

## A partnership with Fairbanks Memorial Hospital/Denali Center and the University of Alaska Anchorage

- *Recruitment into Health Careers*
- *Assistance to Students Scheduling Clinical Rotations*
- *Retention of Rural Providers through Expanded Continuing Education Opportunities*

## SUMMER SURVEYS — INFORMATION IS POWER !!

Interior AHEC has been on the phone making contacts to fill in the gaps of our knowledge of how we can serve our target populations.

First question on the agenda was to determine the capacity for student clinical rotations at various health care facilities during Fall '07 / Spring '08 semesters. We are working to expand placement opportunities to rural sites beyond the Fairbanks area. By providing new students the experience of practicing in a rural and underserved site, we hope they will be inspired to return when they are ready to start work.

To coordinate those rural placements, we must know if a particular facility is suitable for a student placement, whether or not there is a provider practicing there willing to be a preceptor/teacher for the student, and what the housing and transportation logistics

might be for actually getting a student to the site.

Twelve locations were surveyed. Preliminary results show that in the best case scenario, we can work towards placing 20 students in these rural sites in the next year. Most positions are with mid-level practitioners such as advanced nurse practitioners or physicians assistants and in the mental/behavioral health field.

The second question we needed to answer regarded recruitment materials for rural high school counselors and teachers, and what opportunities there will be this year for talking to students about health careers. We asked what materials might help a student take a step beyond curiosity to learn about health careers, and what kind of promotional campaign would work in a particu-

### Contact Us:

Lillian Ruedrich (907)458-6417  
Director  
lillian.ruedrich@bannerhealth.com

Tania Clucas (907)458-6416  
Education Specialist  
tania.clucas@bannerhealth.com

Russell Amerson (907)458-6409  
Clinical Rotation Coordinator  
russell.amerson@bannerhealth.com

[www.interiorahec.com](http://www.interiorahec.com)

lar community. This survey led to the development of a packet for counselors that includes many helpful resources, and a very current distribution list, worth its weight in gold considering the difficulty of making contacts at a distance.

Both surveys helped Interior AHEC staff initiate contact and establish relationships with rural providers. This is at the heart of what we do, and will go a long way to make our efforts more effective.

## LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE PLOTS STRATEGY

The Advisory Council of Interior AHEC has formed a legislative subcommittee to develop goals and strategies for our office relating to state and federal legislation. Volunteers this summer getting the effort started were Torie Foote, Robin Frank, Andrea Gelvin and Drena McIntyre.

The committee requested first and foremost a promotional piece about AHEC for use when contact is made with local legislators. In response, a rack card/bookmark came into being, and we have our first tool! Next, the committee developed specific goals and strategies for

staff and Council members. Some of these include developing a partnership plan, participation in advocacy training, and producing an annual report.

We are excited to be moving forward with this plan. Our hope is to be ready for action when this year's legislature convenes.



*Interior AHEC staff members (from left): Russ Amerson, Tania Clucas, and Lillian Ruedrich*

## R/UOP RULES !!

The University of Washington Medical School provides a guaranteed number of student slots for Northwest states without their own medical school in a program known as WWAMI. That stands for Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho. After their first year in school, WWAMI students can choose to participate in a summer program called R/UOP (Rural/Underserved Opportunities Program). Alaska's AHEC centers help to place students interested in coming to Alaska for their four week R/UOP rotation, and this summer Interior AHEC placed three WWAMI students. Two medical students spent time at Chief Andrew Isaac

Health Center in Fairbanks, Sara Swoboda and Ross Baldwin, and one dental student, Minh Huynh, worked at a private dental clinic in Fairbanks.

Sara wrote during her time here in July, "I just got back from Allakaket. It was such an awesome experience, very inspiring! I went with Dr. de Schweinitz who is an incredible teacher. The whole staff at CAIHC has been so amazing in helping me and teaching me. My rotation has been very hands on, and I am working with multiple doctors and PAs in the clinic. Dr. Fultz has taken me to do some of the touristy stuff on the weekends and has been very welcoming. And I am learning so much about the Na-

tive community and health system in addition to clinical skills."

Many of the same experiences await our second medical student, Ross Baldwin, pictured at right. A typical day will include observing surgery and outpatient visits, and there will also be travel with one of the physicians itinerating to Interior villages. Ross is very enthusiastic about his R/UOP experience, and we are glad to help introduce another new medical student to the many rewards of rural practice !



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## ON THE ROAD FOR THE RECRUITMENT PROGRAM



*Scenic view from Arctic Village airstrip*

In late June, Interior AHEC's Tania Clucas accompanied staff from Tanana Chiefs Conference on a two day excursion to eight villages in the Interior.

At the invitation of Robin Frank, an Interior AHEC Advisory Council member and the manager of TCC's Youth Employment Services division, Tania spent two days traveling from village to village meeting with youth and making contact with local tribal officials to promote the AHEC mission.

Monday, June 18th brought her to Allakaket, Koyukuk, and Nulato. Tuesday the 19th's itinerary included Fort Yukon, Chalkyitsik, Arctic Village, Venetie and Beaver.

This collaborative effort with TCC's Youth Employment Services is part of Interior AHEC's strategy to piggyback, build bridges, expand our network, and partner with community and regional agencies to reach people in our vast service area.

Tania reports, "While Robin and the other TCC staff prepared the employment paperwork for the summer youth hires, I met and spoke with local youth, parents and local TCC employees. I explained the AHEC mission of growing our own in all areas of health care and health careers. The contacts I made will be invaluable in my work this fall."