Minnesota AHEC has continued to connect with communities in partnerships that address health and health workforce issues in Greater Minnesota. This Update reflects the excitement and momentum being experienced across the Minnesota AHEC network.

In December 2003, Willmar was selected as the regional host community for the Southern Minnesota AHEC following a series of community forums. An article, Creating New AHEC Partnerships: The Benefits of Community Engagement, co-authored by Jeny Stumpf Kertz and Lorry Massa details the strong level of community engagement and visionary leadership Willmar and other communities are demonstrating to support the health workforce of the entire region. We are working together to encourage dental, medical, nursing, pharmacy, public health and veterinary medical students to consider rural health careers.

In Northeast Minnesota, health professionals and community partners have displayed tremendous energy and enthusiasm for the development of community videos that will be available through the Minnesota AHEC Web site this Fall. Each video will showcase health care opportunities and stories about community life for Academic Health Center students interested in rural training or considering rural practice. Additional videos will be produced in Southern Minnesota communities Fall 2004.

It is apparent that communities across the state are invested in preparing the next generation of health professions leaders for their communities. Minnesota AHEC staff, the University of Minnesota Academic Health Center and community partners will have the opportunity to share these inspiring stories at the National AHEC Organization conference in August.

I welcome your comments and look forward to continuing our work with you in the future. Please email feedback to mnahec@umn.edu.

Sincerely,
Barbara Brandt, Ph.D.
Director, Minnesota AHEC and Assistant Vice President for Education
University of Minnesota Academic Health Center
Minnesota AHEC

Minnesota AHEC featured in *The National AHEC Bulletin*

Jeny Kertz, Deputy Director of Minnesota AHEC, and Lawrence Massa, CEO of Rice Memorial Hospital in Willmar, co-authored the article, *Creating New AHEC Partnerships: The Benefits of Community Engagement*. The article is featured in the Spring 2004 edition and focuses on the community-based process used to identify a host community for the regional AHECs in Minnesota. Highlights include discussion of a shared risk, reward and benefit partnership model and the collaboration of communities in shaping regional AHECs. *The National AHEC Bulletin* is a semi-annual publication by the National AHEC Organization.

Community videos featuring rural educational partners and community life will be available through the Minnesota AHEC Web site this Fall

Minnesota AHEC is working with health professions students, health professionals and community partners to develop a series of community videos and online resources for AHC students exploring rural training and future employment options.

The profiles and videos will feature …

- community health care facilities
- recreational opportunities
- interviews with current students training in the community
- information about special health care opportunities in the community
- stories about community life

The first phase of community videos and online resources will feature Aitkin, Cook, Hibbing, International Falls and Moose Lake in NE Minnesota. Videos will be available beginning Sept 1. Additional videos will be produced in Southern Minnesota communities Fall 2004. Funding for this project is made possible through a grant by the University of Minnesota Council on Public Engagement.

Minnesota AHEC to present at National AHEC Organization conference

Minnesota AHEC representatives and community members will attend the *National AHEC Organization conference* July 31 – August 4th in Baltimore, Maryland. The workshop offers AHEC staff and community partners the opportunity to learn about the latest in education, policy development, program administration, and new technology. Minnesota AHEC staff and community partners will present two seminars to a national audience; *Creating a Virtual Community Presence on Campus* and *Defining AHEC in Minnesota: A New Generation of AHECs Build Partnerships Through a Shared Model*.

USDA Administrator leads health outreach discussion

On July 15, Barbara Brandt, AHC Assistant Vice President for Education, and Shirley Baugher, Dean, College of Human Ecology, hosted a day-long discussion about how the College of Human Ecology, Minnesota Extension Service and Academic Health Center schools could work more closely together. The focus was on sharing outreach models and partnerships focused on the health agenda of individuals and community organizations that address the health agenda. About 15 people from across the University participated in the discussion.

Dr. Mary Gray, Deputy Administrator, Research, Extension and Education, United States Department of Agriculture facilitated the conversation and linked University of Minnesota participants with colleagues from a variety of land-grant institutions around the country to learn about examples of innovative models in practice.
RPAP Director joins Minnesota AHEC

Newly appointed Rural Physician Associate Director (RPAP) director, Gwen W. Halaas, MD, MBA, has joined Minnesota AHEC in the AHC Office of Education to coordinate the work of the two programs. Dr. Halaas has extensive experience in systems-based practice, the team approach to care, and has a history of commitment to health professions education. She is committed to rural workforce development and will serve as a liaison between RPAP and AHC schools and colleges to advance the development of interprofessional education opportunities in greater Minnesota.

Dr. Halaas attended Harvard Medical School and completed her family medicine residency at Bethesda Lutheran Hospital in St. Paul (currently St. Joseph's Hospital). Following private practice, Dr. Halaas held leadership positions as associate director and director of two Twin Cities family medicine residency programs, medical director of UCare Minnesota, and associate medical director for health policy at HealthPartners.

Dr. Halaas is one of fifteen physicians profiled in the book, Big Doctoring in America: Profiles in Primary Care and has authored The Right Road, a book on health and wellness for pastors and church workers.

Interprofessional Education Strategic Planning Meeting held in Duluth

On June 8, an Interprofessional Education Strategic Planning Session was held in Duluth. The event was designed as a planning session for interprofessional education among health professions programs in the Duluth area. Discussions focused on curriculum competencies, didactic/classroom content, experiential/clerkships, clinical skills assessment, and community involvement. Participants included faculty from the College of Pharmacy and Medical School, Twin Cities and Duluth campuses, and the College of St. Scholastica.

Robin Harvan, Ed.D., of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center gave the keynote address. Jeny Stumpf Kertz of Minnesota AHEC facilitated the break-out discussions focused on experiential/clerkships. Funding for the event was provided by MinnCare Educational Small Grants. Special thanks to Sarah Westburg, Pharm.D. for coordinating the planning session.

Northeast Minnesota AHEC

Northeast Minnesota AHEC and the Quentin N. Burdick Program for Rural Interdisciplinary Training developed interprofessional program to help increase team-care visibility

In June 2004, health professions students spent four-days working and learning together in Hibbing. Activities included:

- Introducing students to discipline-specific educational requirements and interdisciplinary team concepts.
- An AHEC-sponsored luncheon to introduce students to members of the Hibbing community.
- A presentation by Dr. Jerry Pedersen, Hibbing Community College Dental Clinic director, about the impact of dental disease on patient health and well-being.
- A discussion with Dr. David Born, director of the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry’s Division of Health Ecology, about financial and personal considerations related to rural healthcare practice.
- Visits to Range Mental Health Services, the local Diabetic Education Team, Early Childhood Development/Family Resource Center, and the Family Investment Center (Client-based Community Services).

The Burdick grant is administered by the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine Duluth.

Submitted by: Daniel G. Mareck, M.D., Program Director, Quentin N. Burdick Rural Program for Interdisciplinary Training Grant
Mercy Hospital & Health Care Center, Moose Lake offers training opportunities for students from high school to health professions schools interested in rural health care

High school students from Moose Lake and Barnum completed the third component of a year-long course held onsite at Mercy in early June. Exposing students to rural healthcare, this three-part class introduces students to a variety of health professions while also providing hands-on first responder and nursing assistant training.

Mercy hosted a two-week Rural Interdisciplinary Geriatric Fellowship in May. Students from the University of Minnesota and Augsburg College, including geriatric nurse practitioner, social work, medicine, dentistry, and physician assistant participated in the opportunity.

Mercy also welcomed two first-year medical students participating in rural internships from the University of Minnesota-Duluth, School of Medicine.

Submitted by: Terri Vos Ellison, Public Relations Coordinator, Mercy Hospital and Health Care Center

Distance technology utilized for continuing education

The program, Children and antidepressants: Do the benefits of treatment outweigh the risks?, will be offered Tuesday, August 17 by the Northeast Minnesota AHEC. Delivered through ITV networks across the state, the program will not only provide valuable information but will also test the use of distance technology for delivery of continuing education.

The program is being provided in partnership with the Human Development Center in Duluth and the Fairview University of Minnesota Telehealth Network.

For more information or to register, visit www.mnahec.umn.edu/northeast.

Northeast Minnesota AHEC joins regional advisory board

Northeast Minnesota AHEC will serve as member of the Northern Minnesota Area Geriatric Education Center (MAGEC) Advisory Board. MAGEC and the NE Minnesota AHEC are working together to develop programs supporting geriatric populations, particularly around mental and behavioral health issues. Both AHEC and MAGEC are federally funded initiatives through Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Bureau of Health Professions and share a mission to support health workforce development in underserved areas. The Career Laddering for the Education and Advancement of Nursing (CLEAN) grant has asked Northeast Minnesota AHEC to serve as an advisory member providing expertise to guide this federally funded collaborative project which utilizes on-line education as an alternative pathway for healthcare professionals interested in obtaining a nursing assistant, LPN and RN degree.

Southern Minnesota AHEC

Kathleen Huntley, M.S., hired as Executive Director of the Southern Minnesota AHEC following a national search

Kathy is the former service line executive for behavioral health at St. Mary's Duluth Clinic Health System and has a B.S. in speech and theater from Moorhead State University and an M.S. in counseling and guidance from North Dakota State University.

“Kathleen’s vision for educating health professionals in rural Minnesota will provide the leadership that AHEC needs to be successful,” says Barbara Brandt, Ph.D., Minnesota AHEC program director and assistant vice president for education at the University of Minnesota's Academic Health Center.

Willmar’s regional leadership of the Southern Minnesota AHEC will not only bring more health care students to the 25 counties in rural southwestern Minnesota for part of their training, but it will help foster interest in health care careers among youth.
Southern Minnesota AHEC Seeking Corporate, Non-Profit Status
The Southern Minnesota AHEC is working with partners across the Southern region and with the University of Minnesota to establish corporate, non-profit status. The non-profit status application will be based on the Southern Minnesota AHEC mission to serve the health workforce needs of Southern Minnesota through education and service. The status will also allow the organization to seek alternative funding sources for program development and sustainability.

Announcements

Minnesota AHEC will be participating in upcoming events including:

- On Friday, August 20, University President Robert Bruininks, Senior Vice President for Health Sciences Frank Cerra, and Assistant Vice President for Education Barbara Brandt will join health care and community leaders in Hibbing to discuss the value of partnership with the community as a rural health professions education site and as host for the Northeast Minnesota AHEC. This visit is being held in conjunction with the Minnesota Rural Summit.
- Minnesota Rural Partners is pleased to announce the 7th Annual Minnesota Rural Summit to be held August 18-20, 2004 at the Hibbing Community College in Hibbing. NE Minnesota AHEC will co-sponsor the mobile workshop on Collaborative Health Education and Care on Friday, August 20.
- A Regional Healthcare Workforce Forum will be held in Willmar on September 14 at the Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Center to provide information about workforce initiatives and innovative projects in the region and the State, including findings from a recent health care workforce survey conducted by the Center for Rural Health. The Forum is sponsored by 15 health workforce partners and is hosted by the Southern Minnesota AHEC. For more information, go to http://www.heip.org/
- The Minnesota Rural Health Conference is scheduled for October 25-26, 2004 at CentraCare Education Center in St. Cloud. The conference, Rural Minnesota: On the Road to Better Health will be hosted by Minnesota Rural Health Association.

Loan repayment available for providers in health professional shortage areas. Primary care, mental health, and dental providers working in federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas may be eligible to apply for loan repayment through the Minnesota State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP) or the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Federal Loan Repayment Program. Information, candidate applications, and site applications for the SLRP are available on the Minnesota Department of Health Web site at http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/loan.htm. Site applications for the NHSC are available on the NHSC Web site at http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov. Candidate applications will be available sometime after October. Questions on either program can be directed to Deb Jahnke at 651-282-6334/debra.jahnke@state.mn.us

Brendan Ashby, Director of the Northeast Minnesota AHEC, serves as a National Health Service Corps Ambassador and is available as a resource for health professions students and professionals interested in learning more about NHSC. He can be reached at bashby1@range.fairview.org.

N-Lighten: A Residency Experience for Nurses
N-Lighten is a one-year nurse residency program to provide education, guidance and support to newly hired nurses who have recently graduated from nursing school or have changed specialty within nursing. Sponsored by a federal grant under the Nurse Reinvestment Act of 2002, the N-Lighten nurse residency program aims to address the nursing shortage in Minnesota by improving nurse recruitment and retention rates as well as increasing the quality of care delivered.

N-Lighten was created by a partnership of the University of Minnesota, School of Nursing - recipient of the federal grant, with five diverse practice settings: Mercy Hospital in Moose Lake, Dakota County Public Health, Fairview-University Medical Center, North Memorial
Medical Center, and Methodist Hospital. A first of its kind in Minnesota, N-Lighten consists of a nursing education curriculum and a mentorship program. The curriculum focuses on matters ranging from professional role development to providing culturally competent care to diverse patients. The N-Lighten program will be implemented this fall at the partner sites.

Submitted by: Kristen Upson, Project Manager, Nurse Residency Program, University of Minnesota