

2025 Alumni/Advocate of the Year honorable mention honorees



Diyana Ahmed

Diyana Ahmad is recognized for her strong commitment to rural health, academic excellence, and community-focused service. As a student at the University of Arizona R. Ken Coit College of Pharmacy, she consistently demonstrated professionalism, curiosity, and compassion, both in the classroom and in her preparation for post-graduate training.

Through the Rural Health Professionals Program, Ahmad completed five rural rotations—two more than required—earning high praise from preceptors and later speaking to incoming students about the value of rural practice. As an Arizona AHEC Scholar, she served as a team lead supporting the Apache Junction community, applying her global perspective, shaped by her upbringing in Kurdistan and work with the United Nations, to address local health needs through multidisciplinary collaboration.

Ahmad's dedication to lifelong learning was evident in her selection for the competitive 2024 American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP) Aspiring Academics Program. She plans to pursue an industry fellowship after completing her Doctor of Pharmacy degree in 2026, continuing her commitment to advancing health care through service, leadership, and community engagement.



C. Lauren Erdelyi, DrPH, MPH, PMP

Dr. C. Lauren Erdelyi is recognized for her long-standing commitment to strengthening Arizona's primary care workforce and her continued service to the mission that first shaped her as an AHEC Scholar. Growing up in a medically underserved area inspired her path in public health and fuels her dedication to improving access to care. As an Arizona AHEC Scholar during her DrPH program, she trained in rural and tribal communities, gaining experience that continues to guide her work today.

Dr. Erdelyi now serves as program manager for the Arizona AHEC Primary Care Consortium and Graduate Medical Education, where she helps build the infrastructure needed to prepare future physicians and public health professionals for practice in high-need areas. Her work includes developing new training programs with community hospitals and tribal health systems, aligning funding to support faculty and clinical sites, mentoring students, and coordinating statewide efforts to strengthen primary care pipelines.

Beyond her operational leadership, Dr. Erdelyi actively promotes AHEC's mission at state and national levels. She incorporates community-based learning principles into her teaching at the University of Arizona and represents AHEC priorities in national forums, including her service on the American Public Health Association's Education Board. Her advocacy, mentorship, and commitment to community-centered training reflect the values of the AHEC model and contribute to a stronger, more equitable workforce across Arizona.



Melissa Vodicka, DNP, APRN, CPNP-AC/PC

Dr. Melissa Vodicka is honored for her exceptional dedication to advancing pediatric care and improving access for children and families in rural Arizona. An alumna of the AzaHEC Scholars Program, she began her training in acute care pediatrics before expanding into primary care after witnessing firsthand the systemic barriers rural families face. Her early clinical work in pediatric emergency and critical care, along with experience in correctional health, grounded her commitment to health equity and shaped her dual certification in both acute and primary pediatric care.

As a DNP student, Dr. Vodicka focused her doctoral project on improving care for children with bronchiolitis in rural hospitals. Her accomplishments earned her multiple honors, including outstanding graduate of ASU's Edson College, the NAPNAP Foundation Award, an AZ-NAPNAP DNP Student Award, and the AzaHEC Best Poster/Presenter recognition. A National Health Service Corps Scholar and Rural Health Professions Program alumna, she later represented ASU as an advocacy scholar in Washington, D.C., demonstrating her leadership on issues impacting underserved populations.

Today, Dr. Vodicka provides comprehensive pediatric care at a federally qualified health center, collaborating closely with colleagues across behavioral health, pharmacy, dentistry, nutrition, and social services to address the full spectrum of patient needs. Her commitment extends beyond clinical practice: she serves as president of the Arizona chapter of NAPNAP, mentors DNP students, presents nationally, and remains engaged in community initiatives, including monthly food drives.