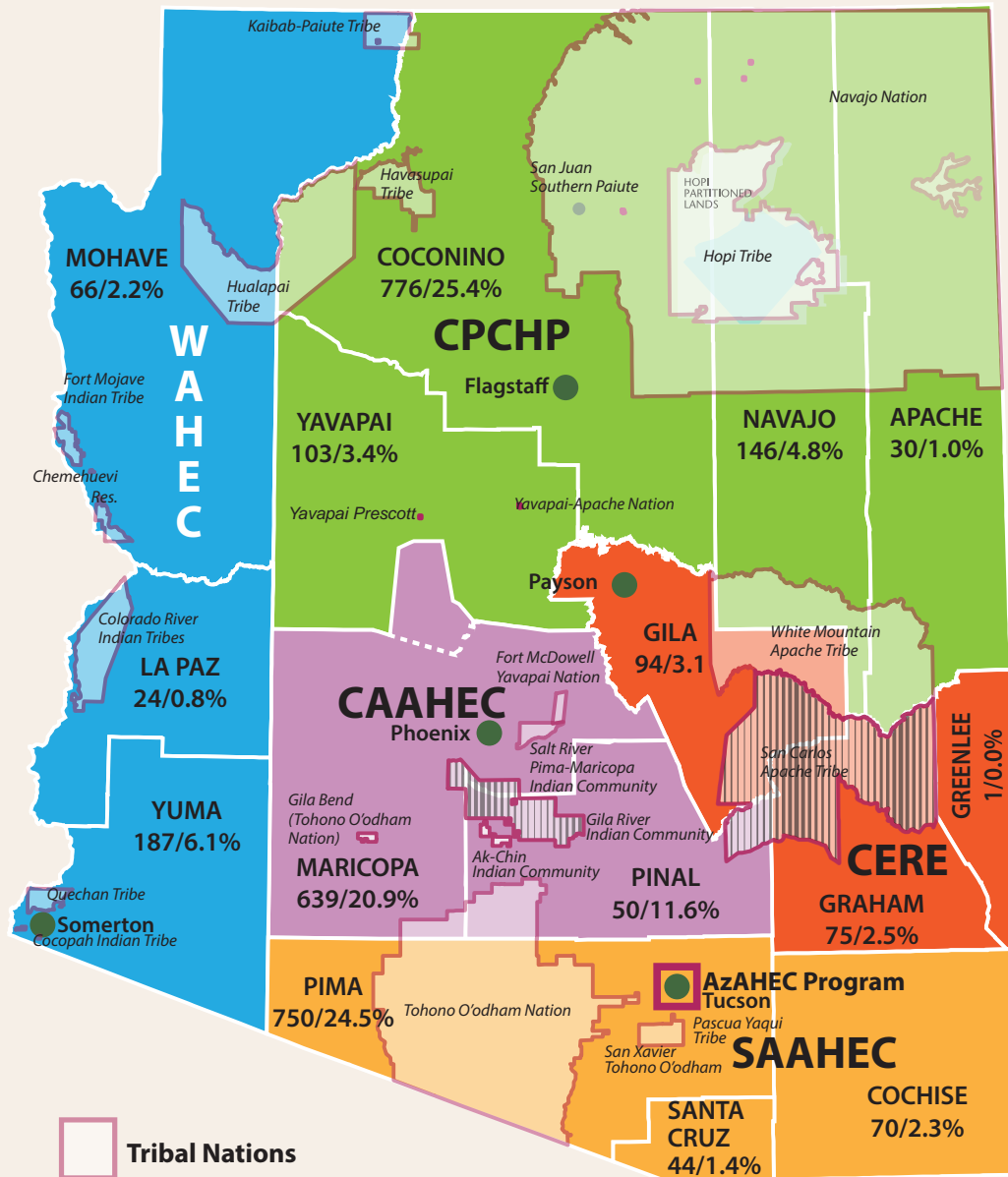
Ken Miller, (p.i, p 10, 23, 35)

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AzAHEC Health Professions Field Experiences by County (total 3,055)

Number and percent of field experiences are reflected immediately below the name of each county where these occurred.



-  Tribal Nations
-  Arizona Area Health Education Center Program Office (AzAHEC) Tucson
-  American Indian Health Area Health Education Center (AIH-AHEC)
-  Central Arizona Area Health Education Center (CAAHEC)
-  Center for Excellence in Rural Education (CERE)
-  Colorado Plateau Center for Health Professions (CPCHP)
-  Southern Arizona Area Health Education Center (SAAHEC)
-  Western Arizona Area Health Education Center (WAHEC)



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Arizona AHEC
 Area Health Education Centers