September 4, 2013

Interim - Health Care Reform Review Committee

Good morning, Chairman Keiser and committee members. My name is Lynette Dickson and I am an Associate Director at the Center for Rural Health, which is located within the School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS); and Director of the Area Health Education Center (AHEC).

Dean Wynne, and the others have provided an overview of the supply and demand of health care workforce in our state and the potential impact of the Affordable Care Act. As follow-up I will share information related to some programs and activities in place to address health care workforce needs. As background, the federal AHEC grant program was developed by Congress in 1971 to recruit, train and retain a health professions workforce committed to underserved populations. North Dakota was actually classified as a "1st generation AHEC" as the School of Medicine had an AHEC grant in the mid-1970's, which was used to create the four medical campuses that are still operated in Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, and Minot. The federal grant dollars ended sometime in the early to mid-1980's and as you are all aware, the Medical School secured support from the state of North Dakota along with tuition dollars, and other sources, to support medical education at the four campuses. In 2008, the Center for Rural Health was awarded a new AHEC grant through the federal Bureau of Health Professions, Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA). AHEC programs are required to be administered through medical schools (unless there is not a medical school in the state). Today, 56 AHEC programs with more than 235 centers operate across the country.

In North Dakota, the Center for Rural Health, is designated as the AHEC Program Office. The role of the Program Office is to support and guide the operation and work of the two regional

centers, one located in Mayville - serving Eastern North Dakota; and the second, with offices in Hettinger and Beulah, serving Western North Dakota.

We subscribe to the viewpoint that recruiting and retaining primary care providers, and other health professionals, is the responsibility of local health care facilities. However, we also know first-hand the reality of how very stretched the limited staff and finances are in rural communities. Therefore, the CRH, regional AHECs, and other statewide partners are integral in expanding the reach of local recruiting efforts by coordinating activities, providing technical assistance, and leveraging resources. As is common in most initiatives, building collaborative relationships that can improve efficiencies and avoid duplication is fundamental to success. The AHEC/CRH serve as "the glue" that brings the resources of communities, local health organizations, health providers, schools (e.g. elementary/secondary/post-secondary), and others, to improve health workforce options and opportunities for all North Dakotans. As you have heard today workforce needs are great; and workforce development is multi-faceted and we cannot rely on any one agency, institution or program as THE solution. It is critical that we approach this at various points in the workforce pipeline. In keeping with Chairman Keiser's request, for short (3-5 year) and long (10+ years) term I will share a few examples of the AHEC/CRH's activites/efforts.

Short term (3-5)

- **Work directly**, at no cost, **to support and assist with recruitment** of primary care, and other health professionals, to our rural healthcare facilities (Recruitment & Retention Services handout).

  How does this work? Our workforce specialist identifies job vacancies in rural health systems; searches the online job boards daily for candidates who indicate they are interested in practicing in ND and/or the Midwest. He contacts candidates, especially

those with ND connections, to learn more about their interests, then refers viable candidates to rural communities. In the past year, over 1200 referrals (e.g. physicians [MD], dentists, nurse practitioners [NP], physician assistants [PA], and nurses) were made; nine providers (e.g. MD, PA, NP) have been placed; and two physicians are currently pending. Health provider candidates are very selective in choosing a practice. The numbers I just provided are indicative of the large numbers of referrals required in order to identify the final candidate recruited.

- **Improve the number of health profession students**, from all colleges and universities, **who participate in rural community-based learning experiences and increase the number of rural locations,** with the intent of changing the misperception of rural practice; and ultimately increasing student interest in choosing a rural community after they graduate.
- **Support and retain the current workforce** - A project currently in place, is the Community Apgar Project, which focuses on identifying challenges and benefits to recruiting and retaining primary care providers to rural communities. No surprise - weather was often cited as a challenge, and we certainly haven't figured out how to shorten our winter; however, another area identified as a challenge was limited experience/skills in dealing with behavioral/mental health issues; and lack of professionals/services to refer patients to. As a small part of the solution, the AHEC has collaborated to offer continuing education/training related to mental and behavioral health to rural health professionals.

Long term (10 + years):

As stated in earlier testimony, it is more likely that students from North Dakota, will stay or return to North Dakota. With the limited health occupation teachers/programs in the rural schools

we feel it is imperative to also devote time and effort to 'growing our own' workforce, as part of the long term solution. Two examples of such activities are the Rural-Collaborative Opportunities for Occupational Learning (R-COOL) Health Scrubs Camps and Health Academies. The camps are one-day events, conducted in rural communities to introduce local students to a variety of health careers through hands-on interactive activities conducted by local health professionals. Since 2010 - 32 camps have been funded; involving 151 rural communities; and have reached over 1800 students grades 5-12. The Health Academies, started in 2011, are an on-campus event which targets middle and high-school students interested in health careers. The students spend 3-4 days/evenings where they also participate in hands-on learning sessions conducted by local health professionals. To date – we have reached 165 middle and high-school students (see attached document). Dr. Krivarchka will share additional examples of these type of programs.

In conclusion, health care workforce development is the responsibility of all of us working together - local health care facilities and their community; K-12 and secondary education, foundations, and state and federal programs. It is also important to understand by-in-large rural communities do not have the same level of resources to draw upon as found in urban areas. Our workforce efforts and progress through the AHEC and CRH are focused on building local capacity. We are dedicated to working in partnership with existing programs around the state with the ultimate goal of addressing the health workforce shortages to maintain access to quality health care for our residents.

Thank you for your time and the invitation to present today.

Recruitment & Retention SERVICES

Through state appropriated funding, the Center for Rural Health (CRH) and Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) provide numerous services to rural health care facilities, at no cost, to support and improve community recruitment and retention efforts.

	Cost to your facility	Estimated savings
National Rural Recruitment & Retention Network (3RNet)		
Post job opportunities on your behalf	$0	Not available outside CRH
Various online job boards (ex: healthecareers.com)		
List job opportunities on your behalf	$0	$300 per posting
Recruitment events (out of state, national, regional)		
Attend on your behalf to promote your community & job opportunities	$0	$3,000 - $5,000 per event
Candidate placement assistance		
Physicians	$0	$25,000
Nurse Practitioners/Physician Assistants	$0	$10,000
Allied Health Care Professionals	$0	$10,000
Evaluate current and create new marketing materials		
Website	$0	$5,000+
3-5 minute video	$0	$3,000+
Print publications/brochures	$0	$500+
Customized strategic planning	$0	$5,000+

Additional Information and Assistance

- Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) designations
- National Health Service Corps loan repayment
- North Dakota state loan repayment
- JI Visa Waiver
- UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences RuralMed Scholars program
- Other services may be available upon request

Utilize these services today! Connect with us to learn more.

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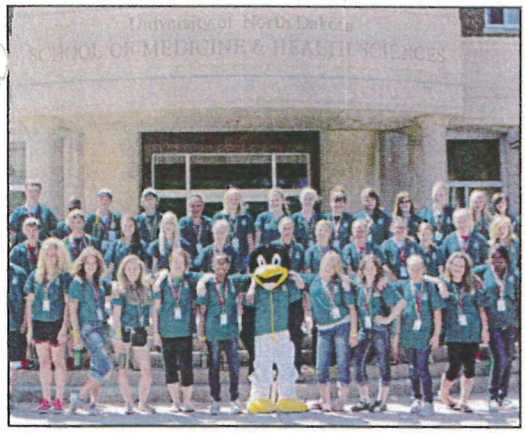
Center *for* Rural Health
The University of North Dakota
School of Medicine & Health Sciences

AHEC Stands for Jobs
NORTH DAKOTA AHEC



Center *for* Rural Health
The University of North Dakota
School of Medicine & Health Sciences

R-COOL-Health

Project Report

JANUARY 2013

Rural Collaborative Opportunities for Occupational Learning (R-COOL-Health) Scrubs Camps and Scrubs Academy

Kylie Nissen, BBA

"Dear UND, Thank you for putting on Scrubs Camp and I loved every part of it! My mom wished that she had gotten to go when she was a kid"
– Bailio Boehler, 5th grade Scrubs Camp attendee

Why Scrubs?

The philosophy behind this program is that if students understand at an early age the wide range of options in health care, they are more likely to consider a health care career. In addition, if students are made aware of career opportunities in their own home town, they may consider it as a place they can return to after completing higher education.

What is a Scrubs Camp?

Scrubs Camps are one-day events held in rural North Dakota communities to introduce students, in grades 5-12, to a variety of careers in health care. Scrubs Camps are not career fairs; Camps utilize interactive activities led by local health care professionals. Students learn about specific careers and opportunities available in their communities. Presenters also share their own experience in training and education and what it is like to work in a rural North Dakota community.

Community partners conducting a Scrubs Camp (which must include a local school system, health care entity, and economic or job development authority) can choose to work with multiple grades, one grade, or can make attending the camp a competitive process within their community. Groups of no more than 10 students per health care professional presenting are recommended in order to create more effective interaction between students and providers.

What is the Scrubs Academy?

The Scrubs Academy is a four-day, three-night program based on an expanded version of the Scrubs Camps. North Dakota students who have completed grade six, seven, or eight stay on the University of North Dakota campus in Grand Forks and participate in over 20 sessions covering a multitude of health careers led by local health professionals, instructors, and college students.

More than PowerPoint Presentations

The key success of these programs is the interactive opportunities they provide. For example, students learning about physical therapy will hear a first-hand account of a therapist's school and work experience, then will spend the majority of their time learning basic skills a physical therapist does. Students participating in a Scrubs Camp or Academy have practiced using mobility devices, worn weights on one side of their body to simulate a stroke patient, and have made finger splints they can take home with them.

Impact

Scrubs Camps

Year	Camps funded	Communities Involved	Students Involved	Volunteers Involved
2010	14	61	1016	292
2011	9	36	433	242
2012	9	54	407	211
Total	32	151	1856	745

Scrubs Academy

Year	Students Involved	Communities Involved
2011	38	21
2012	45	22
Total	83	43

"This is a great opportunity. It also was a great springboard for our organization to continue with a great program. The JMH Foundation board is excited to continue the program and find alternative sources of funding."

— Kristen Vesledahl, Jacobson Memorial Hospital Foundation

How is the Scrubs program supported?

The R-COOL-Health Scrubs program is supported by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, State Office of Rural Health and Area Health Education Center (AHEC) grant programs; state appropriated funds designated for workforce development, and UND Summer Programs and Events Council.

AUTHOR

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More information:
ruralhealth.und.edu/scrubs/