



Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center

Serving the counties of Addison, Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle

Annual Report

September
2007-August
2008

Mission Statement:

The Champlain Valley AHEC improves access to quality health care by working with community and academic partners to support healthcare workforce development through recruitment, retention and continuing education of health care professionals.



Josie Thomas, Mt. Mansfield Union High School student, shadowed Ken Spencer, RN, Cardiac Nurse Sonographer at Porter Medical Center.

AHEC Pipeline works for health care workforce development

Welcome to Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center's annual report in a new format. This year the AHEC graphic depicting the pipeline of health careers development serves as the visual story of our work. It starts with health careers awareness and exploration to interest young people in health careers, moves into recruitment and retention of professionals into underserved areas, supporting that workforce, and then, through the workforce, responding to community healthcare needs. The current workforce in turn encourages and teaches the next generation in the pipeline.

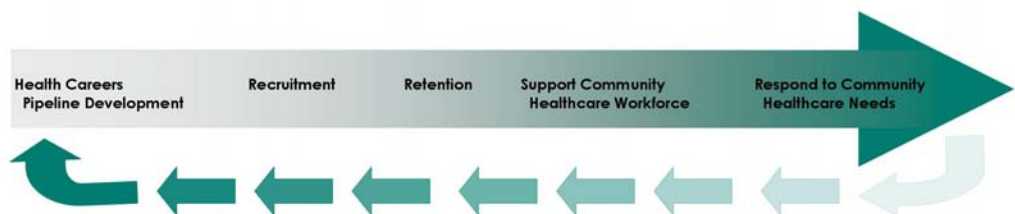
Data drives our work; one of our key jobs is to keep current a database of all the primary care practitioners in our area. Our annual Primary Care Survey informs Champlain Valley AHEC and others, such as policy makers, about the critical needs in our community. Not surprisingly, we find that we have fewer primary care practitioners, fewer are accepting new patients, and the workforce is aging. Several practices are reducing hours or planning to retire. This corresponds to a disturbing trend that many fewer medical students choose to go into primary care; you can see that we have our work cut out for us.

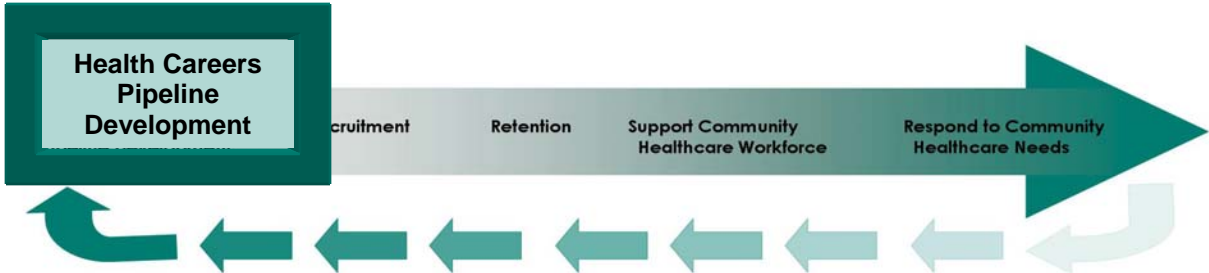
We would like to thank departing staff Deb Emerson and Donna Polk for their contributions. We have welcomed to our team Karin Hammer-Williamson, Education Resource Coordinator and Marnie Rivett, Administrative Coordinator. In changing staff, we have shifted our educational focus somewhat, from providing literature searches for the community medical staff to reaching out more generally to practitioners in our region.

We also focused on our signature health career exploration programs, MedQuest and Shadow Day. We collaborated with the other AHEC centers in the Vermont AHEC Network to expand our health care awareness work, especially in middle schools, thanks to a grant from the Vermont Department of Labor. Staff attended the National AHEC Organization conference in July/July 2008, in Denver, and this was a great opportunity to learn best practices and tie our work into the national picture.

We continue to find our work challenging and rewarding, and we invite you to learn more about the details within this report.

Alice Christian, Executive Director





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Health Careers Pipeline

Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center reached out to 4,677 students in grades K-12 with Health Careers Awareness resources and activities at career fairs and in classroom presentations this year.

Expanding Middle School Services

Thanks to the Vermont Department of Labor, we were able to add a half-time staff to the program to expand our tools and presentations for middle school youth. Vermont teachers and guidance counselors report that by ninth grade, many youth believe they will not be able to attend college or have given up on math and science. We encourage middle school youth through a presentation discussion about “what you can do to get ready for a health career.”

Shadow Day and MedQuest

Champlain Valley AHEC provided four Shadow Days and two week-long MedQuest programs for youth interested in a deeper exploration experience to prepare for a health career. Eighty-two high school youth participated.



Shadow Day students at Porter Medical Center.

Shadow Days are day-long events at community hospitals where high school youth (grade 9-12) receive information about pursuing health careers, an introduction to infection control procedures and confidentiality, and then shadow a health care professional. Students discuss their experiences over lunch, then attend a presentation based on student interests in the health care field or a presentation from an admissions counselor on college and what to do in high school to prepare for college.

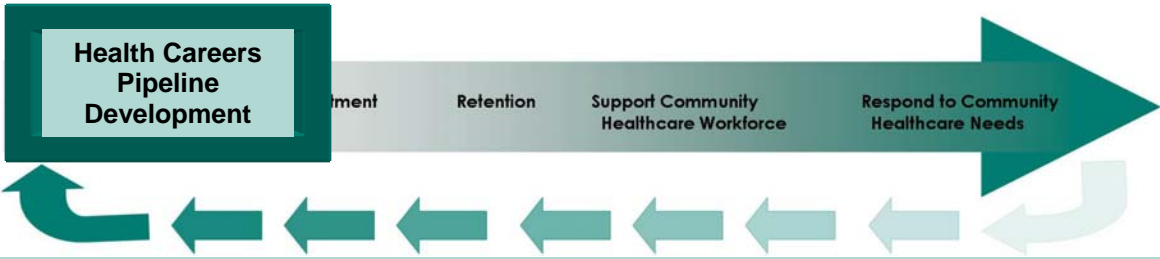
MedQuest is a rigorous week-long residential program based from the University of Vermont (UVM), with day trips to Fletcher Allen Health Care, Porter Medical Center and Northwestern Medical Center. Throughout the week, youth get a preview of college life as they are housed at the UVM dormitories and mentored by current UVM College of Medicine students in partnership with the Freeman Medical Scholars Summer Opportunities program.

Students attend presentations on different health careers and topics, hands-on workshops, a telemedicine surgery, CPR training, and three job shadows. The week culminates with a reception for parents that highlights the participants’ learning and growth.

Our message to students

- Keep exploring health careers—there are more than 300!
- Persist in math and science (you don’t have to be a math genius to pursue a health career).
- Appreciate all people.
- Develop teamwork skills.
- Learn about financial aid (make the VSAC connection)! Students from all walks of life can afford training and college!





Health Careers Pipeline, continued

What youth say about MedQuest and Shadow Day

“MedQuest opened my eyes to everything health care has to offer and I now have real goals to aspire to!”

“MedQuest has provided me with life-changing experiences I never even imagined. The program confirmed my future career plans, adding direction to my life with specific goals to achieve.”

“Throughout my high school experience, I have always tried to get good grades and to take challenging, college preparatory courses, and MedQuest has given me much incentive and extra encouragement to keep up the good grades and to



MedQuest students participating in teambuilding activities.



Gabrielle Heath (Mt. Mansfield Union High School) and Katie Bedard (Mississquoi Valley Union High School) shadow Kay Tran, Registered Dietician at Northwestern Medical Center.

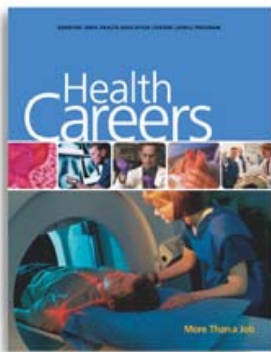
“Shadow Day helped me figure out more specifically what I want to do or not do in medical care.”

strive for my best, especially in the fields of math and science. I have learned at MedQuest that all the hard work today will soon pay off.”

“I would like to thank you for all that you have done for me. I would never have dreamed that MedQuest would have given me such great resources, but it really did. I passed my Graduation Challenge last week and

unlike some of my friends, I love my topic. Radiology was a really interesting field to study and I was amazed at all I was able to see. Thank you very much! P.S. Next year, I’m off to Boston to attend Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences. I got into their pre-medical program and I am planning on becoming a Physician’s Assistant. I can’t wait!”

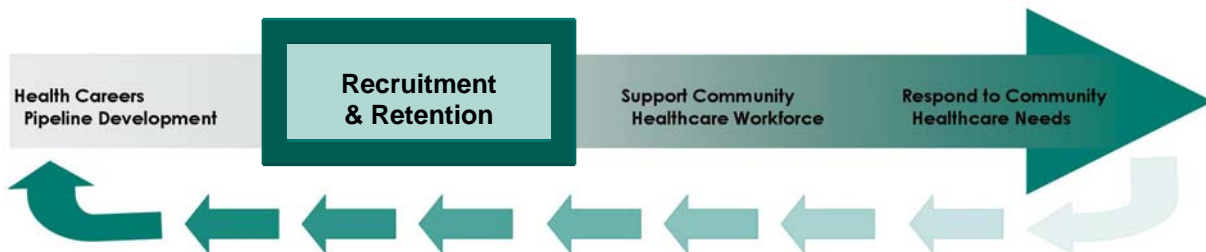
“I had an excellent day. I hope there will be more experiences like Shadow Day for high schoolers in the future.”



Resources for Career Seekers of All Ages

Champlain Valley AHEC works closely with the Vermont AHEC Network to help the public learn about and use the online and print Vermont Health Careers Directory and website at www.vthealthcareers.org. We maintain a busy schedule of appearances and target our annual region-wide mailing to coincide with the national Health Careers Awareness month in October.

Due to recent employment trends, more adults are showing an increased interest in health careers and the possibility of transitioning into the field. We served 577 adults at career fairs and by email or phone last year. Many of these adults are now looking for shadowing or career research assistance similar to the resources we provide for Shadow Day, MedQuest, and to school guidance counselors for high school students.



Recruitment & Retention

Educational Loan Repayment

Champlain Valley AHEC is proud to administer the Vermont Educational Loan Repayment Program for Primary Care in our region in conjunction with the UVM College of Medicine AHEC Program. The Educational Loan Repayment Program for Primary Care is funded by the state of Vermont through the Department of Health. The goal of this program is to ensure a stable and adequate supply of primary care personnel through recruitment and retention to meet the health care needs of Vermonters.

The Champlain Valley AHEC Educational Loan Repayment committee made 20 Primary Care awards, for a total of \$203,000. The average award was \$10,150. The highest award granted was for \$15,000 and the lowest award was \$3,000. All of these awards were retention awards. One award for recruitment to a practice was not used, since the practice hired someone without debt; the funds were redistributed as retention awards. There was one additional Primary Care award of \$3,000 from the Freeman Medical Scholars Program at the University of Vermont College of Medicine.

County	# of Awards	Discipline	# of Awards	Degree	# of Awards
Addison	1	Family Practice	13	MD/DO	15
Chittenden	17	Internal Medicine	2	PA	2
Franklin	2	Psychiatry	5	NP	3

Quotes from Champlain Valley AHEC Loan Repayment Recipients

“The loan repayment program has been a significant factor in my ability to practice medicine here in Vermont.”

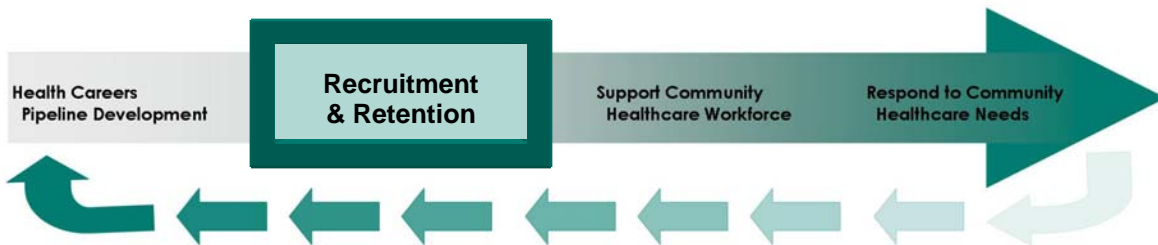
“A factor that has had a tremendous influence on my decision to stay in Vermont is the support of the AHEC program....I am very grateful for my reward; it is the first time that anyone has ever ‘helped me out,’ as I have always taken lower paying salaried positions in order to ‘help out’ families on Medicaid or free care. I have been offered many lucrative private practice opportunities, but this is not where my commitments lie. I truly appreciate that AHEC, and Vermont, has also shown their commitment in return.”

“The support you give makes living and practicing here a little bit easier, letting me focus on more important issues than money.”

“I know that the funding I have received from AHEC has helped me to work on a schedule that keeps me sane in a very challenging job.”

“The Vermont Educational Loan Repayment Program will help support my work, as salaries for physicians in underserved areas and in primary care are significantly lower than other specialties and locations. With my high debt burden and the cost of living in Vermont, it is more difficult to choose a lower paying position over more lucrative private practices. Thus, I am grateful that this program exists.”

“Does money make life good or happy? No. The financial support provided by AHEC can, however, smooth the path.”



Recruitment & Retention, continued

The AHEC Difference: Primary Care Matters

1971 AHEC (Area Health Education Centers) program developed by Congress to recruit, train and retain a health professions workforce committed to underserved populations.

1996 University of Vermont's (UVM) College of Medicine AHEC Program established, including the Program Office at the University of Vermont in Burlington.

1997 Northeastern Vermont AHEC started in St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

1998 Champlain Valley AHEC launched in St. Albans, Vermont.

1999 Southern Vermont AHEC started in Springfield, Vermont.

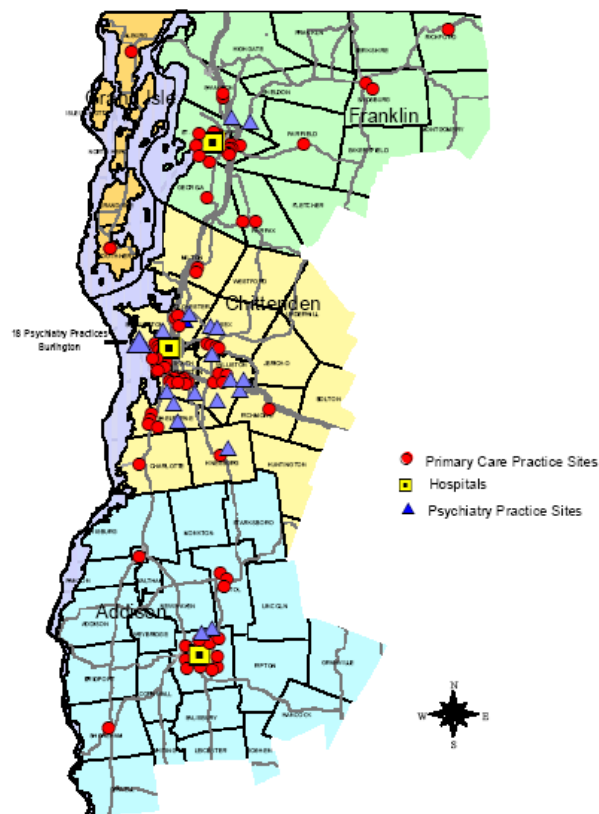
- The Vermont AHEC program helps bring the resources of the UVM College of Medicine to address local community health needs in Addison, Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle counties.
- Today, 54 AHEC programs with more than 200 centers operate in almost every state and the District of Columbia. Approximately 120 medical schools and 600 nursing and allied health schools work collaboratively with AHECs to improve health for underserved and under-represented populations.

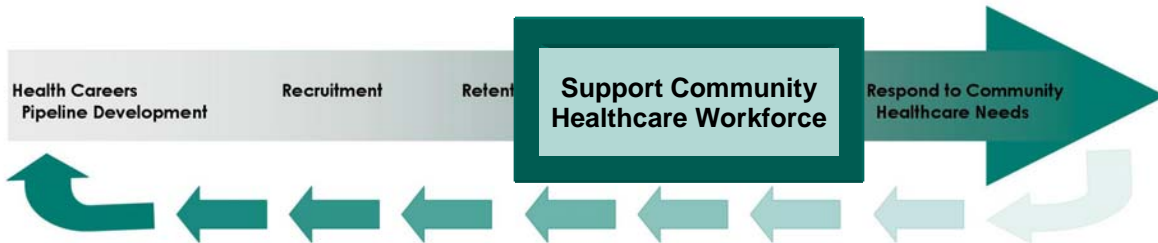


To guide our recruitment and retention work, Champlain Valley AHEC conducts an annual Primary Care Survey of the supply of family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrical-gynecological, pediatric, and psychiatric practitioners. Our 2008 survey gathered information from 122 primary care sites and 308 practitioners in our four county region as of March 31, 2008. The slight decrease in practices is due to two practices being excluded because of a change in Vermont's definition of a qualifying primary care practice site. All counties in our region continue to have a shortage of internal medicine physicians and most have a shortage of family practice physicians based on recommended supply rates from the Graduate Medical Education National Advisory Committee (GMENAC).

Our study is added to other regional data for a statewide report published by the Vermont AHEC Program Office that informs workforce development.

Our data is also used to set priorities for the Educational Loan Repayment program. The survey report is available on the Champlain Valley AHEC website at www.cvahec.org.





Support Community Healthcare Workforce

Freeman Summer Opportunities

Champlain Valley AHEC administered the Freeman Medical Scholars Program during the summer of 2008 to support the following UVM College of Medicine students as they worked with regional partners:

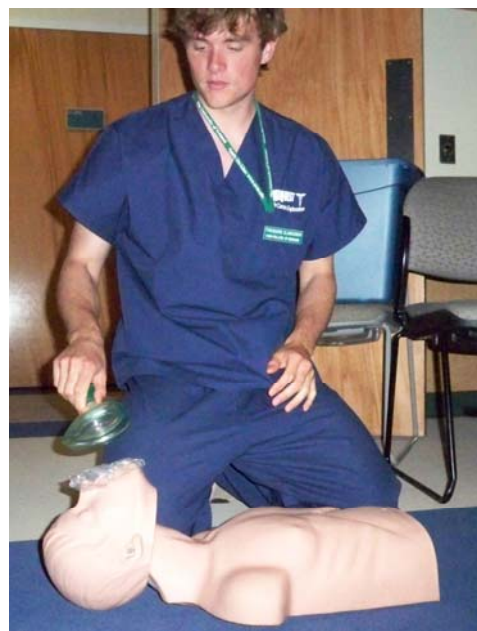
- **Anna Bovill** developed and distributed information to families about the risks of excessive sun exposure.
- **Theodore Elsaesser, Robert Klein and Isaac Leader** established a health outreach team and collected information about the health needs of underserved farming populations in Addison County.



Lauren Wendell, MedQuest Assistant and UVM College of Medicine student bonds with Ryan Parizo, Mt. Mansfield Union High School student at a presentation at UVM Nursing & Health Sciences.

- **Robert Johnston and Ari Garber** identified the healthcare needs of at-risk youth who identify as lesbian, gay, transgender or questioning and surveyed medical students about their knowledge and attitudes toward this population.

The following MedQuest Assistants were also funded by the Freeman Medical Scholars Program: **Erin Perko, Theodore Elsaesser, Sarah Mulligan, Hugo Valencia and Lauren Wendell.**

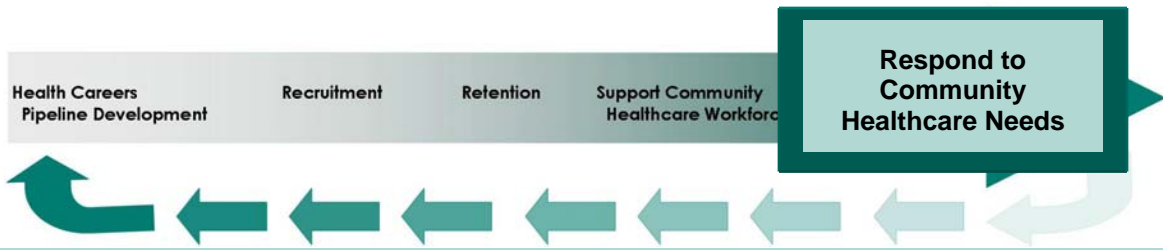


Theodore Elsaesser, MedQuest Assistant, UVM College of Medicine student and Freeman Medical Scholar, demonstrates proper technique as part of CPR training during MedQuest.

Continuing Education & Clinical Tools

Champlain Valley AHEC responds to primary care practitioners' need for continuing education that makes practice more feasible and improves quality. More than 110 professionals from our region participated in lunch n' learn on Health Literacy, UpTo-Date subscription scholarships, a Coding workshop and the AHEC annual Geriatrics conference. We concluded our staffing support to medical libraries as Northwestern Medical Center established a part-time medical librarian position on its staff.

If you practice primary care in our region, we welcome your suggestions for lunch n' learn topics, workshops or other resources that would help your practice and staff!



Respond to Community Healthcare Needs

Practitioner to Practitioner (PTOP) Referral Resource

www.ptophelp.org



Finding appropriate mental health treatment remains a challenge for referring physicians and patients alike. In 2008 we deepened our partnership with Southern Vermont AHEC to support PTOPhelp.org., the state’s only free, all-discipline online directory of mental health practitioners. In FY 2008 there were more than 70,000 searches of PTOPhelp.org. Through generous assistance from Students First and

Howard Center for Human Services, we enrolled more than 75 new practitioners on the site and prepared to publicize the site through brochures to patients. With help from Gorges, Inc., our site programming consultants, we countered a serious virus attack that struck sites throughout the US. We were able to restore search capability within 48 hours, weeks ahead of many larger sites also affected. For 2009, we are planning a series of regional mailings, and hope to simplify the site as resources become available.

Cultural Competency

As an Area Health Education Center, cultural competency is a part of everything we do. With Vermont’s refugee resettlement efforts now concentrated solely in the Champlain Valley region, the VT AHEC Network designated Champlain Valley AHEC as the Network’s lead Center for our collective Cultural Competency efforts. Through the excellent work of Sarah Mulligan in conjunction with the Freeman Medical Scholars Summer Opportunities Program, the Cultural Competency for Health Care Providers manual was revised and widely disseminated.

As we publicized Sarah’s work and reached out to the community, we learned that rural practices are having trouble establishing connections with medical interpreters. We gathered information to help these practices and are working toward a summary tool that will be available to all Vermont practices and provide information to help them meet their due diligence responsibilities more efficiently.

The interpreter workforce is one of the fastest growing occupations statewide, and partners report that interpreters often move on to other jobs after just 18 months of service. In addition, it is difficult for programs to provide training on medical interpretation. To help address this need, Champlain Valley AHEC purchased a “Bridging the Gap (BTG)” medical interpreter training license to be shared with Association of Africans Living in Vermont, Community Health Center of Burlington, Fletcher Allen Health Care (FAHC), and Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program. Champlain Valley organizations that provide health and related services to migrant farm workers will also be eligible to send member staff and volunteers to trainings. In partnership with FAHC, we sent experienced local interpreter Guylaine Daoust to the Cross Cultural Health Care Program’s “BTG” training for trainers this July in Seattle, Washington. She will lead local “BTG” trainings in conjunction with our partners We are excited about this new collaboration and are raising the funds needed to make this plan a reality.

Financial Summaries September 2007 through August 2008

Income Summary

Grant Income

Community Hospitals	\$ 60,000
Fletcher Allen Health Care	\$ 65,000
Freeman Medical Scholars	\$ 54,779
Freeman Loan Repayment	\$ 3,000
HRSA	\$ 64,991
State of Vermont Loan Repayment	\$203,000
State of Vermont	\$123,089
VT Dental Shadow Day	\$ 10,000
VT Health Careers Awareness Month	\$ 3,000
VT Department of Labor	\$ 25,205
VDH (PTOP Website) Carryover	\$ 1,786
VDH (Patient Education) Carryover	\$ 123
Total Grant Income	\$613,972

Registration and Fee Income \$ 12,000

Service Income \$ 8,188

Interest Income \$ 3,612

Miscellaneous Income \$ 202

Total Support and Revenue \$637,974

Expense Summary

Program Services

Core	\$ 44,806
MedQuest	\$ 46,665
Health Careers	\$ 36,743
Educational Loan Repayment	\$209,480
Other Programs	\$ 99,453

Support Services

General & Administrative Expenses \$128,858

Total Expenses \$566,005

Change in Net Assets \$ 71,969