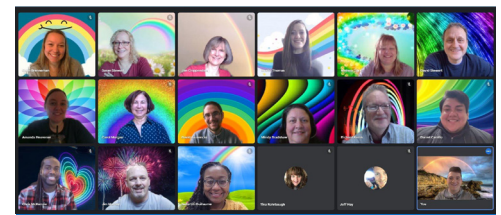
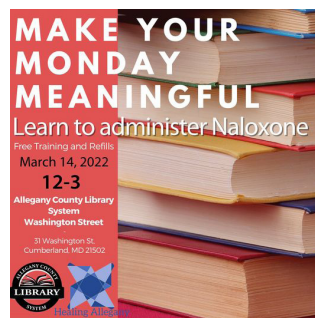


Annual Report FY 2022



Maryland Area Health Education Center West

THE MISSION OF AHEC WEST:

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

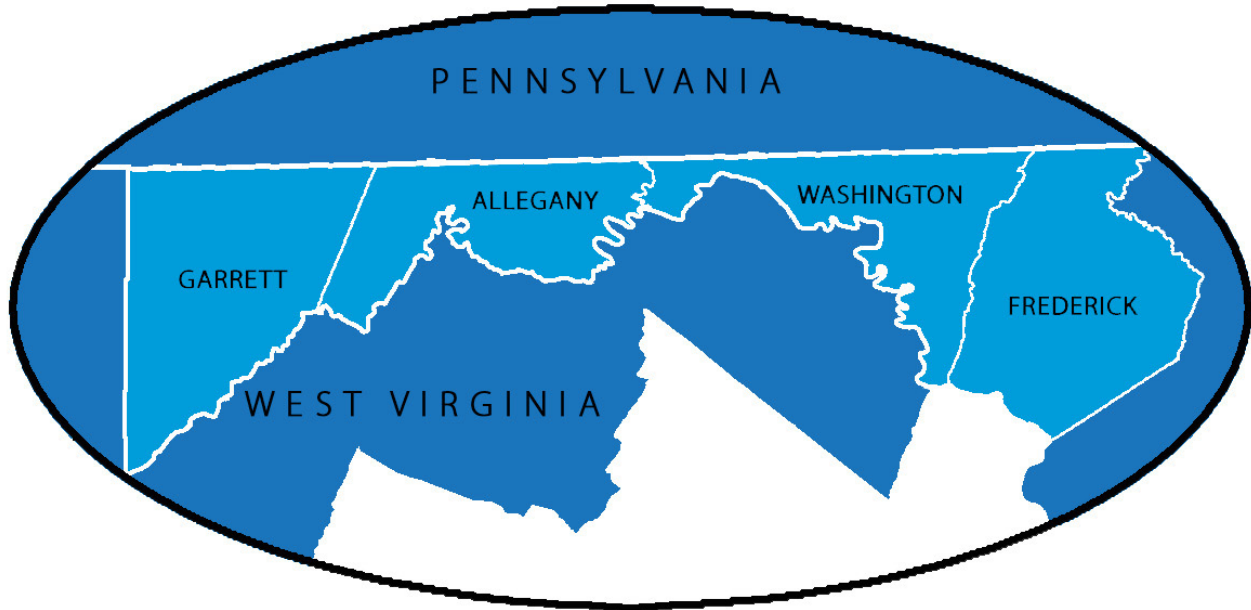


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Cover Photos (from top)

- Students in Allegany College of Maryland’s Medical Assistant program received purple T-shirts after completing training to administer the overdose-reversing drug Narcan.
- AHEC West again sponsored a family for Christmas, which set up staff for a big wrapping session for the donated gifts.
- Congressman David Trone visited AHEC West in January, detailing expansion to Affordable Care Act health insurance under the American Rescue Plan Act. In attendance in addition to staff were consumers who had received assistance through the Health Insurance Program.
- Purple-clad staff were out in force for the Day of Access to Treatment in March.
- Healing Allegany partnered with Allegany County Public Libraries to promote Narcan training as part of “Meaningful Mondays” at various library branches.
- Staff jazzed up their morning-meeting background screens with rainbow themes for Employee Appreciation Day in March.
- For the second year, Peer Recovery Specialists at AHEC West hosted an online “Reframe the Holidays” program to help those in recovery deal with the stress and challenges that often accompany the holiday season.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



JOE HOFFMAN
Chair, Board of Directors



SUSAN K. STEWART
Executive Director

Another busy, banner year for AHEC West

2022 was a banner year for AHEC West. While operating and maintaining quality in core AHEC programs such as AHEC Scholars, Geriatric Assessment Interdisciplinary Team training; Geriatrics and Gerontology Education And Research; Clinical Education; Exploring Careers in Health Occupations; and Continuing Education, our Healing Allegany project hit full stride in working to reduce illness and death related to opioid misuse and addiction. The summer launch of a Syringe Services Program (SSP) brought unprecedented harm-reduction services to Allegany County.

Spearheading efforts to reduce overdoses, the Healing Allegany “Street Team” distributed 1,704 doses of life-saving Naloxone in fiscal 2022, as well as 312 test strips to alert for the presence of deadly fentanyl in street drugs. Five Peer Recovery Specialists work the HRSA-funded Healing Allegany project and related state initiatives, demonstrating the value of lived experience through Peer counselors who have “been there, done that” in the struggle to overcome substance dependence and behavioral health challenges while actively navigating a continually evolving recovery landscape. Meanwhile, Healthy Moms and Babies, another HRSA project, continues its work addressing Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome in Allegany and Garrett counties.

Beyond its programs related to the opioid epidemic, AHEC West also saw dramatic growth in staffing in the Health Insurance Program, which helps enroll Marylanders in insurance provided through the Affordable Care Act. An aggressive new outreach effort was highlighted by the summer opening of The Possibility Shop in Cumberland, which helps connect people with health insurance, health care, and social services.

To sum it up, it was another busy year at AHEC West. We look forward to serving our students, health professionals, and communities and helping those in need during fiscal year 2023.

Sincerely,

Joe Hoffman

Joe Hoffman

Susan K. Stewart

Susan K. Stewart

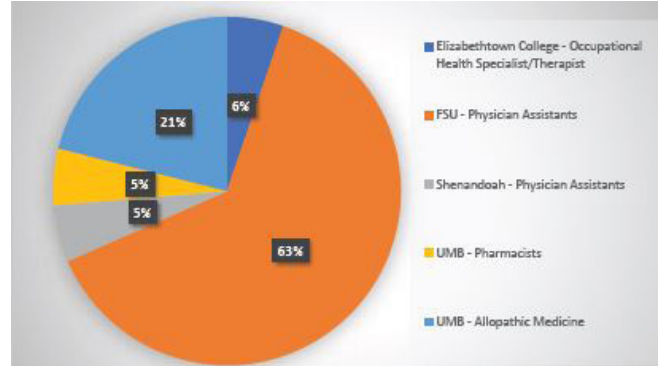
CLINICAL EDUCATION



*Joy Taylor
Program
Coordinator*

The AHEC West Clinical Education Program continues to connect health profession students to practicing health care professionals, with the goal of attracting them to return to our underserved region after graduation. These rotations in Western Maryland allow 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 2022, the Clinical Education program assisted with 121 rotations for 101 unduplicated students for a total of 539 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 18,775 hours of volunteer



This graphic from the Fourth Quarter Board Report details student rotations from April 1 through June 30. Over the entire fiscal year, the Clinical Education program coordinated rotations for a total of 101 students.

instructional time to our students this year.

The Clinical Education program continues to be impacted by COVID-19, with fewer physicians able to bring students into their offices during this time of social distancing and other restrictions. The difficult task of recruiting and retaining preceptors for the Clinical Education program has been challenging, and will be an ongoing issue in FY 2023.

CONTINUING EDUCATION / INTER-PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION



*Joy Taylor
Program
Coordinator*

AHEC West 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, health care organizations and educational institutions.

This effort includes the assessment, planning, development, support and the delivery of continuing education and professional development offerings that are based on emerging health issues and best practices.

During FY22, AHEC West conducted 38 IPE Continuing Education courses, providing certificates to 935 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 health care 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 older adult 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 FY22. 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 the 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 (~five hours) and a ~four-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 the presenters and other staff and faculty. 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 FY22, AHEC West conducted three virtual GAIT programs which registered 88 students (with 69 completers) from eight universities (Salisbury, Towson, University of MD-Baltimore, Frostburg State University, University of MD-College Park, University of MD-Global Campus, University of MD-Eastern Shore, University of MD-Shady Grove) representing 10 different academic disciplines including physician

assistant, nursing, occupational therapy, social work, audiology, speech-language pathology, pharmacy, gerontology, exercise science and psychology.

The first program was held October 14, 2021 titled: "Judgement & Insight of Medical Diagnosis Related to Dementia" presented by Dr. Julia Biernot, Assistant Professor of Neurology at UMB and Jennifer Glotfelty, LCSW-C at Thomas B. Finan Center. The second program was held on March 2, 2022 titled "Falls Later in Life: Risk Assessment, Prevention, and Management" presented by Dennis W. Klima, PT, MS, PhD, DPT, GCS, NCS. The third program was held on May 5, 2022 titled: "Judgement & Insight of Medical Diagnosis Related to Dementia" and was presented by Dr. Julia Biernot and Lisa Crowder, 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. Testimonials from students include:

- I really enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate with students of different professions. I was able to learn a lot from my team members. I also really enjoyed the time in breakout rooms in which we were able to ask questions and discuss our case with professionals.
- I definitely appreciated all of the tools and information provided to us. It gave me a different perspective on how to care for the aging population and how to determine what their needs are in order to provide quality care.
- I really enjoyed the online GAIT experience! Thank you for all the time and effort that obviously went into the planning! I especially enjoyed that the learning and activities were in multiple formats to help ensure understanding of the material and enable us to learn in multiple ways. I appreciated the discussion boards and breakout rooms to work in an interdisciplinary and collaborative way.
- This was a wonderful experience! The case was a great way for us to practice what we all have been learning in school along with what we learned during this program. Thank you all for doing this.

GGEAR Partnership

www.umaryland.edu/gerontology

Joy Taylor
Program Coordinator



**GGEAR FY22 Annual Report
Geriatrics and Gerontology
Education and Research
Project, funded by the
University of Maryland
Baltimore, under the direction
of Diane Martin, PhD. [www.
umaryland.edu/gerontology](http://www.umaryland.edu/gerontology)
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022**

AHEC West coordinated two GGEAR Inter-professional (IPE) Continuing Education courses this fiscal year, training a total of 112 healthcare professionals:

- The GGEAR “**Transforming the Care of Older Adults: Challenges and Opportunities to Support Health and Overall Well-Being**” conference was held by Zoom on Friday, October 29, 2021 in partnership with Garrett College.

This 3.25-hour inter-professional continuing education webinar awarded social work (with 1.5 hours of “ethics”), psychology, professional counseling, Certified Dementia Practitioner and Certified Senior Advisor CEUs.

Presentations included “Trends and Developments in the Field of Aging” by Dr. Diane Martin, GGEAR Director at UMB; “Maryland Durable Medical Equipment Re-Use” by Ian Edwards from the Maryland Department of Aging; “Role of Telemedicine in Remote Dementia Care” by Dr. Julia Biernot, Assistant Professor of Neurology at UMB; “Programs and Services Provided by Garrett County Community Action and Area Agency on Aging” by Katie Harding, Senior Care Specialist at Garrett County Community Action; and “Doing the Right Thing: Staff Expectations of Conduct, Professionalism and Ethical Practice” by Michelle Abruzzino Smith, Executive Director at the Hampshire Center.

There were 54 participants.

- The GGEAR “**Encourage. Empower. Engage: Supporting Older Adults Living with Dementia**” conference was held on May 20, 2022 in partnership with Meritus Medical Center, Allegany College of Maryland, Johns Hopkins Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement and University of Maryland Graduate School – GGEAR Program. This event was presented in a hybrid format providing both an online option to attend, as well as an in-person option to attend at the Robinwood Professional Center in Hagerstown. Those who attended in-person had the opportunity to participate in a *Dementia Live* simulation training at the conclusion of the conference. This three-hour inter-professional continuing education conference awarded nursing, social work, psychology, professional counseling, Certified Dementia Practitioner and Certified Senior Advisor CEUs.

Presentations included: “My Journey through Alzheimer’s” - A personal testimony presented by Dave Arnold; “Maryland Department of Aging: Innovations” - presented by Deputy Secretary Bernice Hutchinson; “Dementia Friendly America: Supporting Communities Where People Living with Dementia and their Care Partners Can Engage and Thrive” – presented by Sandy Markwood, Chief Executive Officer, USAging and Mary Ek, Director, Dementia Friendly America, USAging; and “New Horizons in Alzheimer’s Disease Diagnosis, Monitoring and Treatment” – presented by Esther Oh, MD, PhD; Associate Professor in the Division of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology (Department of Medicine), Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. There were 58 participants.

In addition to conference planning, Joy Taylor had an opportunity to:

- Participate in the development and preparation of a presentation made at the Southern Gerontological Society Annual Meeting on April 9, 2022 on “Enhancing the Professional Skillsets of Aging Health and Social Service Providers through Local Community Education.”
- Participate in the creation of a GGEAR student award nominee and selection process
- Participate in becoming a certified trainer in the AGE-u-cate Training Institute “Dementia Live” course and provide trainings.

AHEC Scholars

Joy Taylor
Program Coordinator



FY 2022 saw the 3rd Cohort of 18 students join the 2nd Cohort of 17 students 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 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 Nursing. 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 to being invited to attend GGEAR interprofessional continuing education conferences and



GAIT (Geriatric Assessment & Interdisciplinary Team) trainings, AHEC Scholars participants are always encouraged to obtain didactic and experiential hours from activities planned such as our annual Book Study project, the multiple orientation/refresher/graduation-celebration Zoom Scholars calls as well as regular announcements

of community events and national webinars to attend that address the Core Topics. This past year, AHEC West Scholars Program participants received an AHEC Scholars lapel pin, an AHEC Scholars tee shirt, an autographed, paperback version of our Book Study book and an AHEC Scholars graduation cord & charm along with their certificate of completion at graduation.

COVID-19/CHW vaccine project

AHEC West last summer joined AHECs across the state in a HRSA-funded project to promote COVID-19 vaccinations, utilizing Community Health Workers (CHWs) to encourage Marylanders to get vaccinated.

In an unprecedented recruiting and training effort, 10 CHWs were hired on a temporary basis to promote vaccinations in Western Maryland, with a specific focus on 12-15 year olds. Launched in August, the project was originally designed to end in January but was extended into spring.

Over the course of the project, AHEC West CHWs coordinated the administration of 205 first-round vaccinations, 183 second vaccinations, and 447 booster shots.

In addition to promoting COVID vaccinations, the effort highlighted AHEC West's role in expanding the utilization of CHWs throughout the regional healthcare workforce. CHWs are frontline public health workers who have a close understanding of the community they serve. This trusting relationship enables them to serve as a link between healthcare providers and patients to improve the quality of service delivery.

With COVID-19 restrictions easing nationwide, the CHW Vaccine Project drew to a close on April 30.

Healing Allegany - Rural Communities Opioid Response Program - RCORP



Melissa Clark
Project Director



Catie Brenneman
Program Coordinator



The deadly synthetic opioid fentanyl looms as a major overdose threat, as noted in this social media post.

The three-year Healing Allegany project addressing Opioid and Substance Use Disorder (OUD/ SUD) continues its work to reduce sickness and death related to substance misuse in Allegany County.

AHEC West serves as the lead agency of the nine-member Healing Allegany consortium, which includes Allegany College of Maryland, Allegany County Health Department, Allegany County Sheriff’s Office, Allegany County Office of Workforce Development, Allegany County Department of Social Services, UPMC Western Maryland, Pressley Ridge and Archway Station, Inc. An array of passionate, committed volunteers help round out the dynamic team.

The Street Team continues to be one of the most visible aspects of Healing Allegany in the community, with team members wearing purple t-shirts as they staff informational tables, attend community events and festivals, and walk neighborhoods, distributing overdose-reversing Narcan and test strips to check for the presence of the deadly fentanyl opioid in street drugs like cocaine.

Over the course of FY 2022, staff and volunteer team members distributed 1,704 doses of Narcan, 60 wound care kits and 312 test strips. Officials tracking drug use

in the county report fewer overdoses this calendar year – both fatal and non-fatal – and we believe our team’s distribution of life-saving Narcan is playing a significant role in that positive development. At the same time, however, increasing use of the synthetic opioid fentanyl poses a continuing threat of addiction and overdose, so that the need for Healing Allegany will not end anytime soon.

In addition to the Street Team, FY 22 saw Healing Allegany continue its partnership with law enforcement and corrections, with Peer Recovery Specialists serving at the Allegany County Detention Center Re-Entry Center, Allegany County Drug Court, and the county’s Pre-Trial Diversion program. These projects represent a “leveraging” of Healing Allegany to secure new funding – and provide additional needed services -- from agencies such as the Maryland Opioid Operational Command Center (O OCC) and the Maryland Center for Harm Reduction Services.

Healing Allegany has also played a central role in increasing the ranks of Peer Recovery Specialists in Allegany County. For those struggling with addiction, Peers provide unrivaled support as those who have “been there, done that” through addiction and subsequent involvement in the criminal justice system. They have come out on the other side, to recovery and hope, and relate to their clients as no one else can.

FY 23 represents the third and final year of the “implementation” funding from the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program – RCORP. We expect to apply for a second round of funding this winter. Meanwhile, O OCC and other state agencies are releasing additional funds from the \$26 billion national opioid settlement. We will pursue these funds as well to continue our efforts through Healing Allegany to reduce suffering and death from addiction, end stigma, and provide needed services related to the ongoing opioid epidemic in our countywide community.



Kristin, Jim and volunteer Peer (now a regular employee) Cody Broadwater were out in the community throughout FY22 as members of the Street Team distributing overdose-reversing Naloxone and strips to test for the presence of fentanyl in street drugs.

Healthy Moms and Babies

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program - RCORP



Susan Stewart
Program Coordinator



Healthy Moms and Babies seeks to reduce the incidence and impact of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) in Allegany and Garrett counties. Like Healing Allegany, the project – also entering its third year – is funded through the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) at HRSA.

The primary focus of Healthy Moms and Babies is to establish and/or enhance family support services in the two counties, and improve coordination of care. Our key project partners are Garrett County Health Department (GCHD), Pressley Ridge family services, and the Allegany County Health Department. Archway Station formally joined the consortium at the close of FY22, bringing expertise in housing services for women in recovery. The Allegany County Department of Social Services is also an active and participating partner on our monthly calls.

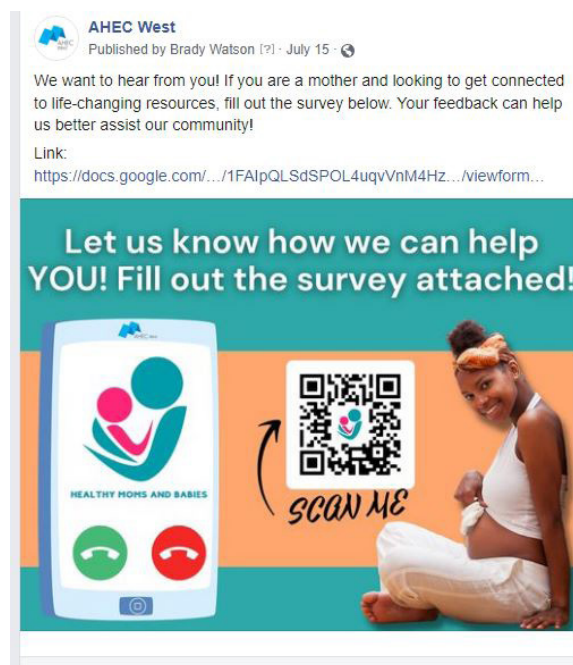
The bulk of the ground-level services are being provided by the Early Care Program at GCHD, where director Maria Friend used HMB funding to launch the new Child Welfare Protocol program and expand/intensify existing case management services. **From Oct. 1, 2021 through June 15, 2022, Intensive Case Management served 32 Garrett County families, while seven families have been enrolled in Child Welfare Protocol, both of which are near capacity for the programs. GCHD staff conducted 84 intensive home visits related to Healthy Moms and Babies/CWP during that time.**

HMB also provides workforce training related to pregnancy and NAS, most often in the form of “Lunch and Learn” virtual programs that feature experts in the field, including local pediatrician Dr. Valerie Navarrette and Kari Earle, a member of the HRSA oversight team for HMB.

As originally designed, HMB also envisioned the provision of Mind-Body Medicine sessions to build personal resilience among pregnant women, new moms,

and families affected by NAS. FY22 saw some hard decisions related to the Mind-Body sessions, which never gained traction despite project modifications that provided increased marketing and outreach. Following extensive discussion the consortium decided this spring to drop the Mind-Body component and pursue a project redesign – in HRSA terminology, a “Change in Scope.”

Approved in June, the redesign allowed HMB to address a need identified by consortium members early in the project related to making pregnant women and new moms aware of the many services available to them related to NAS and other parenting challenges. Information overload as well as stigma against some social service agencies inhibits effective messaging. In FY23 the project will use social media outreach utilizing “geo-fencing” to identify potential members of the project’s “target audience” and provide digital messaging related to HMB and NAS services. Hopefully this helps gets the word out about the many support services available to pregnant women, new moms, and families affected by NAS.



At the request of a local physician, the Healthy Moms and Babies team took the lead in conducting a survey among pregnant women, new moms and others seeking information about pre-natal and pediatric services that are needed in our area, including services related to Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS).

ECHO

Exploring Careers in Health Occupations



Brady Watson
Program Coordinator

ECHO sponsored the Hagerstown Community College Biotechnology and Biomedicine again for FY2022. The camp had 452 middle-school aged participants. The aim of the sponsorship was to provide students the unique learning opportunity, as well as establish a pipeline/ connection to our ECHO program with younger students throughout Washington County.

ECHO teamed up with the AHEC Scholars program to draw 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.

In Quarter 2 of FY22, a follow-up survey was sent out to all former ECHO students. 35 students responded. The main questions asked were: Did the ECHO experience help you in deciding as to whether to pursue a healthcare career? Thirty students responded YES, three UNSURE, and two NO.

We continue to update databases of ECHO students. The total number of students since 2006 who have participated in ECHO now stands at 601.

Prior to the start of ECHO 2022, over 1,000 recruitment flyers were distributed to local high schools.

In March of 2022, ECHO wrapped up Problem Gambling Awareness Month. ECHO received a \$10,000 Grant from the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling, and was able to distribute the funds to directly educate youth and young adult populations. Seventeen students completed a problem gambling prevention strategy to

implement within their schools and community. All 17 participants received a \$300 scholarship check for their efforts! Three students selected at random received a new Apple Mac, iPad, and Air Pods. ECHO will continue to promote problem gambling awareness within youth and young adult populations.

On June 17th, the program coordinator attended the 9th Annual Virtual Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling Conference. ECHO was a virtual presenter for the conference. The link to our virtual exhibition can be found [HERE](#).

ECHO 2022 was held June 13th – June 16th. Events included a Q & A Panel (Virtual) that featured a healthcare company CFO, a Dental Hygienist, an Intensive Wound Care Nurse, the Associate Nursing Dean at Allegany College of Maryland, a Family Medicine Doctor, and a Social Worker.

ECHO 2022 also included a WVU Campus Tour and WVU Health Sciences Center presentation and facility tour (In-person), an APTA MD Presentation and Tour (Virtual), and an Opioid Health Crisis Presentation (Virtual).

Twenty-three students registered for ECHO 2022. However, only 11 students participated in the week of events. The students spanned four counties: Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington, and Mineral (WV). The students were from 10 different high schools. The motto for ECHO was quality over quantity. For the events themselves, the students were very engaging with the presenters, asking many questions and genuinely curious about the presenters' paths to their current position within the healthcare field.

For students who participated in the ECHO 2022 events, their name went into a drawing for a \$750, \$500, \$250 scholarship.

ECHO 2022 marked the second annual Payton Grady ECHO Scholarship that is distributed to aspiring healthcare students. Payton was an ECHO student in 2019. She had dreams to pursue a career in healthcare after attending ECHO. Sadly, her life was taken from us too early. Each year, ECHO will honor Payton by dedicating the scholarships in her name.

As FY22 drew to a close ECHO applied for a state grant to fund future field trips to University of Maryland – Baltimore Campuses / The Shock Trauma Center, and/ or a tour to the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. Funds would also allow 14 students to participate in an ACT/SAT preparatory course, FREE of charge. (Spoiler: We got the grant!)

The tentative plan moving forward for ECHO 2023 is to operate on the hybrid model of events. The hope is to draw students to field trips by visiting top-notch facilities.

ECHO 2023 recruitment will begin in the Fall of 2022.

In the 4th Quarter of FY22, the ECHO Facebook page reached over 10,000 people with the regularly scheduled content. The ECHO Instagram account now has 251 followers.



ECHO again featured a virtual Question and Answer panel that included a wide range of health professionals sharing their insights and history in the health care field.

The Health Insurance Program



*David Stewart
Program Director*

Fiscal year 2022 saw the Health Insurance Program continue to provide its services remotely by phone and prepare to transition back to in-person assistance, which started again in June. While outreach activities slowly returned, consumer assistance did not diminish with 3,292 appointments provided to consumers seeking help with health insurance. The program also received 6,518 calls from consumers. In July the program opened a Hagerstown office, located at 13018 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Congressman David Trone reached out to the program twice in FY 2022. First, after the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was passed in Q1, Congressman Trone chose AHEC West as the site from which he released his report on how ARPA would increase access to health insurance. AHEC West arranged to have four consumers present at the meeting to give feedback to the Congressman on their experience of getting coverage using the Health Insurance Program.



Chris is up front and center for a Health Insurance Program selfie with Nefertiti, Carol and Daniel. Smiles abound with the HIP Team, which is genuinely energized by helping consumers navigate health insurance options under the Affordable Care Act.

Then in Q2 as part of the lead up to Open Enrollment, Congressman Trone reached out to AHEC West and asked Program Director David Stewart along with a CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) representative to record a question-and-answer video about open enrollment, which he released on Facebook and other social media.

In Q3, the Health Insurance Program received the Connector Program Request for Application (RFA) from the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange for FY 23.

The RFA outlined significant changes to the program, most notably requiring a dramatic increase in outreach activity and de-emphasizing application assistance. The overall funding was increased from \$600,000 to \$1,200,000 per year. AHEC West's proposal maintained our current level of application assistance and proposed dramatic increases to the scope of outreach activities.

In Q4, the Health Insurance Program was officially renewed for another three-year cycle. This marks the third time that AHEC West has successfully competed for the Connector Program.



Staff from the Health Insurance Program at AHEC West gather for a photo during one of their first in-person meetings since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The team will be expanding significantly in FY23 as the program undertakes a wide-ranging outreach effort mandated by the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange.

Health Right



Jan Chippendale
Program Coordinator/Case Manager

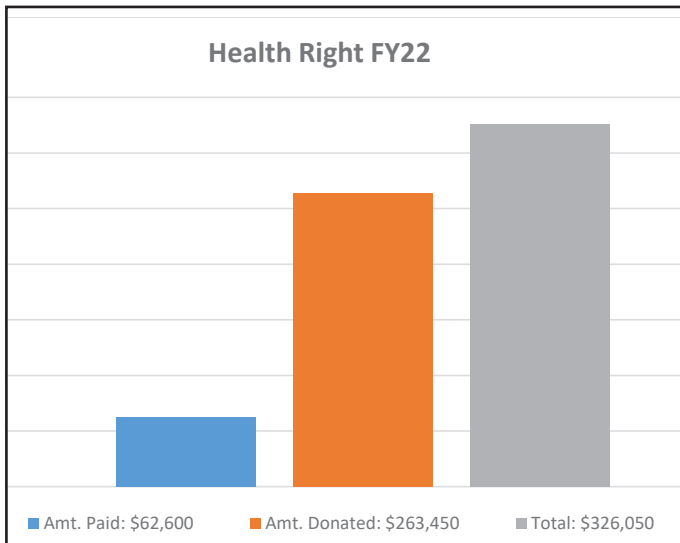
Fiscal year 2022 brought a significant increase in enrollments after the reduced participation of the prior two years as the community confronted the challenges of COVID. A total of 416 individuals were enrolled in FY22, compared to 315 in FY21, 352 in FY20, and 414 in FY19. Dental treatment accessed through the program in FY22 totaled \$326,050, for which \$62,600 was paid and \$263,450 was donated.

Sources of funding support in FY22 included the Maryland State Dental Association Foundation, UMPC Western Maryland/Maryland Physicians Care, County United Way, Guardian Insurance, the Allegany County Commissioners, the City of Cumberland, Delta Dental, the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission, and the Rural Maryland Council. These funds included new grants received in FY22 as well as funds carried over from FY21.

The Maryland legislature has enacted legislation to mandate dental services for adults who have



UMPC Western Maryland was a major Health Right supporter in FY22. Here former AHEC-er Jen Thomas of UMPC presents a donation check to Jan from a hospital-administered grant funded by Maryland Physicians Care.



full Medicaid benefits effective January 2023. (Children with Maryland Medicaid coverage already have extensive dental benefits.) The legislation specifies that diagnostic, preventive, restorative, and periodontal services will be included. AHEC West was one of many supporters providing testimony for passage of the bill. This is a positive step in broadening access to dental care, and we are grateful for the leadership provided by the Maryland Dental Action Coalition and other advocates for oral health coverage as a critical component of health care.

We are also very grateful, as always, for our funders and for the wonderful dental practitioners who work with us by offering discounted treatment. Our primary partner continues to be the Allegany County Health Department Dental Unit. Under the leadership of Dental Clinic Director Dr. Gretchen Seibert, the Health Department practitioners and support staff provide a vital service to the community and have been steadfast partners in our efforts to serve our community's low-income residents.

Regional Oral Health Coordinator



Julie Teter
Regional Oral Health Coordinator

As Regional Oral Health Coordinator (ROHC) for Western Maryland, through the course of FY22 I attended Local Health Improvement Council meetings for Allegany, Garrett and Washington counties.

In August 2021, Eric Biagioli and I visited the Allegany and Garrett County Health Departments' dental clinic as well as Family Healthcare of Hagerstown dental clinic. This was a great opportunity to witness what each of these health care facilities provide for the community for oral health care. We also realized the need in many of these counties for dental care as well as pediatric dentists.

As ROHC I provided oral health supplies to the Allegany County Health Department dental clinic. Community Health Workers from AHEC WEST also distributed oral health supplies as part of their regular outreach events. Together with our CHWs we gave away over 2,000 oral health supplies, aided by the easing of pandemic restrictions which allowed us to get back out into the communities for in-person events. We hope to reach more of the community this next year!

Through the statewide ROHC program, we drew up a work plan to develop a referral system between OBGYN providers and dental providers. The goal was to encourage better oral health during pregnancy and post-partum. We would also like to provide a dental home for every person we can in the state. ROHCs across the state sent a survey to all Maryland prenatal providers to obtain information about their knowledge level pertaining to oral health for their pregnant patients. The survey also sought to determine whether the providers had a referral system in place for their pregnant patients.

As ROHC I attended the Rural Oral Health conference on Nov. 19, 2021. I also attended many CE courses throughout the year. I joined other ROHCs in developing a poster presentation that was presented at the National Oral Health

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

Conference on April 11, 2022. ROHCs also worked with Colorado's Regional Oral Health Specialist to present a separate poster at this conference. The ROHC from Eastern Shore attended the conference. I attended Maryland Head Start Association conference in May 2022.

In June 2022, ROHCs procured 22,000 Youth Oral Health kits to be sent to all Maryland Head Start programs and Judy Centers. We also contacted all Judy Centers to obtain current enrollment as well as participant addresses for outreach. There were several new Judy Centers opened throughout the state!

As the grant-year ended this summer, I was very thankful for all that we could do to improve oral health in our communities!



Among her outreach efforts in FY22 Julie attended the Head Start Association Conference at the Wisp Resort in the fourth quarter, distributing dental-care kits for both adults and young people.

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.



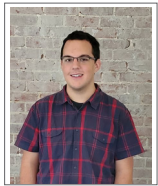
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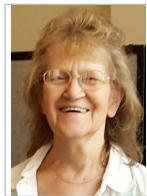
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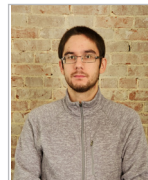
Jeff Hay
Peer Recovery Specialist



Amanda Heavener
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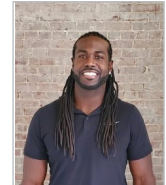
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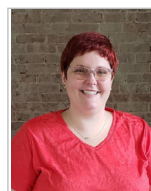
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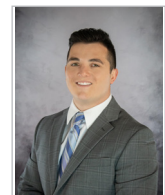
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Oral Health Coordinator



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%	- FY 22 FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS -	\$ Amount
28%	Maryland Health Benefit Exchange - Health Insurance	600,000.00
15%	Healing Allegany	325,538.00
15%	Maryland Statewide Medical Education & Training System (MSMETS)	324,000.00
10%	CHW/COVID	216,504.00
8%	Healthy Moms and Babies	163,252.00
5%	POS AHEC & ACT Immersion	113,186.00
5%	Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.....	101,595.00
3%	GAIT and GGEAR	61,930.00
3%	Maryland Opioid Operational Command Center - Peer project.....	59,267.00
2%	CORGI - Maryland Department of Health - Harm Reduction.....	42,972.00
2%	Regional Oral Health Coordinator	36,768.00
1%	County United Way Impact Grant	24,916.00
1%	NORI	23,693.00
1%	Local Administrative and Program Development Fund	15,507.00
1%	CHRC Recovery	14,280.00
	(Multiple additional funding sources of \$10,000 or less/>1%)	
		2,166,616.00

AHEC West Balance Sheet

June 2022

ASSETS		
Current Assets		
GENERAL CHECKING	193,680.16	
PETTY CASH	55.00	
CHAPIN DAVIS	200,994.64	
DUE FROM GRANTS	440,750.26	
PREPAID RENT	8,969.39	
TOTAL Current Assets		844,449.45
Fixed Assets		
LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS	163,479.01	
FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT	124,054.47	
ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION	(162,932.08)	
TOTAL Fixed Assets		124,601.40
Other Assets		
DEPOSITS	525.00	
TOTAL Other Assets		525.00
TOTAL ASSETS		969,575.85
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
ACCRUED FICA	4,316.34	
PENNSYLVANIA INCOME TAX W/H	401.84	
STATE UNEMPLOYMENT PAYABLE	178.20	
ACCRUED PAYROLL	58,731.84	
ACCRUED PENSION PLAN	4,698.53	
HEALTH INSURANCE PAYABLE	(183.15)	
AFLAC INSURANCE PAYABLE	168.40	
COLONIAL LIFE INSURANCE PAYABLE	(346.67)	
CELLULAR PAYABLE	64.20	
ACCRUED VACATION	21,336.13	
FICA ON ACCRUED VACATION	1,632.21	
REFUNDABLE ADVANCE	7,296.45	
DEFERRED RENT LIABILITY	2,522.00	
TOTAL Current Liabilities		100,816.32
TOTAL LIABILITIES		100,816.32
CAPITAL		
GENERAL FUND - RESTRICTED	1,268.00	
GENERAL FUND - UNRESTRICTED	912,034.07	
Year-to-Date Earnings	(44,542.54)	
TOTAL CAPITAL		868,759.53
TOTAL LIABILITIES & CAPITAL		969,575.85