

## **Funding Opportunity Summary: Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP)**

**CFDA No. 93.822**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) is to assist individuals from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds throughout the educational pipeline to undertake education to enter and graduate from a health or allied health professions program.

**Project aim:** To ensure an adequate, well-trained, and culturally competent health care workforce to meet the health care needs of all Vermonters.

**Proposed Service Area:** Statewide

**Applicant:** Northeastern Vermont AHEC, on behalf of the Vermont AHEC Network

**Partners:** VT AHEC Network, Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, Lyndon State College, Castleton State College, Community College of Vermont, Albany School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, University of New England College of Dental Medicine, University of Vermont Department of Social Work, River Valley Technical Center and Springfield High School, the Lyndon Town School and Lyndon Institute.

**Focus:** The partners on this project will work collaboratively through a comprehensive approach to lengthen and strengthen Vermont's current health care workforce pipeline. The program components are 1) built upon the current work of the Vermont AHEC Network, 2) in response to anticipated health care workforce needs statewide, and 3) informed by education policy and innovation being proposed by Vermont's PK-16 Council and Lyndon State College's Center for Rural Entrepreneurship.

This project will extend health careers exploration activities to every student statewide in grades 6-12, providing in-school programming that fits with the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities. In Northeastern Vermont, health careers exploration programming will be extended to kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grades, as well. Community-based and experiential learning in community and health care settings will be expanded to a greater number of students and coordinated with health, math, science and technology curricula. Starting with the identified partners, the VT HCOP program will explore the expansion of dual enrollment options for high school students in non-nursing tracks, and will work to establish articulation agreements that will increase the rates of entry and degree attainment among Vermont students.

Students who meet the criteria for economically and educationally disadvantaged will be provided supports and enrichment opportunities in health careers exploration. A 10-week structured program will be offered to 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who fit these criteria. It will offer an Introduction to College Studies course, Human Biology (for 3 credits for students who assess college ready), financial aid counseling, professional mentorship through internship and /or community health projects, peer mentorship from assistant program directors (VT college students in paid positions for the duration of the program), stipends for eligible participants, room & board, transportation for program activities, and a personal reflection seminar.

Areas of concentration for all students will include primary care behavioral health, dental medicine, pharmacy, and cultural and linguistic competency. The project will provide mentorship, counseling and resources to low-income, first generation college-bound students to assist them to enter college or a training program in health care, and to help them to graduate. All program activities will be guided by health care workforce data and by input from health care provider organizations throughout the state of Vermont.

**Exclusion:** This program cannot provide support for nursing programs at any educational level or for students exclusively pursuing nursing education.

*May 10, 2011 v. 3*