Defining AHEC in Minnesota:
A New Generation of AHECs Build Partnerships Through a Shared Model

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Agenda

• Minnesota AHEC: brief description
• A shared philosophy
• The process of selecting a host community
• Willmar: A host community’s perspective
• Generating broad public interest
Minnesota AHEC

- Funded in 2002
- First AHEC in Minnesota
- Developed two regional AHECs using similar philosophy
- Regional centers developing as 501(c)3 non-profit corporations
University of Minnesota Academic Health Center

- School of Dentistry
- Medical School, Twin Cities
- School of Medicine, Duluth
- School of Nursing (Twin Cities and Rochester)
- College of Pharmacy (Twin Cities and Duluth)
- School of Public Health
- College of Veterinary Medicine
- Allied Health Programs (Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Mortuary Science, Medical Technology, Genetic Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling)
- Centers and Institutes (Bioethics, Spirituality and Healing)
Greater Minnesota Strategy

- Demonstrated commitment by health sciences and University leadership for regional engagement
- AHEC led University in strategic thinking about regional engagement
- Based in mutual understanding between communities and Academic Health Center of role of partners in addressing common challenges
- Ensures students, communities and partners grow together by working together
- Inspired by University land grant mission to serve Minnesota and its citizens
- Necessary to meet the growing health professions workforce demands of the state
Symbiotic Relationships through AHEC

- Based on shared risks, shared resources and shared benefits
- Common understanding that all partners have assets to contribute
- Community desire to develop innovative strategies to address health workforce
- University desire to connect students with greater Minnesota
Creating a Community-Based Process to Select an AHEC Host Community

- Community Forums organized across region
  - Held 5-9 months prior to selection date
  - Hosted in communities with history of academic collaboration
  - Hosted by community partners

- RFP Process for AHEC Host Community Designation
  - Specific communities were invited to participate
  - Additional communities welcomed to participate
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- Regional Community Forum convened to showcase communities
  - Held in neutral community within the region
  - Five-person community teams showcased community assets and commitment
  - Open and transparent process to ensure all communities were engaged in process

Willmar community team presentation
- Community host selected by academic faculty based on community presentations
  - Host community held accountable by community peers
  - Academic faculty engaged in newly developing AHEC
  - Community members developed new relationships in region

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Barbara Brandt
Director, Minnesota AHEC

Community forum participants
Criteria for Selection of Host Communities

Strengths (community support and involvement, leadership capacity, health professions training experience, connections to U of M AHC programs, etc)

Resources (education and training facilities, student housing, established community health networks, office space, etc)

Experience with collaboration and regional involvement (regional partnerships, leadership roles, organizational participation, facilitation of regional activities, etc)

Creativity and innovation (examples that demonstrate unique approaches to problem solving, creative uses of resources, etc)
Southern Minnesota AHEC Host
Community Selection

- Four communities participated
- Community participants included health care leadership, community members, Chambers of Commerce, business and industry, city mayors, residency director, and community organizations
- Teams presented community information based on identified criteria
- Many questions followed each presentation
- Communities networked and exchanged ideas for collaboration
Willmar, Minnesota
Selected as AHEC Host Community

• Strong broad-based community support
• Regional vision for leadership
• Examples of strong educational linkages
• Demonstrated capacity and experience to successfully foster partnerships and opportunity
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### Who we are

| Beds                     | 110 Acute  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>78 Skilled Nursing Facility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Medical Staff</td>
<td>99</td>
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| Primary & Secondary Service Area | 11 Counties  
|                          | 185,000 population         |
| 2003 Inpatient Admissions | 4860                        |
| 2003 Births              | 865                         |
| 2003 Net Revenues        | $72 million                 |
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Willmar is a growing city, yet a friendly town. A city of approximately 20,000 residents, Willmar stands out as one of the fastest growing non-metropolitan communities in Minnesota. Recently ranked "19th Most Livable Small City in the Nation" by Life in America's Small Cities, its economic base is diverse and yet stable.
As the largest community in west central Minnesota, Willmar serves as the commercial center for the region. Its economic base encompasses a 14 county area composed of over 220,000 persons.

It has a unique tradition of individual growth and development that brings the best of many worlds to those who choose to live here. People can choose to live on a mini-farm, by a lake, in the woods, in one of the nearby small towns, or in the city.
Healthcare as Economic Driver in Communities

“It’s why the public has a stake in the AHEC even though most aren’t directly involved. Maybe they won’t notice anything today, but we’re planning ahead for ten years from now.”

Kathryn Nelson, M.D., Family Physician, Willmar, MN
The Role of Partnerships in Shaping the Future Workforce

Willmar understood the benefit to the community and region well into the future in ways that could not be articulated or described at the time the decision was made to compete for the host site designation.

Specifically:
• Unique role of University in producing key health professions leaders
• Importance of student training to recruitment and retention of health professionals
• Importance of taking the long view when developing workforce development strategies
“We’ve got to get beyond the old models.”
— Dr. Frank Cerra
U of M Academic Health Center

Health education system proposed

Willmar, Minn.

Finalists

Willmar, Montevideo vying for regional health education center

“The university wants to create something with some staying power. We need to be able to show how we can do that.”
— Lorry Massa
CEO Rice Memorial Hospital

AHEC to create new opportunities Center to provide rural health care training

Search begins for director of health center

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Media Coverage

- *ABC National News*
- *The Associated Press*
- *The Business Journal (Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN)*
- *KARE-11 (Minneapolis NBC Affiliate)*
- *KEYC-CBS (Mankato, MN)*
- *KEYC-TV (Mankato, MN)*
- *KLGR - AM (Redwood Falls, MN)*
- *KSFY-TV (Sioux Falls, SD)*
- *KWLM - AM (Willmar, MN)*
- *Marshall Independent (Marshall, MN)*
- *Minnesota Department of Health Office of Rural Health and Primary Care Monthly Update*
- *Minnesota News Network, Minnesota Public Radio*
- *The National AHEC Bulletin*
- *University of Minnesota AHC News Capsules*
- *University of Minnesota Brief*
- *West Central Tribune (Willmar, MN)*
To learn more about the AHEC development process in Minnesota, check out the article, "Creating New AHEC Partnerships: The Benefits of Community Engagement (p4)," featured in the Spring 2004 edition of *The National AHEC Bulletin*. 
For More Information

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