

chicago AHEC

Spring 2013 Newsletter

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"One thing I know; the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."

- Albert Schweitzer

ABOUT AHEC

The Chicago Area Health Education Center is part of the National AHEC Organization (NAO) created by Congress in 1971 to recruit, train and retain health professionals committed to under-served populations. The AHEC program provides a link between needed health resources and local communities.

The goal of Chicago AHEC is to continue toward meeting the primary care & public health workforce needs in the Chicago area.

Program Update from Atara Young, Director of Chicago AHEC

We are on target to meet our goals!

- Last year our Speakers Bureau reached out to over 2,000 students. This year we have seen about 1,750 students with 3 months left in our fiscal year.
- We have hosted 2 workshops: "Advocating for Low Income Clients in the New Healthcare Environment" and "Improving Mental Health Services for Veterans"
- We will host two additional conferences this year. The first will engage community and university based health pipeline programs. The second is a training for community based and VA mental health providers who work with Veterans and their families.
- AHEC recently partnered with Project Brotherhood to launch a job shadowing event for students of Instituto Health Science Academy. Chicago AHEC will continue to support Project Brotherhood's efforts to provide job shadowing opportunities to high school students.

"It has been a great opportunity to actually have personal contact with a woman who is in the career that I want to be in. I want to be a nurse and sometimes I get scared like I can't do it.

She is like me and she accomplished her goals. She also told me about other scholarships they have at schools. This was helpful."

– Quote from a Thornton student about speaker Shalonda Patterson (Speakers Bureau 2012)

Interested in being a speaker at the AHEC Speakers Bureau? 30 minutes of your time with students can help them in their pursuit of a health care career. Presenters will share their journey into the health profession, do a review of what they do during the work day, and talk about how their education influenced their career.
[Contact
ayoung@hmprg.org](mailto:ayoung@hmprg.org)

Speakers Bureau

Last year, Chicago AHEC began reaching out to underrepresented high school students to promote health careers. Our first speaking engagement was at Thornton Township High School, where we reached 91 students. Since then, Chicago AHEC has worked with more than 15 schools and reached over 3,500 students.

Chicago AHEC hosts career days, health care panels, and speaking events. The program encourages participants to explore various career pathways in medicine, nursing, oral health and the allied health professions.

Chicago AHEC will continue to build effective partnerships, engage health professionals and volunteers, and reach thousands of additional students.

Snapshot: Speakers @ Computer Systems Institute and Gage Park High School

In February 2013, Merlyn Chua, Advanced Practice Nurse (NP), spoke at Computer Systems Institute (CSI). CSI is a career training school that prepares non-traditional students for health careers. Mrs. Chua spoke about her career journey in nursing. Starting out as a nurse in the Philippines, she transitioned to work in the United States, obtained her nurse practitioner degree, and is currently pursuing a PhD in nursing. Merlyn gave valuable insight into the nursing profession, what her job entails, and the skills she has used to succeed in the field. While she inspired all students, she especially resonated with adult students when speaking about balancing the responsibilities of family, school, and work.

In April 2013, Alex Luterek, Health Policy Intern at Health and Medicine Policy Research Group spoke with the Gage Park High School Health Club. Alex talked about her undergraduate experience and what led her to want to pursue a Masters in Public Health focusing on health policy and management. Students were eager to hear advice about balancing the social and academic aspects of college, the admissions process, and what college science classes are like. The students also engaged in an interesting discussion about the many subjects that fall under the public health umbrella-- from air pollution to access to health services in schools.

Trainings for Professionals

Chicago AHEC hosts interdisciplinary trainings to promote best practices in primary care, health promotion, and healthcare delivery reform. The trainings are meant to inspire interdisciplinary conversation and learning.

On January 30, 2013, Chicago AHEC co-hosted a training, "*Advocating for Low Income Clients in the New Healthcare Environment.*" Over 150 health and human service professionals learned about the new CountyCare program at the Cook County Health & Hospitals System, the new charity care eligibility standards, and the Medicaid Managed Care Integrated Care Program.

On March 22nd & 23rd, Chicago AHEC hosted a Train the Trainer Workshop for improving mental /behavioral health services for veterans and their families. The training focused on expanding access to mental health services for underserved Veterans. The workshop also covered training for diagnosing and treating veterans for post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. Guests included three veterans who spoke about military culture, the transition to civilian life, and offered direct advice to practitioners about providing health services to veterans.

Tip from Officer Jeremy Parent: What is YOUR Role in Communicating with Veterans?

T: Thank the veteran for their service, and thank their family

U: Understand; let the veteran talk about their skills and experience

R: React; try to pick out the things the veteran says and build on their skills and dialogue

N: Next steps. What do you think the next steps in the transition are?

The AHEC Health Club at Gage Park High School

When Atara Young, director of Chicago AHEC, first met with Josephine Robinson, a specialist working in the College and Career department at Gage Park High School, Mrs. Robinson expressed that her students would benefit from meeting health professionals and gaining access to information about health careers. As a result, Chicago AHEC agreed to host a health club at the school.

Throughout the year, fifteen students of the Gage Park Health Club engaged in forty hours of mentoring, service learning and career development activities. At the end of the year, the five students with the highest rate of participation were awarded \$100 book scholarships. One student stated, "The health club did a great job at helping me understand what will be required of me in the health profession. I have also had the chance to meet and get to know people who are doing the work I want to do. I feel like I can reach out to them."

During the club's final meeting, the students were asked about improvements for next year. Most of the students agreed that having a job shadowing opportunity sponsored by AHEC would have made the health club better. Mrs. Robinson and Atara Young are committed to coordinating more shadowing opportunities for the next round of students.

Family Health and Diabetes Fair



Throughout the school year, the students of Gage Park High School covered various discussion topics—from career development, to the importance of service learning, and mentorship. Yet there was one topic that the students felt they wanted to draw more attention to: diabetes. Diabetes impacts both the culture of Gage Park High and the local communities, which consist of almost equal populations of African Americans and Latinos. So with the help of AHEC director Atara Young, the AHEC health club hosted a Family Health and Diabetes Fair in May 2013.

Over forty students, parents, and faculty from Gage Park gathered to celebrate the students' participation in the program and to learn about diabetes. The students learned how to do diabetes assessments and evaluated their peers and parents on BMI and lifestyle factors.

So how did the participants score on the diabetes assessment?

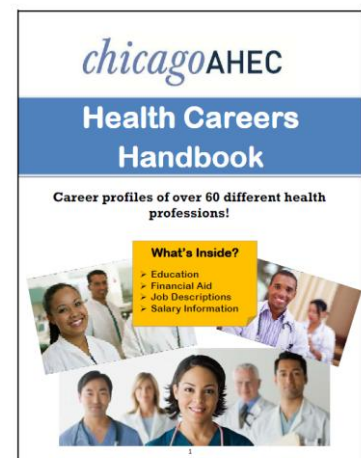
- **57% were at risk for type 2 diabetes**
- **14% were on the border**
- **28% were not at risk**



Upon completing a diabetes assessment, participants received a raffle ticket to win one of three prizes: a food processor, blender, or a Target gift card. Several pieces of take home information were also available, including a BMI chart, diabetes FAQs, and tips on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Throughout the evening, several parents shared stories about friends, family, and community members that have been affected by diabetes. Attendees of the event also had the chance to share a healthy meal of roasted turkey, salad, steamed vegetables, and fruit. As the health club students become seniors, surely they will reflect positively upon their experiences with the AHEC health club.

The AHEC Health Careers Handbook is Now Available!

The Chicago AHEC Health Careers Handbook is now available on the AHEC website! It contains profiles of over 60 different health professions, ranging from art therapy to medicine, occupational therapy, social work and public health. There is also information on health professional education financing, duration of training, and career mobility. The handbook has been distributed to six Chicago Public Schools thus far. For more information, visit www.hmprg.org or contact Atara Young.



How to Register for the Chicago Public Schools Health Sciences Speaker Bureau

Health and Medicine Policy Research Group is now partners with Michael Reese Health Trust as part of their "Health Workforce Innovators" Pilot program.

One key role HMPRG plays in this partnership is providing speakers to the 6 pilot high schools to inspire youth to pursue health careers. We invite you to sign up for the Chicago Public Schools' Speakers Bureau, where you will be connected with one or more of the following schools: Dunbar Academy, Kelvyn Park, North Grand, Sullivan, Westinghouse College Prep and Crane.

Speakers are essential to the education of Career and Technical Education students regarding various careers in industry. The Health Sciences Speakers' Bureau hopes to provide CTE Health Sciences students an opportunity to hear the first-hand experiences of health professionals with various health careers expertise. It also provides an opportunity for health professionals to interact with youth eagerly seeking to gain knowledge about careers in the health care industry.

Be sure to state that you're a Schweitzer Fellow for Life or AHEC partner when you **apply online**:
<https://www.chooseyourfuture.org/cte/work-based-learning/speakers-bureau-application>

Thanks to Our Community Partners and Volunteers!

The Chicago AHEC Speakers Bureau would not be possible without the help of health professionals who provide inspirational and practical insight to students interested in the health professions. *Thanks to the support from our volunteer and community partners, we have reached over 3,500 students!*

Community Partners

Urban Health Program, UIC
 Gage Park High School
 Thornton Township

Project Brotherhood, Cook County Woodlawn
 Instituto Health & Science Career Academy
 Computer Systems Institute (CSI)

Volunteers

Gail Anderson
 Felix Huang
 James Lott
 Camille Williamson
 Perrin Green

Merlyn Chua
 John Hayes
 Erica Mendez
 Qiana Woodson
 Jane Jih

Dr. Joseph Day
 Kenya Hemmingway
 Shalonda Patterson
 Dr. Francois Blumenfeld Kouchner

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