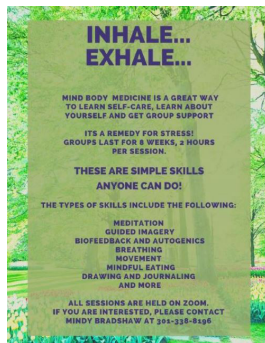
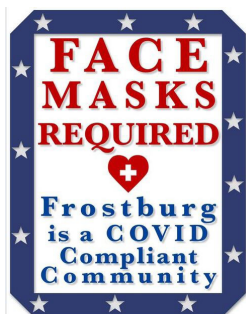
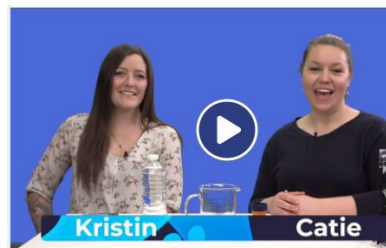


Annual Report FY 2021



DOCUMENTARY
SCREENING,
VIRTUAL
EXPERT PANEL,
AND
Q&A WITH
DR. DALE
OKORODUDU



Maryland Area Health Education Center West

THE MISSION OF AHEC WEST:

*Improving access to and promoting quality in healthcare
through education and collaboration*

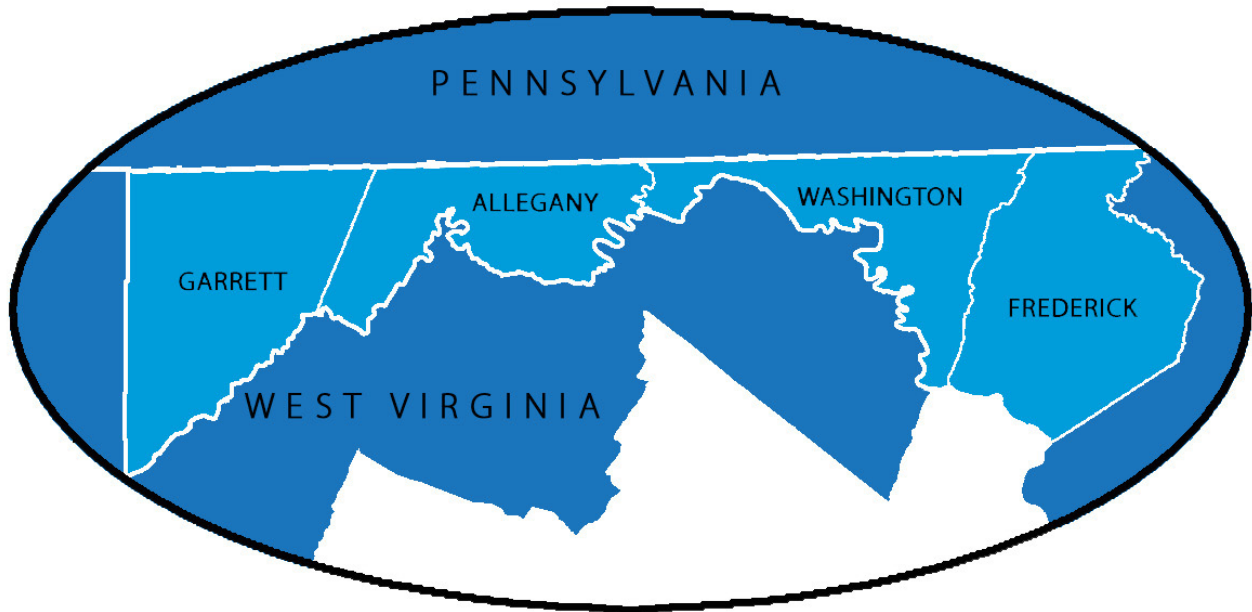


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Cover Photos (from top)

- Peer Recovery Specialist Jeff Hay presented a program on how to “Reframe the Holidays” for those struggling with addiction.
- The AHEC West team hit Friends Aware as part of the Day of Caring and Sharing.
- Staff from Health Insurance, Healing Allegany and Health Right conducted outreach at Cumberland’s Juneteenth celebration.
- Catie briefs the Healing Allegany Street Team as it prepares to head out on the Downtown Cumberland Mall.
- Catie and Kristin shared a video on how to safely dispose of old medicine with specialized disposal bags.
- AHEC Scholars featured discussion of the book and documentary “Black Men in White Coats,” detailing the challenges faced by African-Americans in the health professions field.
- The evidence-based resiliency training of the Center for Mind-Body Medicine is one component of the Healthy Moms and Babies project addressing Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome in Western Maryland.
- Social media posts throughout the year encouraged COVID-19 safety precautions such as masking and social distancing, as well as the COVID vaccination.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



JOE HOFFMAN
Chair, Board of Directors



SUSAN K. STEWART
Executive Director

From seismic shift to new normal

Fiscal Year 2021 was comprised of continued programmatic and staff operations changes that started during the COVID-19 pandemic. We became pros at facilitating and implementing programs and services primarily online. We were able to provide some services in-person, but most occurred online. In our second year of pandemic operations, we remained resilient, engaged in our communities, and continued to provide quality programs and services. So, the seismic shift that occurred during Fiscal Year 2021 settled into the new normal for staff and programs in Fiscal Year 2021.

As always, AHEC West continued its commitments to the communities we serve, continuing collaborations that meet identified community needs for the public, our students, and health professionals. Our newest funding opportunity came via the Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling, allowing us to shed light on the issue for health professionals and high school students. We also obtained more funding to address other aspects of the opioid/substance use disorder problems in the area, diversifying our reach and potential impact.

We continued our efforts in health professions education pipeline programs; health insurance assistance for Western Maryland residents; interprofessional geriatrics education and training; access to oral healthcare for people without the means to pay for treatment; regional oral health coordination; Community Health Worker services and training; community education programs to prevent or mitigate chronic disease, and Mind Body Medicine Skills Groups. We gained recognition with the Maryland Department of Labor as a registered apprenticeship program for Community Health Workers.

We thank our Board of Directors, the Maryland AHEC Program Office, our funding and other partners, and the incredible, dedicated-to-quality staff of AHEC West. Our core values are excellence, innovation, and collaboration.

Sincerely,

Joe Hoffman

Joe Hoffman

Susan K. Stewart

Susan K. Stewart

CLINICAL EDUCATION



Joy Taylor
Program
Coordinator

As part of the ongoing effort to attract more health professionals to our underserved region, the Clinical Education program at AHEC West coordinates health-professions student rotations in Western Maryland, allowing students to experience first-hand the challenges, opportunities and rewards of practicing in our rural, small-town communities.

Staff work to both coordinate rotations with volunteer physician preceptors, and to arrange temporary housing for students through AHEC West-managed properties in the three western counties, including apartments above our office in Cumberland.

During FY 2021, the Clinical Education program coordinated rotations for 89 students, for a total of 451 weeks. Our preceptor partners are absolutely critical to the success of the Clinical Education program, with physicians generously donating their time and opening their practices to mentor health professions students as the healthcare professionals of tomorrow. With great appreciation, these local preceptors donated more than 18,360 hours of volunteer instructional

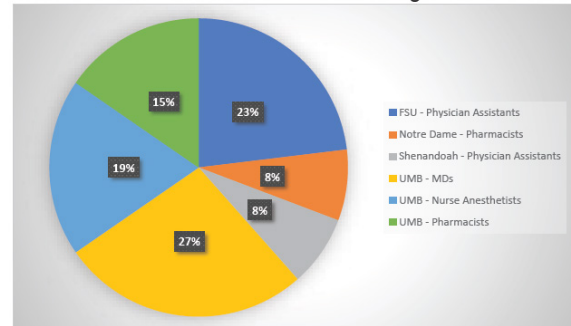
time to our students this year.

The Clinical Education program continues to be impacted by COVID-19, with fewer physicians able to maintain the student rotations at a time of lockdown and social distancing.

The difficult task of recruiting and retaining preceptors for the Clinical Education program has been challenging, and will be an ongoing issue in FY 2022.

Clinical Education

32 Rotations
26 Students
138 Weeks of Clinical Training



This graphic from the Third Quarter Board Report details student rotations from January through March, 2021. Over the entire fiscal year, the Clinical Education program coordinated rotations for a total of 89 students.

CONTINUING EDUCATION / INTER-PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION



Joy Taylor
Program
Coordinator

AHEC West FY21 Continuing Education planning continues to focus on providing Inter-Professional Education (IPE) experiences to our local health professional community, utilizing our IHEC (Interprofessional Health Education

Committee) to identify training topics, speakers and venues. IHEC will always consider requested training opportunities and continue to coordinate with our collaborative partners at the local hospitals, healthcare organizations and educational institutions.

During FY21, AHEC West conducted 25 IPE Continuing Education courses, providing certificates to 1,256 health professionals and health professions students.

By providing quality, diverse and affordable educational opportunities, AHEC West has assisted with the retention of health professionals in the region, as well as assisted them to improve the healthcare provided to the citizens of Western Maryland.

GAIT: Geriatric Assessment Interdisciplinary Team



Joy Taylor
Program Coordinator

AHEC West continues a 25-year collaboration with GGEAR, University of Maryland, Baltimore, for interprofessional geriatrics educational opportunities in Western Maryland for University System of Maryland health professions students. Funded by the Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research Project, University of Maryland Baltimore, the program operates under the direction of Diane Martin, PhD.

The Geriatric Assessment Interdisciplinary Team (GAIT) program is recognized across the state of Maryland as a valuable interprofessional learning experience that brings together students from all University System of Maryland campuses for didactic and clinical sessions related to providing care and service to geriatric patients and their families.

For the safety of the vulnerable populations with whom our GAIT participants interact, we had to modify delivery of GAIT for FY21. AHEC West and the Geriatrics & Gerontology Education and Research (GGEAR) program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore Graduate School are pleased to create a virtual GAIT, using Blackboard online platform, which is designed to foster a sense of community among participants and allow for interaction with GAIT facilitators -- just as participants would in the live trainings.

This virtual GAIT is an **eight to nine-hour program**, divided into two parts: asynchronous (independent) activities (~5 hours) and a ~ 4-hour live group meeting (with smaller break-out rooms) via Zoom.

The asynchronous, self-pace portion of GAIT includes reviewing the resources located on the training site (videos and reading assignments), sharing thoughts in the discussion forum, and learning from the diverse academic and professional backgrounds that make up this GAIT training. Attendees will also be divided into smaller interdisciplinary teams to review a patient "case" and discuss it with a Neurologist from the University of Maryland, School of Medicine. They will then work together as an interprofessional team to consider the case holistically, developing and presenting the best possible care plan using a person-centered approach.

During FY21, AHEC West conducted two virtual GAIT programs which registered 54 students (with 36 completers) from seven universities, representing seven different academic disciplines, including physician assistant, nursing, occupational therapy, social work, audiology, pharmacy and community health.

The first program was held Nov. 6, 2020 and was titled "Providing Care & Service to Isolated Older Adults," led

by Dr. Julia Biernot. The second program was held on March 25, 2021 and was titled "Judgement & Insight of Medical Diagnosis Related to Dementia," led by Dr. Julia Biernot and Jennifer Glotfelty, LCSW-C.

Evaluation results reflect that the students enjoy this new format with real enthusiasm about working with other disciplines on an interprofessional healthcare team.

In addition to the virtual GAIT planning and delivery, Program Coordinator Joy Taylor co-presented "The Virtual Geriatric Assessment Interdisciplinary Team Project: Interprofessional Geriatric Training Against the Backdrop of COVID-19" with Diane Martin, PhD; Min Park, M.A.; Sara Smith, MHA; and Meredith Hochman, JD, MSW, at the Southern Gerontological Society Annual Meeting and Conference on April 23, 2021.



AHEC West
Published by Richard Kerns | 191 | September 17

Many people worry about becoming forgetful as they age. They think it is the first sign of Alzheimer's disease. But some forgetfulness can be a normal part of aging. This chart explains several differences between normal signs of aging and Alzheimer's disease:

NORMAL AGING	ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE
• Making a bad decision once in a while	• Making poor judgments and decisions a lot of the time
• Missing a monthly payment	• Problems taking care of monthly bills
• Forgetting which day it is and remembering later	• Losing track of the date or time of year
• Sometimes forgetting which word to use	• Trouble having a conversation
• Losing things from time to time	• Misplacing things often and being unable to find them

Social media is used to help spread the word about elder-care services, as part of the GAIT and GGEAR programs.

GGEAR Partnership

www.umaryland.edu/gerontology



Joy Taylor
Program Coordinators

GGEAR FY21 Annual Report
Geriatrics and Gerontology
Education and Research
Project, funded by the
University of Maryland
Baltimore, under the direction
of Diane Martin, PhD. [www.](http://www.umaryland.edu/gerontology)
[umaryland.edu/gerontology](http://www.umaryland.edu/gerontology)
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

AHEC West coordinated three GGEAR Inter-professional (IPE) Continuing Education courses this fiscal year, training a total of 171 healthcare professionals:

The GGEAR **“Brain Health: Age Related Issues”** webinar was held on Wednesday Sept. 16, 2020 from 9:00am – 12:30pm via Zoom and received great feedback! There were 46 participants from a variety of disciplines including social work, psychology, professional counseling, nursing and students. Twenty-six social work certificates were distributed. In partnership with Garrett College of Maryland, this three-hour training included presentations by Kim Burton, former Director of the Older Adult Programs at the Mental Health Association of Maryland, Jana Brown, Doctor of Audiology and Theresa Stahl, Registered Dietitian. This was the first time that a GGEAR conference had a registration fee assessed; the Planning Committee also searched for corporate and private co-sponsorships.

“COVID-19: Updates, Hidden Health Risks of Social Isolation in Later Life & Pathways to a More Connected Future” was held Jan. 8, 2021 via Zoom. This three-hour interprofessional continuing education webinar had 62 attendees and awarded 13 Social Work CE certificates and one Professional Counseling CE certificate. Dr. Wilbur Chen, University of Maryland School of Medicine; Dr. Thomas Cudjoe, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine; and Ms. Bernice Hutchinson, Deputy Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging were speakers and were very well received. Evaluation comments included:

- All the speakers were excellent – I especially appreciated the clarity of the COVID-19 information.
- Information and was timely and relevant!
- Speakers were knowledgeable and straight to the point. They responded to the clear

objectives.

- Thanks to all of you! Great program – lots of important and necessary information!

Other evaluation details include:

- 100% of attendees responded that the training was fair, balanced, objective and free of commercial bias and influence.
- 100% of attendees responded that they increased their knowledge.
- 58% of attendees responded that they were using this course to meet licensure requirements/education needs
- 94% of attendees responded that they will implement at least one practice improvement as a result of this training.

“Mental Health & Aging: Motivational Interviewing Skill Development” GGEAR Conference was held on Friday, May 14, 2021 via Zoom. This three-hour interprofessional continuing education webinar had 63 attendees and awarded 14 Nursing CE certificates, 12 Social Work CE certificates and nine Professional Counseling and Psychology CE certificates. In addition to GGEAR, conference co-sponsors included Meritus Medical Center and Allegany College of Maryland. Fan favorite, Dr. Mary Hodorowicz, Clinical Assistant Professor for the University of Maryland School of Social Work, returned as the expert speaker on motivational conversations and was very well received. Evaluation comments included:

- Great presentation. I loved being able to practice what I learned. Very useful in the real world.
- Excellent presentation and good interaction opportunities.
- Great training that was well presented.
- Thank you - great format!

Other evaluation details include:

- 100% of attendees responded that the training was fair, balanced, objective and free of commercial bias and influence.
- 100% of attendees responded that they increased their knowledge.
- 70% of attendees responded that they were using this course to meet licensure requirements/education needs
- 100% of attendees responded that they will implement at least one practice improvement as a result of this training.

AHEC Scholars



Joy Taylor
Program Coordinator

FY 2021 saw the 17 students of Cohort 2 join the 16 students of Cohort 1 participating in the AHEC Scholars Program with AHEC West. A national HRSA educational project implemented by Area Health Education Centers across the U.S., AHEC Scholars is a program for health professions students interested in supplementing their education by gaining additional knowledge and

experience in rural and/or underserved urban settings. Program duration is two years and each year includes the following for a total of 160 hours:

- 40 hours community-based experiential or clinical training in rural and/or underserved area
- 40 hours didactic education focused on six **Core Topic Areas**: Interprofessional Education, Behavioral Health Integration, Social Determinants of Health, Cultural Competency, Practice Transformation, and Current and Emerging Health Issues (FY21 included COVID-19 and implicit bias/racism as a public health crisis).

To date, the students represent the Physician Assistant program at Frostburg State University, the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy.

Clinical experiences have included ER, cardiology, obstetrics, pharmacy and psychiatry rotations at UPMC-Western Maryland; family medicine and pharmacy rotations at Meritus Health; dermatology rotation at Western Maryland Dermatology; orthopedic surgery at Garrett Regional Medical Center; general surgery with Stasko Surgical Associates; family medicine rotation with Gonzaga Family Health; pediatrics with Children's Medical Group; family medicine rotation at Meritus Family Medicine-Williamsport, neurology rotations at MIR Neurology, family medicine rotation at Frederick Primary Care and a wound clinic at UPMC Western Maryland.

Didactic (online) experiences have featured Smiles for Life, the "Regrounding Our Response" opioid program, Weitzman ECHO Pain webinar, "Giving Birth During the COVID-19 Pandemic" webinar, "Help for Clinicians Caring for Patients with Diabetes" webinar, and a webinar on "Acknowledging Racial Inequality in Medical Education".

In addition, 10 AHEC Scholars students from each Maryland AHEC participated in the A.C.T. (Advocacy for underserved Communities through Training) Immersion Project, which included these additional experiential training opportunities:

- Participation with three GGEAR webinars focused on the health and care of the older adult;

- Book Study of the New York Times Bestseller, "Black Man In A White Coat" (book provided to students in December 2020.) with a follow-up virtual discussion with author Dr. Damon Tweedy;
- Two sessions of implicit bias and anti-racism training with Dr. Wendy Shaia, Clinical Associate Professor at the Univ. of Maryland School of Social Work and Executive Director of Social Work Community Outreach Service;
- Watch party screening of "Black Men In White Coats" documentary with a followup conversation with Dr. Dale Okorodudu, founder and executive producer;
- A virtual panel presentation with UMB School of Medicine experts regarding the rewards and challenges of pursuing a profession in healthcare;
- A virtual tour of the R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center.

Participation with the Western Maryland "Immersion" weekend event in April 2021. Activities included mind/body/medicine exercises, "The Providers" film Watch Party and discussion, participating in a poverty simulation and "The Healing Allegany Project: Panel Presentation – What is happening in rural Western Maryland?" Each student submitted a reflection paper sharing their thoughts and experiences regarding the A.C.T. Immersion Project. Evaluation responses were very positive with students reporting how impactful the activities were and how much they will benefit their practice as future healthcare providers.

Other activities:

- Identification of an AHEC West Scholars student to provide testimonial about her experiences being an AHEC Scholar – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOKlx6ioMt0>
- Nomination and acceptance of an AHEC West Scholars student to participate in a panel presentation at the National AHEC Organization Conference
- Distribution of "Letters of Congratulations" and Certificates of Achievement sent to the 13 graduating Scholars from Cohort 1. In addition, graduation cards and charms were sent to nine graduating FSU students from Cohort 1.

Recruitment for AHEC Scholars Cohort 3 has begun and is on-going.



Healing Allegany - Rural Communities Opioid Response Program - RCORP



Melissa Clark
Project Director



Catie Brenneman
Program Coordinator

Fiscal Year 2021 saw the blooming and fruition of what has become one of AHEC West's signature projects, as Healing Allegany transitioned last summer from a one-year Planning grant to a three-year Implementation grant to promote Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery related to opioid misuse. Funded by HRSA's Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP), Healing Allegany in just its first nine months figuratively and at times literally painted Allegany County purple to advance a mission that at its heart seeks to restore hope to those struggling with addiction. (Our Healthy Moms and Babies program is also funded through RCORP.)

That mission became even more critical as fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic created a nationwide surge in overdoses that did not spare Appalachia. Allegany County in 2020 recorded 48 fatal overdoses, more than twice the number from 2019 and by far the biggest increase in the state.

Arriving with the New Year just four months into the start of the Implementation project, these grim statistics spurred Healing Allegany to speed startup on initiatives that had been identified in the year-long Planning phase. Guided by the Healing Allegany Consortium of nine

member-agencies and numerous individual volunteers, these efforts include stigma education, workforce training and development, harm reduction measures to prevent fatal overdoses, promotion of Peer counselors, and establishment of the Reentry Center at the Allegany County Detention Center.

With Melissa and Catie guiding the project, Healing Allegany in just its first days in the Implementation phase took the lead in promoting the first "Allegany County Goes Purple" commemoration of September as National Recovery Month.

The official color of National Recovery Month, purple plays a central role as well in one of Healing Allegany's most visible initiatives, the harm-reduction "Street Team" project to distribute Naloxone and fentanyl test strips to people who use drugs. Clad in distinctive purple T-shirts, AHEC West staff members and volunteer team members literally hit the street to share doses of the overdose-reversing Naloxone to the people who most need it, where they are. The test strips alert to the presence of deadly fentanyl in street drugs like marijuana and cocaine. By design, it is "low barrier" outreach, with no judgments made, no questions asked in service to the ultimate goal: To save lives.

Begun in April, the Street Team through the end of June distributed 433 doses of Naloxone and more than 100 fentanyl test strips.

Healing Allegany volunteer Sue Folk, a retired federal prison official who has been involved from the start of the Planning grant, took the lead in developing the new Reentry Center, working closely with Christy McMillan, Reentry Coordinator at the Detention Center. Our Peer Support Specialist Jeff Hay works with male inmates, while Community Health Worker Mindy Bradshaw works with females. COVID lockdowns have proved daunting at times, but the project is gaining traction in providing support – housing, employment and other "Social Determinants of Health" – to former inmates reentering the community.

COVID continues to impede both workforce and community-education initiatives, including efforts to address stigma: Both internalized personal stigma, and the stigma that many people who use drugs encounter in their interactions with healthcare workers. While limited virtual trainings have been held, we hope to begin the far more effective in-person training in the spring of 2022.

Increased use of Peer Support Specialists was another need identified during the Planning phase. AHEC West has leveraged the success of Healing Allegany to apply for (and in early FY 22 receive) two state grants that utilize Peers in judicial and harm-reduction initiatives.

As Catie noted of Healing Allegany early last summer, "We are making waves my friends!"



Social media promotions helped spread the word about Street Team outreach, including informational tables on the Downtown Mall and its weekly Farmers Market.

Healthy Moms and Babies

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program - RCORP



Susan Stewart
Program Coordinator

Fiscal Year 2021 saw AHEC West win funding for its second project under HRSA's Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP): Healthy Moms and Babies. Begun in October 2020, the three-year project is working to address Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) in Allegany and Garrett counties by enhancing family support services, providing NAS workforce education, and building personal resilience for moms and families through Mind-Body Medicine.

Under the leadership of Program Coordinator Susan Stewart, Healthy Moms and Babies is working hand-in-glove with Healing Allegany – the other RCORP project – to promote efficiency, eliminate duplication and “work smarter.” Personalized stigma is perhaps most severe in NAS cases, with pregnant women and moms often harboring intense feelings of shame for the effects of addiction on their newborns. Working with Healing Allegany, stigma related community and workforce education set to be carried out in the spring of 2022 will include an element on NAS. In addition to such programmatic coordination, weekly staff meetings for both Healing Allegany and Healthy Moms and Babies have been combined to enhance coordination.

Most of the Healthy Moms and Babies funding has been dedicated to the Garrett County Health Department, which through the grant has been able to implement the Healthy Families America Child Welfare Protocol for pregnant women, new moms and families affected by Substance Use Disorder/Opioid Use Disorder (SUD/OD) in Garrett County. Under the leadership of Maria Friend – Director of Early Care Programs – the Health Department is also utilizing the grant to provide intensive case management for those either affected by NAS or susceptible to SUD/OD. Services include counseling, medical and dental care for mother and baby, car seats, and other support linkages.

In Allegany County, Health Moms and Babies is focusing on developing NAS-related healthcare



HEALTHY MOMS AND BABIES

Brady, who says he “lives” in the world of design-software Canva, designed the logo for Healthy Moms and Babies.

workforce education – with trainings to be available in both counties – and as with Garrett County, promoting a message of resilience and self-care by facilitating Mind-Body Medicine skills groups for pregnant women and new moms.

Healthy Moms and Babies began with a six-month planning period, during which elements of the strategic plan and work plan submitted with the grant application were refined for implementation over the remaining two-and-a-half years. Even with this delayed start, the Garrett County team made great progress in its dual NAS initiatives.

As of the end of FY 21, 11 Garrett County families had been enrolled in intensive case management, with referrals pending for six additional families. Under the Child Welfare Protocol, eight referrals were made by the Department of Social Services – as required with the program -- and 25 home visits conducted. Both case management totals are on track with targets outlined in the original grant application.

AHEC West staff are working closely with the HRSA oversight team to develop NAS related workforce training, with a spring 2022 target for the initial round. The project continues to experience difficulties in obtaining partner referrals for clients who would benefit from Mind-Body Medicine training, with HRSA coordinating on a possible refinement of this project element moving forward.

ECHO

Exploring Careers in Health Occupations



Melissa Clark
Program Coordinator



Brady Watson
Assistant Program Coordinator

AHEC West's signature health careers pipeline program this year celebrated 16 years of nurturing students' interest in becoming health professionals.

Once again, the global pandemic directly affected the 2021 ECHO program. The decision was made early in 2021 to have the program take place entirely online. ECHO 101 and ECHO 201 were once again merged into the same program for the year and offered four unique events over one week.

ECHO still managed to provide high school-level students with a variety of learning opportunities through presentations and virtual tours. Each day the group of students and presenters gathered on a Zoom call to chat and learn with fellow students.

The events took place from June 14 to June 17. The first was a live Q & A with four guest speakers: A current medical student, a nursing home administrator, and two nurses involved with direct patient care and school admissions.

The second event was a virtual, hands-on dissection of a sheep heart. Each student was provided a dissection kit that they used to follow along with our guest presenter.

The third day included a presentation on AmeriCorps from Frostburg State University. We were also lucky enough to have West Virginia University's Dr. Linda Nield from WVU's Health Science Center provide us a virtual tour of the WVU HSC center and a presentation on the history of medicine. She also answered students' questions about applying to medical school.

The fourth event was a presentation on 3D-Gel Printing that represents genetic and DNA makeup. This was also included in the dissection kit to follow along with the presenter.

Scholarship drawings of \$750, \$500, and \$250 were

awarded to three different students. The scholarships are now named the Payton Grady Scholarships in honor of a former ECHO student who passed away unexpectedly in 2020.

Twenty-two students participated in all four scheduled events and were awarded a \$25 Visa Gift Card. Over the course of the four days we had a total of 29 total participants from Allegany, Garrett, Washington, and Montgomery counties, and Mineral County in West Virginia. Each student received a free supply kit that included a t-shirt, water bottle, pens and pencils, a USB flash drive, and their supplies to participate in the virtual, hands-on dissection and 3D Gel Model presentations.

In March ECHO partnered with the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling to offer students a scholarship opportunity related to developing a strategy to combat problematic gambling. Scholarships of \$500, \$250, and \$100 were awarded to three students whose strategies were evaluated based on content, problem solving, and proposed strategy.

ECHO also teamed up with the AHEC Scholars program to enroll former ECHO students to the Scholar's program. Flyers were sent to the entire ECHO Constant Contact data base, and a major social media campaign was launched over a three week span.

The aim for the summer ECHO program moving forward will ultimately depend on the status of COVID-19. The current idea for the future of the program envisions a hybrid system, offering both in-person and virtual experiences for our students. ECHO 101 and ECHO 201 will be merged into a one- or two-week program titled ECHO 2022.

The in-person experiences will include one-day field trips to top-notch medical facilities such as NIH, WVU School of Medicine, and the Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore. We envision events such as the Q&A panel to be held over Zoom, which is more convenient for both presenters and students.

We are eager to hit the ground running and hopefully be able to enter local schools and recruit new students to our program! We will also be reaching out to former students to gauge their interest in receiving assistance with MCAT/ GRE test prep material costs and/or assistance with writing medical school entrance essays. Once again we look forward to recruiting a new class of students for ECHO 2022, and are eager to reconnect with former ECHO students.



ECHO Summer Program students participated in a virtual dissection of a sheep heart, using a kit that was provided to all participants to follow the online presenter.

The Health Insurance Program



*David Stewart
Program Director*

The fifth year of the Health Insurance Program continued to be significantly influenced by COVID-19.

Except for a brief period during late spring and early summer, there were no in-person outreach events. In-person assistance did not resume either. The program did begin producing and promoting videos which were used for social media outreach. Staff did, however, begin returning to working from the office. The program continues to provide all assistance by phone or online.

For FY 2022, the Health Insurance Program received 4,369 calls from consumers and had 4,805 appointments with consumers. The uninsured rate for Allegany, Garrett and Washington counties is now below 6%. This is a major improvement from pre-ACA implementation when the uninsured rate was in the teens. That said, our region relative to most of Maryland is still among the highest uninsured rates.

Highlights from FY 2021 include:

- A significant jump in appointments from 3,504 in FY 2020 to 4,805 FY 2021
- Expansion of radio and digital advertising
- Self-produced outreach/educational videos for website and social media
- Secured a permanent store-front location in



Nefertiti hosted a health insurance informational table in Hagerstown as part of outreach efforts that have begun to transition back to in-person events with relaxation of COVID restrictions.

Hagerstown

- A significant ramp up of social media efforts
- Health Insurance Program Director participated as a panelist for Congressman Trone's February 12th Equity and Justice Healthcare Roundtable
- United Healthcare (UHC) joined Maryland Health Connection and began offering plans in Washington County
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) increases financial help available to ACA consumers
- Health insurance enrollment remained open all year

A special mention should be made of United Healthcare joining the Maryland Marketplace and the passage of ARPA.

While the UHC move points to a strengthening of the system overall, it did significantly lower the amount of financial help available to consumers. Because UHC's plans are less expensive than CareFirst's, consumers are deemed to have less need for assistance. This change prompted a jump in calls from Washington County consumers who wanted to know what happened. Initially some consumers were dropping their coverage but most stayed and when the American Rescue Plan Act was passed, many came back.

ARPA increased not just the amount of financial help available but also the population of consumers who could now qualify for that help. Our navigators were ready and able to support consumers through these changes.



Health Insurance Program Director David Stewart participated in a Feb. 12 webinar with Congressman David Trone and medical professionals titled "Equity and Justice Healthcare Roundtable."

Health Right



Health Right
A program of AHEC West



Jan Chippendale
Program Coordinator/Case Manager

In FY21, 315 low-income adults were enrolled with Health Right for assistance with dental treatment. The program paid \$70,794.60 in dental charges, and \$204,048.20 in treatment was donated by our generous dental partners. Health Right clients were able to receive over 2,600 dental procedures through the program.

Enrollments were much lower than usual during the first half of the fiscal year as our community was still in the early stages of navigating the challenges of COVID. The pandemic also forced the cancellation of the Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic, which would have been held in October 2020 at the fairgrounds. Health Right enrollments increased in the second half of the fiscal year to numbers more representative of our usual participation in the program.

In FY21 we continued our project of serving those in recovery with funding from the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC) and the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF). Funding for Health Right in FY21 also included grants and donations from County

United Way, Guardian Insurance, the Ted A. Wolfe Trust of the WMHS Foundation, the city of Cumberland, the Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation, Delta Dental, and additional RMPIF funding. We also received a donation from First Presbyterian Church of Cumberland, which has included Health Right in their community outreach for several years.

With the high rates of dental disease in our community, and household incomes well below the state average, we are grateful for the opportunity to assist our low-income residents in accessing this vital component of health care. We are extraordinarily grateful for our funding partners and for the caring dental practitioners who work with us. In addition, we extend our thanks to our local human service agencies, health care providers, and others for their efforts in referring their clients and patients to us and helping those in our community to secure the services they need.

Mountain Health Alliance

Catie Brenneman
Program Coordinator

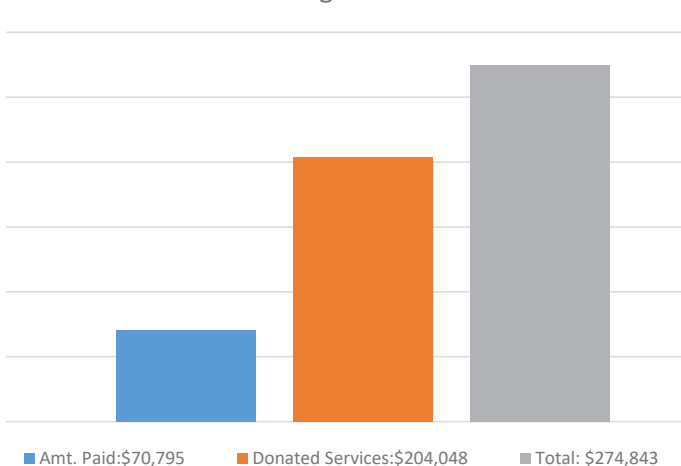


Mountain Health Alliance wrapped up Sept 30, 2020. Mindy and Catie finished out the project working with UPMC Western Maryland and the Maryland Department of Health to implement the online/virtual Diabetes Prevention

Program training locally.

MHA staff also worked closely with the Garrett County Local Management Board, Garrett College, Luma Health Partners, and the Maryland Department of Labor to develop a Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program for Community Health Workers (CHWs). AHEC West serves as the Sponsor and Related Instruction Lead for the program. Our application went before the Council in January 2021 and we were approved as an Apprenticeship Program in Maryland. The first three apprentices were hired in the spring of 2021, with the CHW training beginning in September 2021.

Health Right FY 21



Regional Oral Health Coordinator



Julie Teter
Regional Oral Health Coordinator

With the support of federal funding from HRSA, the Maryland Department of Health Office of Oral Health (MDH OOH) mobilized two Regional Oral Health Coordinators to two key regions of Maryland: Western Maryland and Central/Southern Maryland. The Oral Health Coordinators support local health departments in building referral networks with local dental providers and document best practices for case management and care coordination that can be used statewide by Health Departments, healthcare and non-dental organizations. They also work with community partners and local Primary Care Providers to promote the Oral Health Delivery Framework, a conceptual model for integrating oral healthcare in routine medical care. We also provide assistance to Head Start and Judy Centers in the counties we serve.

The AHEC West Regional Oral Health Coordinator (ROHC) took many webinars on medical/dental integration. The ROHC went to the MDH OOH staff meetings monthly and kept in touch with contacts that were made early on. The ROHC also attended Maryland Oral Health Association meetings, as well as Local Health Improvement Council (LHIC) meetings for Allegany, Washington and Garrett counties.

The ROHC supplied Washington, Allegany and Garrett County head starts with toothbrushes and toothpaste to give to their children throughout the year. ROHC provided the Head Starts with videos and other information to send to parents to encourage brushing at home. ROHC has also given supplies to the Allegany County Health Department. Community Health Workers with AHEC West also supplied oral health kits through outreach events.

The ROHC worked on PowerPoint presentations for when we present to conferences. ROHC presented to the WIC state conference in January 2021 with Katy Battani, providing information on how to take care of children's teeth and what the WIC employees can teach their clients about oral health. ROHC also updated program staff on the extended Medicaid benefit for pregnant women, which will start November 1, 2021. This will allow dental coverage for 60 days post-partum.

MDH - Scope of Work for Regional Oral Health Coordination

- Assess community oral health/dental workforce needs in the three Western Maryland counties and identify vulnerable populations at high risk for oral disease;
- Build partnership networks with healthcare and community organizations
- Assess regional oral health needs and gaps in the dental workforce
- Promote oral health integration into primary care settings and community programs
- Develop regional oral health training networks and training resources
- Develop a comprehensive data collection process for program evaluation

ROHC presented at the local WIC meeting in March 17, 2021 to discuss COVID-19 impacts on dental and general dental HEALTH. ROHC had a great discussion on oral health and COVID, stressing the importance of seeing the dentist and noting the infection control procedures in place to protect patients.

ROHC also sent brochures and online oral health information to Allegany and Garrett County Head Starts to supply to their families.

ROHC attended webinars for the American Association of Community Dental Programs and the Florida Oral Health Conference on April, 7, 14, 21, and 28, with presentations centered on integrating oral health into primary care. ROHC also attended the National Oral Health Conference every Friday in April 2021. Both conferences were fantastic! ROHC attended one day of the OPEN summit – Oral Health Progress and Equity Network -- again focusing on integrating dental and medical. This was the end of June and was very informative.

ROHC is involved in the Oral Health Knowledge Network (now named Oral Health Learning Café). The OHLC meets monthly to talk about how other states integrate medical and dental. ROHC is also meeting with the Maryland Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the Maryland Academy of Pediatrics. The goal is to reach out to all Maryland Pediatricians and Pediatric Dentists to have them speak to each other on how to lessen the burden of dental decay on children in the state and have more Pediatricians participate in the Maryland Healthy Smiles program

ROHC attended the Maryland Rural Health Association conference in October 2020. It was a great experience to learn about rural health and what healthcare disparities there are, especially with oral health.

STAFF

AHEC West's mission is accomplished by a group of **highly professional, dedicated** individuals who work to meet the goals and objectives of each program.



Susan Stewart
Executive Director



Melissa Clark
Associate Director



Tina Rohrbaugh
Finance Director



Jackie Booth
Administrative Specialist



Mindy Bradshaw
Community Health Worker



Catie Brenneman
Program Coordinator



Jan Chippendale
Program Coordinator



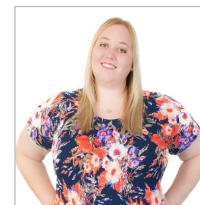
Mary Clites
Custodian



Nefertiti Guillaume
Program Coordinator



Jeff Hay
Peer Recovery Specialist



Amanda Heavener
Administrative Specialist



Heather Iser
Community Health Worker



Richard Kerns
Program Coordinator



Clark Lanthier
Navigator



Carol Morgan
Navigator



Terri Socha
Program Coordinator



David Stewart
Program Director



Joy Taylor
Program Coordinator



Julie Teter
Oral Health Coordinator



Jen Thomas
Program Coordinator



Kristin Thomas
Intern



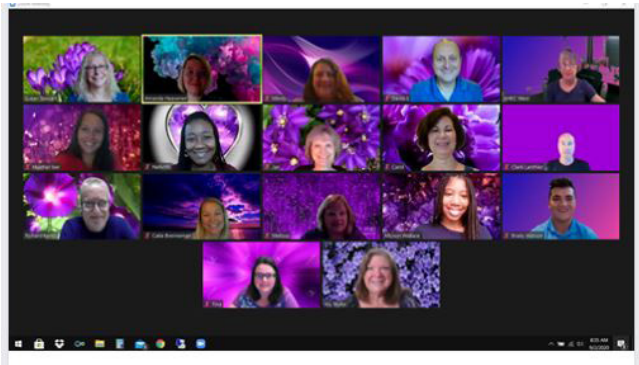
Allyson Wallace
Navigator



Brady Watson
Navigator/ECHO

AHEC West: Living the Zoom Life...

Beginning about three months after we began working from home due to COVID, Fiscal Year 2021 saw AHEC West staff embracing the “new normal” of the Zoom Life, from daily morning staff meetings to conferences, project meetings, and training webinars. Here is a sample of some of the special-occasion Zoom screenshots from the 8:30 a.m. staff meetings.



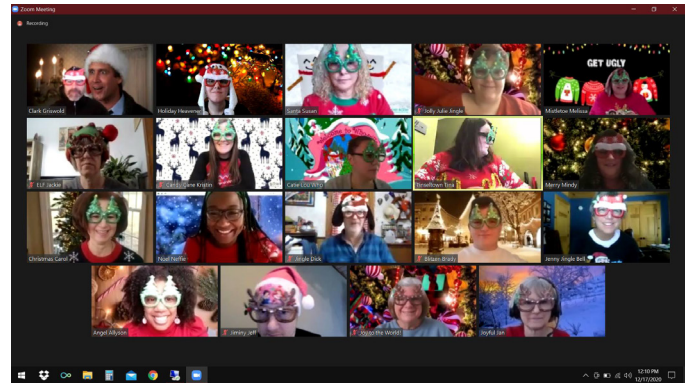
Healing Allegany played a central role in celebrating the first annual “Allegany Goes Purple” campaign to mark National Recovery Month. Staff marked the start of September by displaying purple backgrounds.



Blue backgrounds commemorated Colon Cancer Awareness Day.



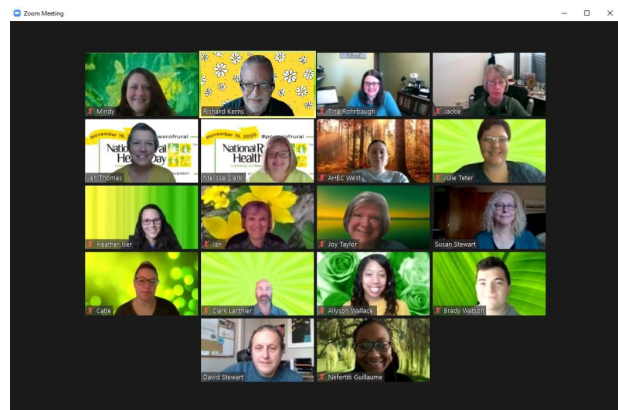
Staff sent Clark off to retirement with best-wishes cards. As seen at upper left, he had already relocated from Garrett County to a Caribbean beach bungalow (just kidding).



Unable to meet in person for a Christmas dinner, staff donned holiday hats and goofy glasses Melissa had mailed out ahead of time to each staff member’s home. We also exchanged cards.



Staff shared cards they made to mark Jen’s final day. Pictured at upper left, Jen now works at UPMC Western Maryland.



Yellow and Green are the colors of National Rural Health Day, observed the third Thursday of November.

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Allegany County Health Department

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Clinical Operations, University of Maryland School of Medicine
Department of Family and Community Medicine
Director, Maryland Area Health Education Center

Leah Millstein, MD
AHEC Course Director,
Associate Residency Program Director
Director of Ambulatory Education
Director, Preliminary Program Dept. Internal Medicine

%	- FY 21 FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS -	\$ Amount
30%	Maryland Health Benefit Exchange - Health Insurance	600,000.00
16%	Maryland Statewide Medical Education & Training System (MSMETS)	324,000.00
14%	Healing Allegany	283,156.00
8%	POS AHEC & Supplemental Funding	151,737.00
7%	Healthy Moms and Babies	142,864.00
5%	Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.....	101,595.00
3%	Mountain Health Alliance 3	62,310.00
3%	Local Administrative and Program Development Fund.....	53,380.00
2%	Geriatric Assessment Interdisciplinary Team (GAIT) Project	42,500.00
2%	CHRC - Recovery	40,822.00
2%	Regional Oral Health Coordinator	35,288.00
2%	Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund	33,085.00
2%	Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research (GGEAR)	30,000.00
1%	Weinberg Foundation	26,083.00
>1%	(Multiple additional funding sources of 1% or less)	56,156.00
		1,982,976.00

AHEC West Balance Sheet

June 2021

ASSETS		
Current Assets		
GENERAL CHECKING	191,064.58	
PETTY CASH	55.00	
CHAPIN DAVIS	246,740.04	
RBC WEALTH MANAGMENT	99,766.43	
DUE FROM GRANTS	317,342.06	
PREPAID RENT	6,870.97	
TOTAL Current Assets		861,839.08
Fixed Assets		
LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS	163,479.01	
FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT	131,438.47	
ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION	(156,386.08)	
TOTAL Fixed Assets		138,531.40
Other Assets		
DEPOSITS	525.00	
TOTAL Other Assets		525.00
TOTAL ASSETS		1,000,895.48
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
ACCRUED FICA	2,876.11	
PENNSYLVANIA INCOME TAX W/H	191.51	
STATE UNEMPLOYMENT PAYABLE	174.04	
ACCRUED PAYROLL	39,630.36	
ACCRUED PENSION PLAN	3,170.44	
AFLAC INSURANCE PAYABLE	168.40	
CELLULAR PAYABLE	64.20	
ACCRUED VACATION	15,456.34	
FICA ON ACCRUED VACATION	1,182.41	
REFUNDABLE ADVANCE	17,701.60	
DEFERRED RENT LIABILITY	6,978.00	
TOTAL Current Liabilities		87,593.41
TOTAL LIABILITIES		87,593.41
CAPITAL		
GENERAL FUND - RESTRICTED	1,268.00	
GENERAL FUND - UNRESTRICTED	855,423.15	
Year-to-Date Earnings	56,610.92	
TOTAL CAPITAL		913,302.07
TOTAL LIABILITIES & CAPITAL		1,000,895.48