



Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center

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

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2009
September 2008-
August 2009

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.



Alice Christian, Pat Donehower, Judy Cohen, and Merryn Rutledge, strategic planning consultant.

A Year of Strategic Learning and Planning

As I write this letter, we are in the process of searching for a new Executive Director. It has been a wonderful time to be the Executive Director of this multifaceted organization. Over the previous fiscal year (September 1, 2008 to August 31, 2009), we have made a lot of progress, yet in this challenging economic environment, obstacles still remain for the person who will take the helm.

We kicked off our new fiscal year in September 2008 with strategic planning. We had contracted with Merryn Rutledge, from Revisions LLC, to help us through this process. We interviewed many of our partners in the community to learn about the current environment, and compiled that information into a picture of our strengths and challenges. We chose goals to expand on our strengths—health careers awareness and exploration, and support for the primary care workforce. Out of all of this, we distilled six strategic goals with a number of objectives to reach those goals over the next three years. In April, at our annual meeting, the board approved the strategic plan. We have undertaken the work to expand health careers programming and support for primary care, increase cultural competency, build on our partnerships, strengthen infrastructure, and tell our story compellingly.

The board was invigorated by the addition of seven new board members, as we also bade a fond farewell to eight board members who were passing the baton: Judith Cohen, RN, PhD; Moira Cook, MS; Johanna “Jody” Brakeley, MD; Rebecca Brakeley; Claire Larose; Daniel Larrow, MD; Michelle Lawrence, CPA; and Emily Willis.

Other changes that took place were that Marnie Rivett joined the staff as Administrative Coordinator in late August 2008 and left to move out of state in April 2009. Mary Horton came on as a temp at that time, and was hired to take the job full time in June 2009.

In this annual report, we tell the visual story of our work using a graphic depiction of the AHEC “pipeline” of health careers development. 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 health care needs. The current workforce in turn encourages and teaches the next generation.

At this writing, Vermont faces the most difficult budget year in memory. Since we receive the largest portion of our funding from the state (see p. 2 Financial Summaries), we aim to diversify our funding sources, including fundraising, seeking sponsorships, and partnering on grants with likeminded organizations. We have refocused our energy and efforts; I feel this is an important legacy to leave to this organization as it takes on new challenges and opportunities.

With warm regards,

Alice Christian, Executive Director



Five of our new board members at the June 2009 Board meeting: Albert Perry, Heather Danis, MPH; Robin Lessoff, MD; Heather Kidde, CNM; and Maja Zimmermann, MD (not in photo: Carol Buck-Rolland, APRN and Megan Malgeri).

Board of Directors

Patricia Donehower, MSN, RN
President

Sen. Virginia Lyons
Vice President

Kevin Cote, CPA
Treasurer/Secretary

Johana Brakeley, MD*

Rebecca Brakeley*

Carol Buck-Rolland, APRN

Judith Cohen, RN, PhD*

David Congalton, DDS*

Moira Cook, MS*

Elizabeth Cote, Director

UVM AHEC Program

Ex officio

Heather Danis, MPH, RD

Ex officio

Cheryl Gibson, MD

Heather B. Kidde, CNM

Claire Larose*

Daniel Larrow, MD*

Michelle Lawrence, CPA*

Robin Lessoff, MD

Charles MacLean, MD

Associate Dean, Office of

Primary Care, UVM College

of Medicine

Ex officio

Megan Malgeri

Albert J. Perry

Emily Willis*

Maja Zimmermann, MD

Staff

Alice Christian, MPA

Executive Director

Kylee Ryan

Program Coordinator

Karin Hammer-Williamson

Education Resources Coordinator

Tammy Johnson

Data Manager/PR Coordinator

Mary Horton

Administrative Coordinator

Marnie Rivett*

**former Board or Staff*

Financial Summaries

September 2008 through August 2009

Income Summary

Grant Income

Community Hospitals	\$ 60,000
Fletcher Allen Health Care	\$ 65,000
Freeman Medical Scholars	\$ 51,217
Health Resources & Services Administration	\$ 61,582
State of Vermont Loan Repayment	\$156,500
State of Vermont	\$114,168
VT Health Careers Awareness Month	\$ 3,000
VT Department of Labor	\$ 31,511
Total Grant Income	\$542,978

Registration and Fee Income \$ 12,150

Interest Income \$ 2,071

Miscellaneous Income \$ 187

Total Support and Revenue **\$557,386**

Expense Summary

Program Services

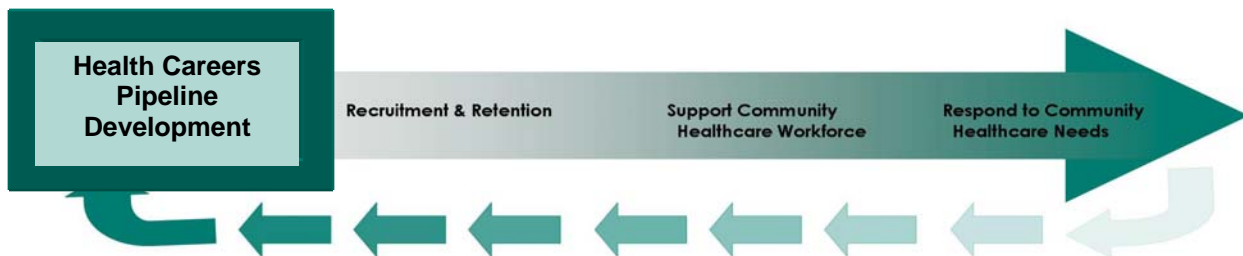
Core	\$ 58,502
MedQuest	\$ 46,276
Health Careers	\$ 56,852
Educational Loan Repayment	\$160,667
Other Programs	\$ 68,721

Support Services

General & Administrative Expenses \$166,675

Total Expenses **\$557,693**

Change in Net Assets **(\$ 307)**



Health Careers Pipeline

Exploring the World of Health Careers

Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center reached out to 4,888 middle and high school students this year. This was done through classroom presentations, career fairs, Health Careers Exploration Programs (like Shadow Day and MedQuest), and other events.

We want to thank the school professionals that continuously support our efforts to educate youth about the number of opportunities available in the health care field. We are always looking to build on these partnerships, start new ones, and assist with educational and health care related events.

We are proud to announce that on May 27, 2009, Champlain Valley AHEC was recognized by Linking Learning to Life “as an outstanding community partner, supporting our work with providing high quality work and learning opportunities for area youth!”

This is what some of the students had to say about what they learned from our classroom presentations:

- **“It was cool and I liked to check out the medical equipment.”** 7th grader
- **“Not all health careers are bloody.”** Middle school student
- **“I didn’t know about many of the professions we talked about today. Now I have a clearer understanding of the jobs available in the health care field.”** 10th grader

Resources for Middle School Students

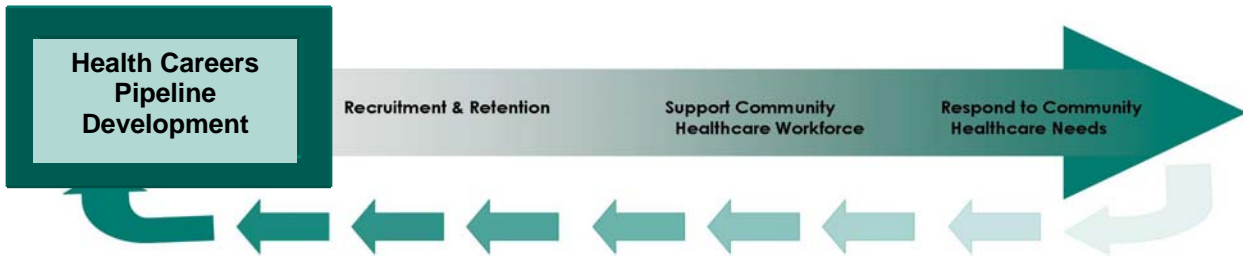
There is national consensus that to build a diverse health care workforce requires beginning with middle school outreach. We added to our tools to engage middle schoolers despite a cut in our Vermont Next Generation grant funds that reduced available staff from half to quarter-time. We targeted rural and underserved schools and youth-serving prevention organizations. We continued to improve our health career and classroom presentations that raise health careers awareness, encourage students to develop all their academic talents, challenge youth to persist in math and science, and promote developing appreciation for all people.

To help youth appreciate careers in aging, we developed a “Frontiers in Aging” experience including aging simulations based on the work of Monika Deppen Wood at Rutgers University.

Despite great success in creatively serving more than 350 youth, we end the year facing difficult decisions about middle school service. Our Next Generation funding will end early in our next fiscal year and will not be renewed. We look forward to remaining in close touch with middle school partner organizations to develop collaborations and resources to continue this valuable work and rebuild resources.



Edmunds Middle School students breathe through straws to experience what it might be like to perform activities of daily living with reduced lung capacity or cardiac disease during the *Frontiers in Aging* presentation.



Health Careers Pipeline, continued

Health Careers Exploration for High School Students: Shadow Day and MedQuest Programs

Champlain Valley AHEC provided four Shadow Day programs and two week-long MedQuest programs for a total of 87 high school youth interested in a deeper exploration experience to prepare for a health career.

The **Shadow Day Programs** are one-day educational programs held at a local hospital that provide high school students in grades 9-12 the opportunity to explore the health care field. Students receive confidentiality, infection control, and job shadow training, one 2-3 hour job shadow, panel discussions from college students in a health care program, and an interactive presentation by health care professionals and students. A college admissions person presents on college admissions and college preparation. Students leave the program with resources to pursue volunteer opportunities and to continue with career exploration, and much more.



Students who participated in the Health Careers Exploration Shadow Day Program at Fletcher Allen Health Care.

We had a record number of applicants for this year's Shadow Day Programs. Applications increased by 15% for the Shadow Day at Porter Medical Center (PMC) on October 23, 2008 and increased 148% for the Fletcher Allen Health Care (FAHC) Shadow Day on April 20, 2009. To welcome more students, we increased the capacity of the programs and held a second Shadow Day Program at PMC on March 13, 2009. The increased capacity in the program allowed 65% of applicants to participate.



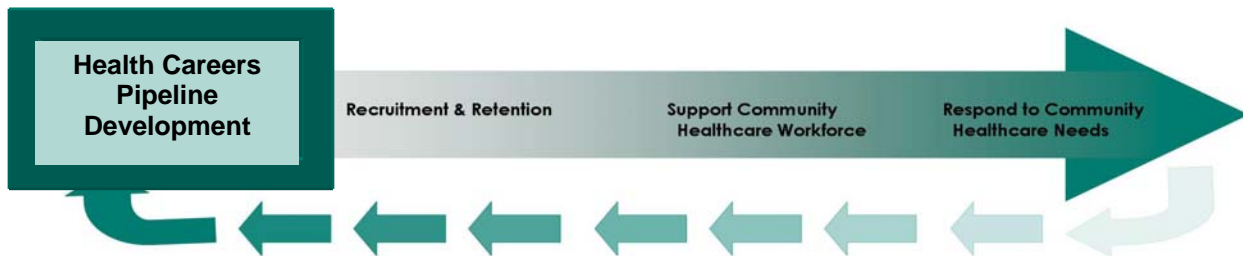
MVU student Meghan Cornforth shadowed Edith Allard, MT at Northwestern Medical Center (NMC) Laboratory during the Health Careers Exploration Shadow Day Program at NMC.

MedQuest is a rigorous, week-long residential program based at the University of Vermont (UVM), with day trips to FAHC, PMC and Northwestern Medical Center (NMC). 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.



Alysha Magnant, South Burlington High School student, shadowed Steven St. Marie, OD at Northern Valley Eyecare in St. Albans during the June Health Careers Exploration MedQuest Program.

Students attend presentations on health careers, hands-on workshops, a telemedicine surgery, CPR training, and three job shadows. The week culminates with a closing reception for parents that highlights the participants' learning and growth. Local and federal legislators were invited this year.



Health Careers Pipeline, continued

What people say about MedQuest and Shadow Day

“Congratulations on completing your exploration of health care careers through Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center Program, MedQuest. I am so proud to hear about your accomplishments during your job shadows this week. The skills that you have developed and the knowledge that you have gained will enrich your life and make our community a healthier one.” Peter Welch, Member of Congress

“I was extremely thankful my son was chosen to participate in the Shadow Day Program—it piqued his curiosity and passion for the medical field even more—keep it up.” Parent of a Shadow Day participant

“I want to thank you for all you do to promote health careers. I have enjoyed working with Champlain Valley AHEC for many years and we are lucky to have you as our partner. Keep your enthusiasm and great ideas coming; results from these efforts are showing!” Christine Griffin, MS, MT (ASCP), SH, UVM Department of Radiation Sciences College of Nursing and Health Sciences

“I can’t thank you enough for this incredible experience. MedQuest has changed my life and I believe no words can explain how thankful I am that I got to meet people like you, all of the med students, all of the MedQuest students, the doctors, and the patients. I am very thankful and you should be very proud of yourself for showing so many kids who they can truly be and motivating them to become the people who stand out in their generation and make a valuable difference.” Sean Keenan, MedQuest 2009 participant

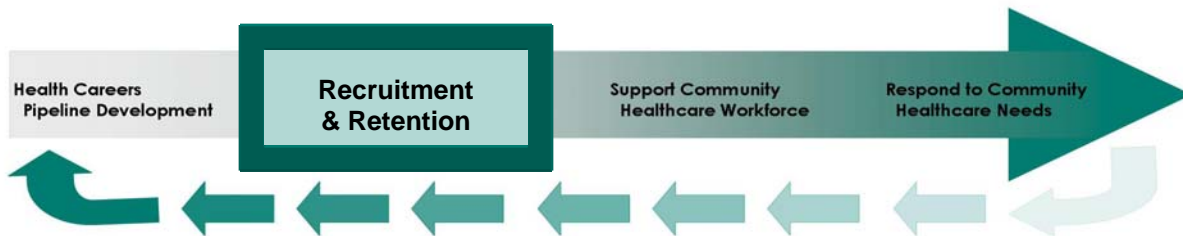


Ashley Kittell (Richford High School) practices her lifesaving skills in Adult CPR and AED Training during the July Health Careers Exploration MedQuest Program.

Resources for Career Seekers of All Ages

This year we worked with partners to serve adults interested in transitioning to a health career. We explored the gaps in provision and provided some resources limited by staff availability. We contracted with Vermont Adult Learning (VAL) to provide a health careers component for their Nellie Mae Foundation-funded Transition to College and Career course. This semester long class co-presented by VAL, Community College of Vermont, and Vermont Student Assistance Corporation aimed to prepare adults for college or professional study toward a health or “green” career. Champlain Valley AHEC staff presented health career exploration activities and resources in five classes over the fall term, plus individual consultation with students. Cindy Mills of VAL remarked, “Having an AHEC partnership was a competitive advantage with this national grant project. More important, we couldn’t replicate your knowledge of health careers and all your tools. We couldn’t have done this project without you.”

Expanding services to adults without substantial new resources was not part of our work plan going into the fiscal year and was not easy, but as layoffs mounted, it was the right thing to do. We ended this year inspired by a public planning session on adults in health careers jointly sponsored by the Vermont Department of Labor and Vermont Agency of Human Services, and honored to be included in a State of Vermont grant application for federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to continue and expand adult services. These are important first steps to address the emerging consensus that there would be great public value to having a comprehensive menu of health career exploration services for adults. Staff at Association of Africans Living in Vermont and Community Health Center of Burlington have referred to us young adults in transition. We look forward to learning more about these needs and opportunities to serve.



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 24 Primary Care awards, for a total of \$194,000. The average award was \$8,083. The highest award granted was for \$15,000 and the lowest award was \$2,500. All of these awards were retention awards. Three awards for recruitment to practices were not used and that money will be distributed as part of the fiscal year 2010 loan repayment awards.

County	# of Awards	Discipline	# of Awards	Degree	# of Awards
Addison	2	Family Practice	16	Physician—MD/DO	18
Chittenden	21	Internal Medicine	5	Physician Assistant (PA)	4
Franklin	1	Psychiatry	3	Nurse Practitioner (NP)	2

Quotes from Champlain Valley AHEC Loan Repayment Recipients

“I appreciate Vermont’s commitment to primary care through loan repayment. However large or small the financial support, it is a validation of our efforts in the daily life of primary care.”

“It is my goal, and always has been, to stay in Vermont. I was raised here in this state and attended a Vermont State College. I returned to Vermont to live and hope to remain here. However, the economics of rural practice versus metropolitan cannot be ignored. Primary care in a small state does not pay what a surgical or sub-specialty practice does. The funds that AHEC has been so gracious to extend to me have been critical in allowing me to stay in Vermont. I am sure that many other practitioners feel the same way.”

“Loan repayment assistance will help me to continue to focus on my work and the spirit of altruism that I have cultivated since premedical training.”

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

“I continue to enjoy all of my work and look forward to its continued challenges and rewards. While compensated less in community mental health in Vermont than I might find elsewhere, past financial assistance from AHEC has helped ease the burden of my educational loans. In so doing, AHEC has allowed me to practice in an environment that I believe is second to none. For that I am deeply grateful and look forward to a long future in this wonderful state.”

“A factor that has had a tremendous influence on my decision to stay in Vermont is the support of the AHEC program.”

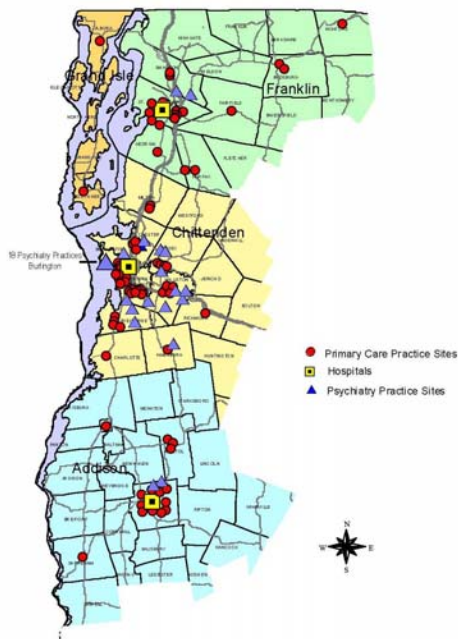


Recruitment & Retention, continued

Primary Care Matters

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 2009 survey gathered information about 82 general primary care sites and 321 physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, physicians and certified nurse midwife practitioners as of March 30, 2009. *Based on requests from many psychiatric practitioners, we are streamlining the data and procedures we request from these sites and practitioners. We will resume reporting on needs in this primary care category with the 2010 Primary Care Survey report.*

Six practice sites closed their doors as operations consolidated or practitioners retired. We would like to thank David Henderson, MD; Robert LaFiandra, MD; and Ned Shulman, MD for their service to our region and wish them well in their retirement. Roger Giroux, MD established the Brookside Family Health Center in Hinesburg, and the Northern Tier Center for Health (NOTCH) group of Federally Qualified Health Centers added the St. Albans Health Center. The survey documents a continuing, serious shortage of internal medicine and family medicine



Champlain Valley Region—Primary Care Distribution Map

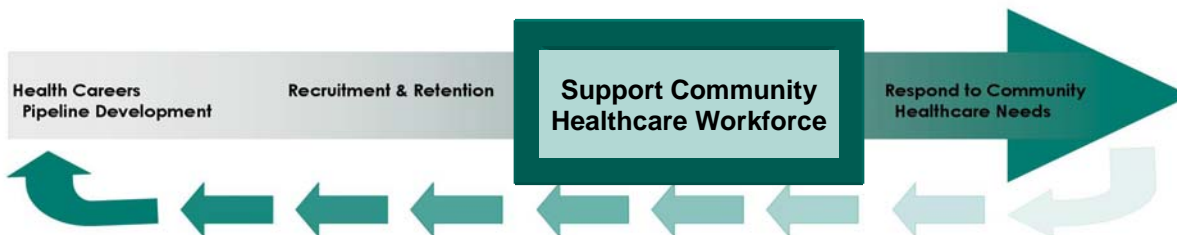
capacity. Franklin County's shortage has increased to 15 physician full time equivalents (FTEs) plus a significant shortage of APRN/PA/CNM practitioners. In our other counties, Chittenden lacks 5 FTE, Addison lacks 3.4 FTE (internal medicine only) and Grand Isle lacks 3 FTE physicians.

Data about our region is added to other regional data for a statewide snapshot published by the Vermont AHEC Program Office at the UVM College of Medicine that informs workforce development. Our survey is also used to set priorities for the Educational Loan Repayment program. The full 2009 survey report will be published on the Champlain Valley AHEC website at www.cvahec.org by February 28, 2010.

Cultural Competence

The ultimate purpose of cultural competence in health care is the elimination of health disparities. We are thoughtfully learning more about our region's needs in preparation for 2010 planning activities to define our role and goals as the Vermont AHEC Network cultural competence liaison.

- We have increased our outreach and services to schools and youth-serving organizations working with highly diverse middle and high school student populations.
- We provide accommodations when needed, and assure that accommodations meet students' needs.
- Our curricula engage youth in the vision that a quality health care workforce is a diverse workforce.
- We work with a diverse group of Health Career Ambassadors and MedQuest Assistants to deliver our Health Career programs.
- We support training, retention and utilization of medical interpreters as a critical input.
- We sponsor higher education student projects and learning opportunities that advance individual learning goals, meet community health needs, engage patients as collaborators, and assist community agencies with related medical interpreter costs.
- With Freeman Medical Scholars, we are expanding the Cultural Competency Manual for Health Care Providers to better describe the diverse and traditional populations living in our region. This both assists primary care practitioners and improves health outcomes.

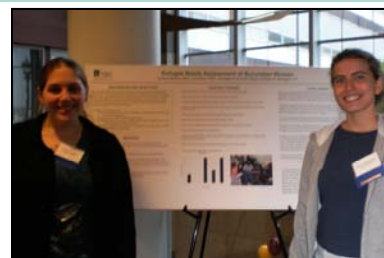


Support Community Healthcare Workforce

Freeman Summer Opportunities

Our region benefited from the dedicated work of ten UVM College of Medicine students. Their work was funded and supported by the Freeman Medical Scholars Program directed by Dr. Mimi Reardon.

- **Lindsay Nadeau and Laura E. Piper** worked with academic mentor Dr. Andrea Green, co-director of the International Clinic at University Health Center Pediatrics, to identify the health education needs of Burundian women in partnership with the Association of Africans Living in Vermont. The project informed a new chapter about the needs of Burundian refugees for the Cultural Competency for Health Care Practitioners (CCHCP) manual.
- **Derek Huang** worked with academic mentor Dr. Mimi Reardon and with Jon Bourgo from the Community Health Center of Burlington to update information about the health status and needs of Chinese Vermonters.
- **Alex Folkl** worked with academic mentor Dr. Mimi Reardon and Champlain Valley AHEC to update the introductory sections of the CCHCP manual. Alex also created a new outline for manual chapters about populations, assured that new resources are peer-reviewed and evidence based, and updated many sections.
- **Andrea Steely** was mentored by Dr. Patti O'Brien in the subject of managing lymphedema in breast cancer survivors. While lymphedema affects most breast cancer survivors, she found that the literature and guidance on the topic was surprisingly limited. She contributed a chapter to a book for cancer survivors.
- **Marissa Bucci and Hugo Valencia** were MedQuest Assistant Directors for June and **Sarah Mulligan and Tyler Stewart** staffed the July MedQuest Program. **Jessie Kerr** staffed both the June and July MedQuest programs, serving as the lead MedQuest Assistant Director.

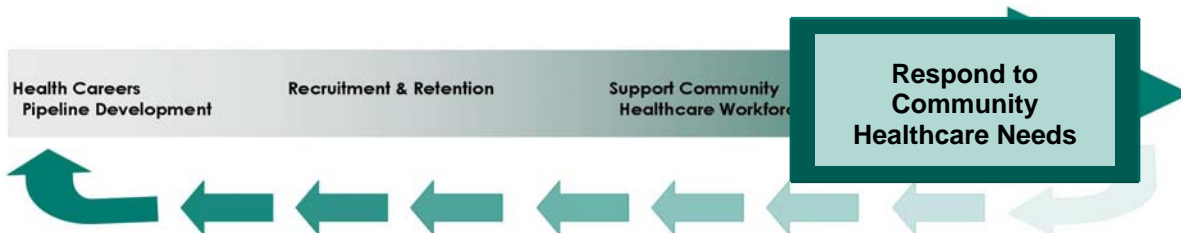


UVM College of Medicine students Lindsay Nadeau (left) and Laura Piper display the results of their project "Refugee Needs Assessment of Burundian Women" at Vermont Recruitment Day at UVM College of Medicine.

Continuing Education and Clinical Tools

Champlain Valley AHEC staff provided planning assistance for training events including trainer or curriculum identification, and participation in planning groups for larger events including the Interpreter Task Force's provider trainings on How to Work with a Medical Interpreter, and the AHEC Network's annual Geriatric conference.

We supported an annual Evaluation & Management (E&M) Coding Update series with the other regional AHECs. We function as a link to precepting opportunities with the UVM College of Medicine. We encourage primary care practitioners to consider preceptorship as a valuable way to connect to the College of Medicine. We provided more than 30 practitioners with subsidies to purchase UptoDate clinical reference service and maintained a library of resources for practice learning sessions. Upon request, we refer practitioners to experts and resources, especially in the areas of primary care, cultural competence and mental health. Altogether, more than 170 practitioners and six practices benefited from our support last year.



Respond to Community Healthcare Needs

Practitioner to Practitioner (PTOP) Referral Resource

Finding appropriate mental health referrals continues to be a challenge for primary care practitioners. Many studies show that a commercial-free, all-discipline directory of mental health practitioners is a vital tool in states' mental health access toolkits. After an increase of 10% enrollment with help from Students First in FY 2008, mental health practitioner participation leveled despite mass mailings and partner outreach through four professional newsletters. Many practitioners tell us that their caseloads are so consistently full that they feel it would be misleading to list on PTOPhelp.org. To address this challenge, our strategic plan for PTOPhelp includes gathering more information about practitioner perceptions in FY 2010 and to form an advisory committee to guide the project.

Cultural Competency—Medical Interpreter Education

As one piece of our cultural competency work, Champlain Valley AHEC partnered with Association of Africans Living in Vermont, Community Health Center of Burlington and Fletcher Allen Health Care to train the first class of medical interpreters in the Bridging the Gap forty hour curriculum in August–September 2009. We are grateful for the advice and encouragement of the Vermont Interpreter Task Force to the project. Fourteen of 18 trainees completed training and 13 have passed their final exams from Cross Cultural Health Care Program in Seattle, Washington to date. Together, the interpreters speak more than fourteen languages in addition to English.

Bridging the Gap Basic Training includes basic interpreting skills, information about health care (including anatomy, physiology and medical terminology), culture in interpreting, communication skills for advocacy, and professional development (including resources for continuing learning after the series). To receive the course certificate, trainees must pass a final written exam, and attain the level of competent oral fluency in English and a target language as certified by Pacific Interpreters of Portland, Oregon.



Participants in the first Bridging the Gap Basic Training.

Community Health

Kylee Ryan, AHEC Health Careers Program Coordinator, has served on the Vermont Governor's Council for Physical Fitness and Sports for almost two years. This past year, Kylee assisted with the Council's Stretch Your Limits Winter Youth Activity Challenge, which had 20 youth participants; Vermont's Corporate Cup Challenge & State Agency Race, in which 2,300 people participated; and the Worksite Wellness Conference, which reached 250 people.

Since January 2009, Executive Director Alice Christian has been part of the Community Assessment Team for the Vermont Blueprint for Health in Chittenden County, to support implementing sustainable interventions at multiple levels of prevention to address chronic disease risk factors for adults.

Karin Hammer-Williamson represents our center on the Addison County Farm Worker Coalition, the Refugee Health Committee, the Interpreter Task Force of Vermont, the Refugee and Immigrant Service Provider Network, and the Healthy Youth Collaborative at Essex CHIPS (which includes linking youth health career awareness to national Red Ribbon Week and to the statewide Youth Tobacco Activism Summit at Lake Morey).