

About Us

The **Southwest Georgia Area Health Education Center (SOWEGA-AHEC)** is a community-driven, nonprofit organization whose goal is to improve access to healthcare by improving the number and distribution of healthcare providers in 38 counties in southwest Georgia. Our long-range goals are to cultivate a workforce that closely matches the state's population in diversity, to assure that each community has enough practitioners in the right disciplines, particularly primary care, and ultimately improve access to healthcare.



Serving 38 counties in southwest Georgia

Atkinson	Colquitt	Lanier	Sumter
Bacon	Cook	Lee	Terrell
Baker	Crisp	Lowndes	Thomas
Ben Hill	Decatur	Miller	Tift
Berrien	Dooley	Mitchell	Turner
Brooks	Dougherty	Pulaski	Webster
Calhoun	Early	Quitman	Wilcox
Clay	Echols	Randolph	Worth
Clinch	Grady	Seminole	
Coffee	Irwin	Stewart	

Staff

Laura Calhoun, BA - Executive Director
Andrea Gillan, BSN, RN - Special Projects Coordinator
Kimberla Hitch, BS - Health Careers & Student Support Coordinator
Michelle Huskey, MS, RRT-NPS - Continuing Education & Distance Learning Coordinator
Rashae Oliver, MEd - Preceptor Coordinator
Zina Whitaker, MA - Officer Manager



Board of Directors

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Southwest Georgia Area Health Education Center

ANNUAL REPORT

CONNECTING



2017

Recruit

Students to
Health Careers

In conjunction with local partners, SOWEGA-AHEC develops and implements health careers awareness and recruitment initiatives by conducting presentations for K-12 and post-secondary schools. We create and execute intensive programs for students to provide a more indepth, hands-on look at health career opportunities. Our strategy is to guide students into an education “pipeline” that encourages and supports them in a pursuit of a healthcare profession. Additionally we provide health career counseling, set up shadowing experiences and participate in career fairs. All of these services are provided free of charge.

- ◆ Provided **59** health career programs to **3,240** youth.
- ◆ Counseled **60** students to help guide in their health career decision and provided **58** shadowing experiences.
- ◆ Conducted **7** concentrated programs exposing **62** students to various health careers and healthcare opportunities.
- ◆ Oversaw four-week residential program for **10** college students pursuing a career in medicine.



Train

Health Professionals
to Communities

In partnership with health professions programs and regional healthcare providers, SOWEGA-AHEC arranges clinical rotations and assists in the development of clinical training sites. We connect students and practicing professionals to unique learning environments by arranging housing and/or assisting with travel expenses to remove barriers so students can be immersed in the community while away from their “formal” academic institution. By getting to know the students rotating in our 38 counties, we’re better able to identify and connect those that want to stay in the area to providers that need them.

- ◆ Arranged **1,083** community-based training rotations in **118** healthcare facilities.
- ◆ **249** practicing professionals acted as preceptors or teachers.
- ◆ **664** students received a quality, hands-on clinical training experience.



Retain

Communities to
Better Health

SOWEGA-AHEC supports practicing healthcare providers by offering high quality continuing education programs and distance learning opportunities. Our programs help professionals maintain licensure and certification requirements as well as reflect this rural area’s unique needs and priorities. By providing quality continuing education opportunities locally, we are able to overcome distance and isolation obstacles which supports our mission to create a more balanced distribution of healthcare resources and professionals for better health outcomes to occur.

- ◆ SOWEGA-AHEC, with collaborations, provided **38** continuing education programs.
- ◆ In these programs, **881** practicing healthcare professionals were able to update their skills.
- ◆ This year **43** students that we supported returned to practice in southwest Georgia.
- ◆ Since our inception in 1990, we have tracked **2,000** students, who upon graduation, have returned to our region to practice.
- ◆ Of the above students, **192** have served as preceptors for the next generation of practitioners.

