



**NORTHEAST
OREGON**

**AREA HEALTH
EDUCATION
CENTER**



Northeast Oregon
Area Health Education Center

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

WWW.NEOAHEC.ORG

Board of Directors



Meredith Lair
Executive Director

Liz Sieders, PA-C,
Chair
Umatilla County

Jill Boyd, MPH
Union County

Josie Conrad
Wallowa County

Patty Barfield, PhD, PMHNP,
Vice-Chair
Malheur County

Cindy Denne
Baker County



Hailey Hulse
Program Coordinator

Lynn Carpenter
Secretary
Wasco County

Sadie Kennedy, JD
Wallowa County

Mike Hetrick, MD
Treasurer
Union County

Amy Yielding, PhD
Union County

Mike Glane-Freysinger
Hood River County

Yessenia Garcia-Sanchez
Umatilla County



Beckie Juarez
Site Coordinator

Eric Wiser, MD
Director Oregon AHEC

Director's Message

Sometimes by slowing down, reflecting, prioritizing, and letting go an organization is given the opportunity to truly get better. This year at NEOAHEC our staff has been challenged and gifted with birth of new life, surgeries, sickness, loss of friends, and another year of working from home in separation of each other.

At NEOAHEC our team is small, but entirely devoted to serving Eastern Oregon through health career education. In this year of pause, we were able to learn and grow from our continued virtual programming, take inventory of gaps in our program pathway, and begin again with new ideas, collaborations, and renewed sense of purpose.

On behalf of NEOAHEC staff, board, and volunteers I wish you a year of happiness, health and possibilities.

Meredith Lair

GROWING OUR OWN HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

Since 1991, NEOAHEC has consistently worked towards growing our own healthcare professionals. NEOAHEC has continued its pathway programs through the COVID-19 Pandemic, and as our region's population becomes more diverse, we have gained tools and experience in adapting our programs to be more equitable and inclusive.

The NEOAHEC pathway aims to nurture a diverse group of applicants for healthcare training programs by stimulating interest, removing barriers, and facilitating progress. Through a new program offered by our organization, the NEOAHEC Pre Health Society, we will offer support through college to help students become successful applicants to graduate level health professions programs.

Pathway Participation

Girls in Science



Future Health Professionals
of Oregon



MedQuest



Health Speaker Series



Each  is equal to 10 participants

Pre Health Society

Seven students represent the first cohort of the NEOAHEC Pre Health Society. Five will be applying in the upcoming year for PA, Dental, and Medical Schools. One society member, a native of La Grande, applied to PA school and received multiple interviews and acceptances.

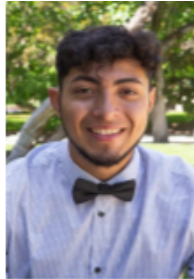


Gus Whittington

"I am very fortunate to be able to attend PA school after being a member of the Pre Health Society. I hope to one day come back to the area to practice

Emergency or Critical Care Medicine. I am very excited for this opportunity, and would encourage everyone to consider a career as a Physician assistant."

CONNECTING STUDENTS TO CAREERS
& COMMUNITIES TO BETTER HEALTH



Yessenia Garcia-Sanchez
Camp Mentor

Aldo Rivas
Camp Mentor

First Year Nursing Students & MedQuest Camp Mentors

Yessenia and Aldo light up any room or conversation they are part of, and recently they brought their inspiring personalities, leadership skills, and impactful stories to students attending the virtual MedQuest camp.

Yessenia Garcia-Sanchez has been involved with NEOAHEC since middle school when she attended Girls in Science. She went on as a MedQuest student, counselor, mentor, and now NEOAHEC Student Board Member, and first year OHSU nursing student. Yessenia described our camp saying, "MedQuest helped me realize that I wanted to pursue a career in the healthcare field. I am passionate about sharing my story, so all students know there is a place for them in health care."

Aldo Rivas from The Dalles, Oregon, said "As a first year nursing student, I am passionate about serving the members of my community." Aldo has volunteered his time with NEOAHEC on many occasions, beyond MedQuest, to share his unique journey to becoming an OHSU nursing student.

Lewis Wright, Future Dentist

Lewis is a graduate of Eastern Oregon University where he earned a Bachelor's of Science in Molecular Biology and a concentration in Pre-Dental. Lewis had this to say about his experience with NEOAHEC:

Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center has played a huge part in my journey to becoming a dentist. They provided me with exciting volunteer opportunities such as Girls in Science, which not only allowed me to give back to my community, but helped strengthen my resume in preparation for dental school. In addition NEOAHEC is heavily involved in the Pre-Professional Health Club, and we had access to an amazing variety of health professionals in our community. Lastly, through NEOAHEC, I was able to video chat and text mentors like Trace VanCleave, a current OHSU dental student also from Eastern Oregon.

I am proud to be recently accepted into OHSU School of Dentistry, and I am forever grateful for NEOAHEC for providing so many effective resources and opportunities. In the future I aim to provide dental care for underserved, rural communities in Oregon.



Student athletes,
Lewis and his wife Alaina

SARA SCHUMANN MEMORIAL MEDQUEST SCHOLARSHIP

In August 2020, just one year after Sara came into our lives as a standout student in the NEOAHEC MedQuest camp, she tragically died in a car accident in her hometown of Salem. To her family and friends Sara was a loving friend and always kind and caring. In addition to these attributes, Sara will be remembered by our team as an aspiring OBGYN or Pediatrician who had incredible intuition with hands on skills, a natural ability to communicate with others in a positive and professional way, and a deep desire to learn. "It was obvious that she was comfortable in the medical field and had room for her passions to thrive," said Hailey Hulse, MedQuest Camp Director.



Sara Schumann pictured on the left in 2019, at MedQuest Camp

In talking with Sara's Mom, she remembered Sara being so excited for MedQuest and how quick she was to make a friend the moment she was dropped off in the parking lot at camp.

"Sara said that MedQuest was one of her favorite experiences and she would want to help others to be able to attend this camp, too," said Sara's Mom, Jaimie Schumann.

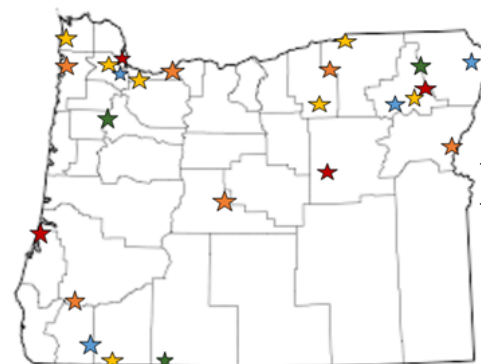
To fulfill Sara's passion for MedQuest, the Schumann family has started a memorial scholarship in honor of Sara to help future students attend the camp she loved so much!

To learn more about supporting this scholarship fund, contact Hailey Hulse at hhulse@neoahec.org

Virtual MedQuest Outreach

MedQuest camp continued virtually for the second year. Through this platform we are able to connect high school students from across the state with each other and fascinating health career exploration content, including hands-on activities. OHSU Nursing and Medical Students from rural and disadvantaged backgrounds also volunteered to share their stories with this year's campers.

MedQuest Statewide Camp Representation



Stars represent student(s) by location

**INTRODUCING
COHORT 2 ~
EASTERN OREGON PMHNP**

**\$300,000 in scholarships
awarded so far**
.....

Chelsea Matthews

In 2019, NEOAHEC was awarded a Healthy Oregon Workforce Training Opportunity (HOWTO) grant of nearly \$1 million to increase the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) workforce in eastern Oregon.

Based in Eastern Oregon, the OHSU PMHNP distance education program gives learners the flexibility to learn from home, and have clinical experiences in their communities. Again this year, significant scholarships will be available for tuition and other expenses.

In the third year of this generous HOWTO grant, NEOAHEC is excited to announce that a second cohort of students has accepted admission into the OHSU PMHNP program. Welcome to the program Chelsea Matthews - La Grande, Oregon, Nikki Billman - Union, Oregon, and Toni Bleick, Irrigon, Oregon.

With experience in medical surgical nursing, labor & delivery and Babies First/ Cacoon home visiting, I actually didn't expect to be drawn towards mental health. But surprise! I was not only drawn in, but I feel

really passionate about helping my patients overcome mental health barriers. I'm particularly interested in the mental health of women during pregnancy and the postpartum period, as well as kids and adults who have experienced trauma. I also have a real heart for rural folks and want to make sure they have access to services. I appreciated that OHSU includes the DNP in the PMHNP program and I couldn't be more thrilled to have this program available here in Union County.



.....

Nikki Billman

My roots are already planted in Eastern Oregon as most of my family lives here. I am familiar with the region and the people who live here, and am passionate about helping rural Eastern Oregonians. Our region is vastly underserved (as are most rural areas) when it comes to mental health and I plan on making an impact in this area for those whom are struggling the most.



I chose to enter the PMHNP program first because I have grown up and personally lived with mental illness. Addiction touched my life in the death of my sister due to heroin overdose, and most of my life has been spent around those struggling with addiction. I had familiarity with OHSU as I received my BSN from them, and they had a local rural program.

CLINICAL EDUCATION IN EASTERN OREGON

48 Students 5 Health Professions

9 Clinical Sites

\$5,350 Mileage Support

\$22,190 Furnished housing support



Preceptor Experience - Dr. Adam Heisinger

"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."

INTRODUCING COHORT 2 ~ CONTINUED EASTERN OREGON

Toni Bleick



Eastern Oregon has become my "home", having lived here since 1993. I love the rural lifestyle and prefer to spend my free time "unplugged", with hobbies that include: fishing, archery hunting, camping, horseback riding, hiking, and rockhounding.

Having family members with mental illness and addiction issues is what initially drew me to mental health nursing but love of this specialty field is what brought me back and makes me want to stay. I graduated in 2007 from OHSU La Grande campus and started my nursing career. Life events took me down several different nursing pathways (public health, pediatrics, home health & nursing education) but never brought me the satisfaction that I found in the mental health field. I currently work as a nurse at a psychiatric facility in Hermiston, Oregon. I see the impact the lack of mental health services has on patients and families. I hope that by obtaining my PMHNP license I can help alleviate the chronic shortage of mental health providers in rural areas and hope to one day open my own practice in Eastern Oregon.

Our Vision for Healthcare in Eastern Oregon

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
