

INTERIOR ALASKA AHEC

Healthcare Workforce Development for the Interior

WINTER 2008

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*

MULTIPLE FUNDING PROPOSALS ON THE TABLE

The race for sustainability is on! Federal funds for Alaska's AHEC program will drop in September from 75% to 50%, and we intend to be ready with new sources to fill the gap.

As we are now in Year 3 of our initial federal grant from Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the first order of business this fall was to prepare a new proposal for years 4-5-6. Center directors from Interior AHEC, Southcentral AHEC and Yukon Kuskokwim AHEC all contributed to the effort. The proposal was successfully submitted in January. HRSA is expected to approve the proposal sometime this spring, and funding is then awarded separately for each of the three years according to the availability of federal funds each year. The AHEC Program Office at UAA will be working with several new partners to establish additional centers in Southeast

and possibly the Northwest area of the state as part of this next phase.

One of our resources in this planning process was the director of the North Louisiana AHEC Center, Susan Moreland. Susan visited during the statewide AHEC network board meeting in October to give us information about how her program had achieved financial sustainability over the course of the 20 years it has existed. She talked about a summer program they run that inspired the Alaska AHECs to come up with a similar proposal for the Alaska State Legislature. Like the Louisiana program, it will be called "A-HEC of a Summer."

We will ask the State Legislature for funding during the 2008 session, with the hope of starting the program in Summer 2009, to allow plenty of time to coordinate with our rural clinic partners on this new activity. The idea is to provide

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a three-week summer experience for high school students interested in health careers, offering both job shadowing and classroom time.

The third proposal was made to the State Department of Labor to establish a continuing education activity for teachers designed to introduce them to health careers. They will then have more information to share with their students during the school year.

We hope to have news of all 3 proposals within a few months.

KITTY GRIFFIN JOINS TEAM AHEC

Interior AHEC is very pleased to welcome Kitty Griffin to our team. Kitty is here to assist on a half-time basis, and spends the other half of her time in the Education Department at FMH. She has been an FMH employee for 12 years, starting in Home Health Care, and moving to Patient Quality

Resources before joining the Education Department last year.

Kitty is learning a lot about databases in her initial months on the job! Interior AHEC collects data on all the students and providers participating in our program and tracks their progress in an Access file as well as a

web-based program collecting statewide AHEC data. Data entry has been her primary responsibility since starting, and she is doing a great job while keeping her sense of humor (very important!).

Kitty is mother to five and grandmother to six lucky children. She enjoys spending time with all her family.



Interior AHEC welcomes new staff Kitty Griffin, Administrative Assistant

INTERIOR ALASKA AHEC

ADVISORY COUNCIL — PREMIER PROGRAM PARTNERS

It's a grand group that gathers quarterly to help set priorities and forge new connections for the Interior AHEC program. Through their hard work on the advisory council, each and every member shows a commitment to strengthening the healthcare provider network in Alaska's Interior.

Newly elected co-chairs Andrea Gelvin and Drena McIntyre both fill educator seats, as does Torie Foote. Andrea teaches in the Health Occupations program at Hutchison High School and is the faculty advisor for the local chapter of Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA). Drena works at the Tanana Valley Campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks as a program manager. Her latest project has been a series of career academies for high school students wanting a taste of the real world. The health care academy presented a class in emergency medical technology. Torie is the director of Health Programs for the College of Rural and Community Development at UAF. Her department offers distance classes for behavioral and allied health professionals, many in rural communities.

Amy Baldwin and Crystal Stordahl are in the health care administrator seats. Amy is the Human Resources Officer for Interior Community Health Center, one of the few federally recognized community health centers in the Interior. Crystal Stordahl is the director of the Community Health Aide program at Tanana Chiefs Conference and has recently received federal grant funding to establish an itinerant community health center—completely innovative!

Judith Snow-Rosander, RN and Ruth Alvarez, PA-C fill the provider seats. Judith works at the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center, and also sits on the board of the Alaska Rural



Amy Baldwin



Torie Foote



Robin Frank



Andrea Gelvin



Rebecca Madison



Drena McIntyre



Crystal Stordahl

Health Center, Alaska's AHEC Program Office. Ruth works at the health clinic in Fort Yukon operated by the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments. They are preparing to move in to a brand new building this spring.

Robin Frank, Rebecca Madison and Sharon McConnell Gillis are community representatives. Robin is the Youth Employment Services Coordinator for the Tanana Chiefs Conference and works very hard to help the youth of TCC find meaningful employment. Rebecca has been developing the statewide network of hospitals and providers who will eventually share electronic medical records, a truly giant task of coordination. Sharon is the Executive Director of the Doyon Foundation and has a keen interest in helping shareholders find their way to a successful healthcare career.

We are truly grateful for the time and effort these individuals contribute towards the success of our program! Thank you!

DIVERSITY AWARENESS SERIES AT FMH



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Interior AHEC is collaborating with the Education Department at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital to offer a series of continuing education classes about cultural diversity. January's class "Future Shock: A Time of Cultural Change in Village Alaska" featured Paul Beals, itinerant counselor for Tanana Chiefs Conference, and Athabascan elder Alfred Stevens. Many nurses and behavioral health workers attended to gain a perspective on cultural stresses facing Alaska Natives in Interior villages. February's event will be a potluck lunch with an opportunity to share foods from different cultures. In March, a speaker will address the topic of how

people of different faiths relate to health care issues. The topic for April is "Thinking Outside Your Cultural Box," and will attempt to awaken participants to some of the unspoken and unconscious biases each person carries into their social and professional interactions. The topic in May is tentatively set to look at some of the communication difficulties of health care professionals when dealing with personal and intimate subjects.

Increasing providers' awareness of cultural diversity will help them to deliver better health care services to rural and underserved populations in the Interior.