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INSPIRING LIVES OF SERVICE

GROWING THE FUTURE
OF HEALTHCARE



Northeast Oregon
Area Health Education Center

ANNUAL REPORT

2022



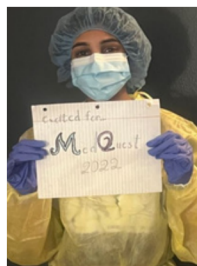
Photo courtesy of Eric Valentine

From the outside, it may seem that living the rural way of life feels like the road less traveled but for me, it feels like the road full of promise! The promise of community service, the never-ending opportunity for innovation, the feeling of family, and strong relationships. In my ten years with NEOAHEC, I have been inspired and driven by the people of eastern Oregon. As I look forward to the future and all of the exciting things it will hold for NEOAHEC, I want to pause and highlight a few special moments from 2022.

**MEREDITH LAIR, DIRECTOR**

96 Students Register for Virtual MedQuest

67% of Oregon's counties were represented in the innovative Virtual MedQuest camp. Oregon regional AHECs collaborated to bring together the best resources to share with students statewide.



Connecting the Pathway, Dr. Nick West joins the NEOAHEC Board of Directors

Nick continues his relationship with NEOAHEC in an updated capacity from his previous student and mentor roles. Dr. West joined the NEOAHEC Board of Directors & Winding Waters Clinic in 2022. Welcome home, Nick!



2nd Generation NEOAHEC Family

During Investigators of Science (formerly known as Girls in Science) a special moment happened when NEOAHEC began its connection with a second generation pathway family.

Dr. Stephen Koza was one of the original MedQuest campers. Now a dentist in his home community, Dr. Koza and his wife Beth, have had two of their children participate in NEOAHEC programs.

"I am thrilled the AHEC organization has been around for as long as it has and continues to evolve and thrive to serve our students. I know these programs help students to find and hone their interests," said Dr. Koza. "I appreciate that the AHEC relationship with Eastern Oregon University has held strong over the years. I know AHEC programs provide exposure to STEM that may not be available in schools and exposure to university facilities is a good opportunity for students," added Dr. Koza.



Medical School Admission Offer

In October Hailey Hulse and I stood beside each other during a presentation about the importance of Oregon AHEC pathway programs. Hailey has been working with NEOAHEC for the past five years and during that time developing her application for medical school. At our presentation the moment became one of the most memorable in my career when Hailey received a call with her first admissions offer to medical school!



MEET NEOAHEC

2023 Board of Directors

Patty Barfield, PhD, PMHNP,
Chair
Malheur County

Mike Hetrick, MD
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Union County

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Andrea Flores
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Yessenia Garcia-Sanchez
Umatilla County

Nick West, MD
Wallowa County

Eric Wiser, MD
Director, Oregon AHEC

With sincere appreciation
to our Board Members
who fulfilled their terms
of service with grace
& dedication.

Jill Boyd, MPH
Union County

Josie Conrad
Wallowa County

Mike Glane Freysinger
Hood River County

Sadie Kennedy, JD
Wallowa County

NEOAHEC Staff

Staff Team Pictured From Left:

Hailey Hulse,
Pathway Program Coordinator

Meredith Lair,
Executive Director

Nikkita Titus, MSN, RN
Clinical Education Manager

Sarah Florig, MS
Evaluation & Research Coordinator





Pathway Participation

Each  is equal to 10 participants

Investigators of Science (Grades 6-8)



FHPO/HHP-131 (Grades 9-12)




MedQuest (Grades 9-12)



Health Speaker Series (Undergraduate, Gap Year)



Pre-Health Society (Undergraduate, Gap Year)

 Program provided 290 contact hours with students

The Pathway Never Ends What is the NEOAHEC Pathway?

- Fully integrated model in support of health career education & workforce development through:
 - Health career exploration
 - Mentorship
 - Stewardship of local healthcare providers
 - Ongoing education



From Creativity & Partnership to a Sustaining Scholarship Fund

In the rural communities that NEOAHEC serves, trust and dependability are respected above all else. It is because of this understanding that a core value we believe deeply in is the sustainability of the projects we innovate and support.



In 2019, NEOAHEC was one of the first awardees of the new Health Oregon Workforce Training Opportunity (HOWTO) grant intended to expand health professional training in Oregon. NEOAHEC partnered with the OHSU School of Nursing Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) program to expand to a distance model serving place-bound learners in Eastern Oregon. Over the grant period, seven learners from Eastern Oregon were admitted to the program and were able to complete the majority of their coursework and clinical experiences in or near their home communities.

A critical factor in the success of the distance PMHNP student was the availability of scholarships. Through creativity and partnership NEOAHEC, the Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization, and the OHSU Foundation were able to develop a sustaining scholarship fund for future place-bound learners admitted to the PMHNP distance program from Eastern Oregon. For more information about this program or scholarship funding, email mlair@neoahec.org.

NEOAHEC Pre-Health Society - A Student Story

Increasing Confidence & Access to Resources

Noah Szumski, Pre-Health Society Student

"NEOAHEC has been instrumental in preparing me for the medical school application process. NEOAHEC has provided access to tools and support such as Mappd, to organize experiences and activities prior to filling out the application, and to assist in preparation for the MCAT. They have also provided resources to improve my personal statement and other aspects of my application. Most of all NEOAHEC has been a wealth of information and opportunity. I have learned more about medical schools, particularly in the pacific northwest, and have had the opportunity to hear directly from schools about what they value in a student.



Mock interviews with Pre-Health Society members & NEOAHEC Staff and Board

In August I will attend Pacific Northwest University's College of Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine program. While I do not know what specialty I want to pursue after school, I am steadfast in my resolve to practice in rural America. NEOAHEC has been a fantastic resource in helping me get accepted to medical school and decide which school is the best fit for me."



MEDQUEST HEALTH CAREER EXPLORATION CAMP

Diversifying Oregon's healthcare workforce and retaining health professionals in rural areas do not happen overnight, it starts with early exposure to health careers, continued connection with students as they progress along their pathway, and opportunity for current professionals to provide mentorship.

217 students served

NEOAHEC's "grow our own" mindset has led to an essential advancement in Oregon's longest running high school health careers camp, MedQuest. During the Pandemic NEOAHEC transitioned its MedQuest from an entirely in-person, residential camp held once per year, into a virtual experience offering uninterrupted and expanded access to health career exploration for students throughout Oregon.

From 2020 - 2022. More than 6 times the number that would've had access in the pre-pandemic camp structure.

In a survey of past participants, 85% of the 96 respondents were practicing healthcare professionals, current health professions students, or aspiring to become healthcare professionals. Of those currently working in the healthcare field, 50% were working in rural areas. However, a gap still exists for those who identified as Hispanic and Latino, where former participants had significantly lower levels of higher education than those who identified as not Hispanic or Latino. This coincides with outside findings that healthcare workforce diversity lags behind the population of Oregon.

Increasing equitable and inclusive access to MedQuest has been a non-negotiable priority for NEOAHEC through the pandemic and as we move back into an in-person camp delivery model. Thanks to a grant from the Roundhouse Foundation and many other community partners there will be four MedQuest Camps in 2023. Visit our website for more information www.neoahcec.org.

REGISTRATION OPENS MARCH 6TH



MedQuest is designed for high school students interested in learning more about careers in health care. MedQuest will connect you with new friends, resources, & unique learning opportunities!

FOUR CAMPS IN 2023

- ✔ Skills & hands on techniques
- ✔ Job Shadowing
- ✔ Mentorship
- ✔ Stethoscopes for all campers

JUNTOS MEDQUEST

March 19 - 22, 2023
The Dalles, Oregon

FRONTIER MEDQUEST

June 5 - 9, 2023
Burns, Oregon

RURAL MEDQUEST

June 18 - 23, 2023
La Grande, Oregon

VIRTUAL MEDQUEST

June 19 - 22, 2023
Online

More Information

www.neoahcec.org
541-910-9924
hhulse@neoahcec.org

Registration
Opens March 6th

SNAPSHOT OF CLINICAL EDUCATION IN EASTERN OREGON

10 Clinical Sites

Throughout Baker, Elgin, Enterprise, La Grande, Pendleton, Ontario, Union.



HOUSING PROVIDED FOR:



32 professional health students

4 health professions



10 OHSU Residents

12 PNWU Residents

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING PRECEPTORS IN EASTERN OREGON ARE TALKING



Rafaella (Raff) Betza, MD - Grande Ronde Hospital - Union & Elgin Clinics

"Working with medical students gives me a chance to pass on knowledge and experiences to future physicians. In a rural environment there are unique opportunities and challenges that I get to share with students that may not have been exposed to. It's a very rewarding experience to see a medical student develop an interest in orthopedics after a rotation, and to be able to share that mutual interest in taking care of people."

Curtis Peters, DMD - Eastern Oregon Dental Group - Baker City

"For the past twelve years we've had the pleasure of having dental students come and work alongside both my staff and I. From day one, it has been a valuable program for both the students and us. Not only do the students gain invaluable experience, but the program allows us to improve our access to care that is so greatly needed in our community. I love being able to teach students it has been inspiring to see their passion for their future career. It is amazing to be able to see the growth of these students over the 2 months they are here. My favorite part of the program is being able to share our beautiful, secluded part of Oregon with them. Many of the students have never traveled past Hood River and many, if not all, have loved their stay in Eastern Oregon. I feel through this program we have helped many students appreciate the difficulties of rural dentistry as well as the many, many rewards!"





PROVISION OF MEANINGFUL CLINICAL EDUCATION IN RURAL SETTING PROPELLED BY AHEC SET SIMULATION GRANT

As NEOAHEC works with the OHSU School of Nursing to implement the new Pediatric HAL and Adult HAL Gaumard Manikins that were purchased with the Simulations Education Training (SET) grant funded by HRSA, it has become evident that the upgraded equipment was both needed and welcomed. The utilization of this equipment has allowed for authentic life scenarios to take place within the learning environment. The manikins allow for real-time interaction, emotional expression as well as excretion of bodily fluids in a variety of scenarios.

Project lead, Nikkita Titus, MSN, RN said, "Encouraging the use of both manikins in the student learning environment has not only increased knowledge and understanding of acute care scenarios, but has also provided practice to learn a variety of other critical skills such as; communication, assessment, and procedural without risking poor outcomes on real patients."

Increasing the accessibility to high-fidelity equipment will allow pre-health and health professions students, as well as current healthcare professionals the chance to have hands-on practice when it comes to high acuity/low-frequency situations. The curriculum will encompass an interprofessional team of healthcare professionals, which is essential for maintaining optimal standards of care throughout rural regions.

"In the rural healthcare setting, student clinical learning needs and schedules do not always align with patient presentations, especially for high risk low volume events (i.e. postpartum hemorrhage, pediatric airway management). The ability to simulate specific patient presentations means that the OHSU School of Nursing can prepare nursing students to meet clinical challenges they may not have the opportunity to see in a clinical setting. The collaboration with NEOAHEC through the SET Simulation grant has increased our clinical education capacity," said Patty Barfield, Ph.D, PMHNP, OHSU School of Nursing Campus Associate Dean La Grande.



Proudly serving 11 counties in eastern Oregon:
Baker, Gilliam, Hood River, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla,
Union, Wallowa, Wasco, and Wheeler

&

Collaborating across Oregon to increase access to health career education.

Our Vision

To address the healthcare workforce shortage in rural and frontier Eastern Oregon by developing our own health professionals that reflect the composition and needs of our region.

Find us on the web:
www.neoahec.org

Email the Director:
mlair@neoahec.org



Northeast Oregon AHEC

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