



Chicago AHEC FY2017 Annual Report

September 2016 through August 2017



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A Note from the Director

Dear Chicago AHEC Community:



Thank you for completing another program year with us! We continued to support our participants using strategies that honor their experiences as students and professionals and strengthen their ability to advance on the health career trajectory. We remained focused on our mission to recruit, maintain, and support a diverse health workforce.

As many changes took place at the federal level, the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program was redesigned and the Illinois AHEC Network responded with a successful proposal that was fully funded for FY18-FY22. Congress has continued to allocate the funding needed to support the AHEC Program. On the local level, Chicago AHEC worked with our community partners to examine and respond to Chicago Public School (CPS) school closings and budget cuts as well as the fallout of the Illinois state budget crisis. As a health workforce development program, Chicago AHEC works with our participants to navigate these types of challenges that impact their educational and career trajectories.

Chicago AHEC continues to utilize the recommendations from the *Illinois Health Care Workforce Report and Recommendations: Illinois Health Care Reform Implementation Council Workgroup on Workforce*, that propose pathways and career trajectory initiatives include “a schema that identifies the spectrum of educational programs . . . from early exposure to late education.” This workforce pathway strategy is the foundation of a career trajectory that includes exposure and enrichment, technical training, certification and licensure, undergraduate professional education, graduate professional education, and postgraduate education. This approach is structured and flexible enough to provide access and opportunity at various junctures along the way as well as accommodate the needs of a diverse workforce that includes underrepresented and underserved communities.

We know a successful pathways strategy needs to pay attention to veterans, people with disabilities, individuals with primary languages other than English, people with criminal records or otherwise involved with the justice system, and other underrepresented populations in the workforce. These strategies should also utilize interprofessional education for a team-based health care delivery system. This comprehensive and coordinated strategy requires stakeholders representing public, private, and community interests.

In FY17, Chicago AHEC focused on:

- Preparing for the federal redesign of the AHEC program. The Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) was released in December 2016 and detailed a focus on diversity, distribution, and practice transformation while introducing a co-branded new AHEC initiative:

AHEC Scholars, a competitive two-year cohort program expanding on traditional health professions and student education and training.

- Continuing to develop relationships and partnerships with community based organizations, educational initiatives, and other groups.
- Developing data collection and analysis tools and protocols to assist us with longitudinal tracking, program improvement, and identifying health workforce trends that support individuals on their health career trajectory.
- Examining health care workforce issues: diversity, barriers, forecasting, and educational trends.
- Strengthening the Chicago AHEC Speakers Bureau including recruitment and management protocols, database refinement, and providing opportunities for professional development.
- Developing an automated online Speakers Bureau request system for use with Chicago Public Schools' Career and Technical Education unit for the Health Sciences cluster as well as community college and other community based requests.

As the year drew to a close, we were excited by the milestones met by our participants as well as their passion for health careers. Our Speakers Bureau members were integral partners in inspiring students and community members with the stories of their career journeys. We are proud of the work everyone put in and grateful for your support. Chicago AHEC at Health & Medicine Policy Research Group looks forward to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Sincerely,

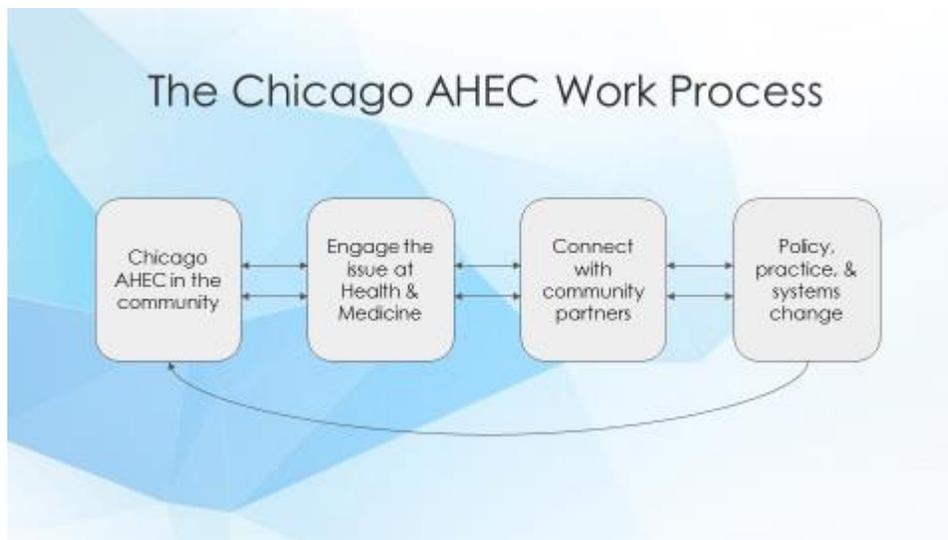


Sharon Powell, MA
Director, Chicago AHEC



What is AHEC?

In 2011, Health & Medicine Policy Research Group became the host site for the Chicago Area Health Education Center (Chicago AHEC). [Chicago AHEC at Health & Medicine](#) works to recruit, support, and maintain a diverse health workforce in underserved and underrepresented communities. Chicago AHEC is uniquely situated as an AHEC in an independent “action-oriented policy center” promoting health equity and challenging health inequities using the social determinants of health framework. AHEC and Health & Medicine share language that focuses on underserved populations, inequities, disparities, and community as well as being “honest brokers” bringing together diverse stakeholders with interests in common goals regarding health in general and the healthcare workforce specifically. We are able to accomplish AHEC’s work by having our “on-the-ground” health workforce development activities inform policy and vice versa.



In this report

In this report, you will find information about the many activities, people served, and major achievements in the Chicago AHEC FY 2017 (September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017).

Overview of FY 2017

Activities

In FY17, 390 people participated in 43 different Chicago AHEC activities ranging from health career exploration to CPR certification sessions which were held across Cook County, Illinois. Most of the participants reported living within one of the 77 Chicago community areas and 31% reported they came from the Loop, near South side (zip code 60605), Rogers Park (60626), and Bridgeport (60608). The total number of hours of activities was 87.83. As participants engaged in an event, a sign-in sheet, demographics form, and evaluation form were given to them at the beginning and at the end of the event. The response rate for evaluation forms was 57%.

At the beginning of a Chicago AHEC event, people were asked “Are you interested in a health career?” on the sign-in sheet. On the evaluation form at the end of the event, people were asked the same question. When comparing their interest in health career at the beginning versus after the event, the Chicago AHEC event increased health career interest among our population by 9%. Also, only 15% of participants had their CPR certification prior to participating AHEC events.

Chicago AHEC Speakers Bureau and Working Professionals Network members contributed 172.83 hours to Chicago AHEC work in FY 17.

AHEC staff, Working Professionals Network members, and Schweitzer Fellows and Fellows for Life provided over 25 one-on-one contact hour sessions to support Chicago AHEC Internship Alumni. These sessions included assistance with school registration and administrative issues, education and career planning, tutoring, and certification exam coaching.

Innovations and Responding to Community Needs

- **Health Literacy and Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition (CCLC)**
Working with our community partner, CCLC, we embarked on a health literacy project providing evaluation consulting/assistance.
- **Literacy and the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP: CATCH-ON @ Rush)**
Connecting with our literacy partner, Literacy Works, we were able to offer assistance with “translating” clinical information and materials for a variety of audiences and reading levels to

A note about the data:

Chicago AHEC at Health & Medicine reaches individuals all over the city of Chicago, ranging in ages from under 18 to over 70, representing all genders, races, educational backgrounds and interests. Proper data collection, data management, and evaluation is critical to not only communicate our reach and effectiveness, but to satisfy strict governmental reporting requirements as well. Because Chicago AHEC at Health & Medicine is uniquely situated in an independent policy center that promotes health equity and challenges health inequities using the social determinants of health framework, our data interests extend outside of the pre-created race, ethnicity, and gender drop-down menus that our existing data warehousing system offered us based on Federal requirements. As such, Chicago AHEC collects age, race/ethnicity, and gender data using a self-report tool.

another Health Services Resource Administration initiative, GWEP. Chicago AHEC and Health & Medicine is one of CATCH-ON's partner organizations.

Demographics

Age

Since events were mainly held at high schools and colleges, most participants (77.2%) were less than 22 years old and 44.3% of them were between 14-17 years of age.

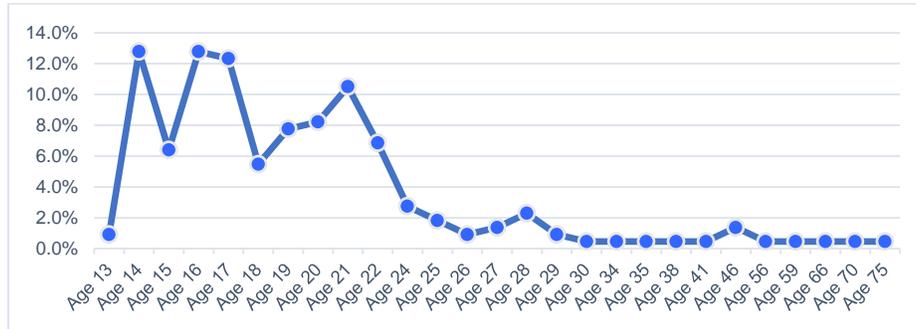


Figure 1. Distribution of Age Group

Gender

In general, females (83%) make up a larger proportion of Chicago AHEC participants compared to men (17%), as demonstrated in Figure 3. However, when asked to self-report their gender, 1% of respondents reported identifying as gender non-binary (Figure 2). If participants were asked to choose their gender based on the two U.S. Census response categories, transgender and other gender minority's identity was not captured.

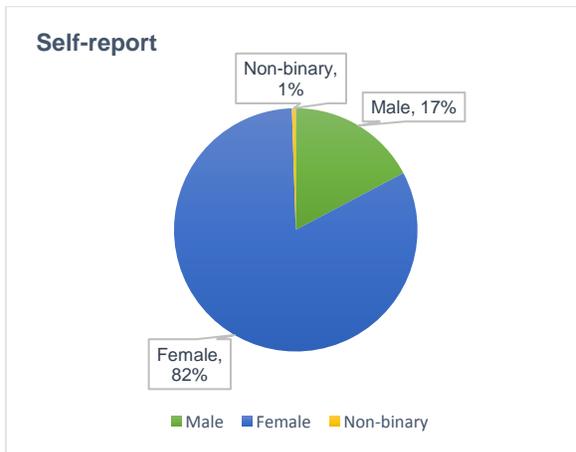


Figure 2. Self-reported Gender Identity

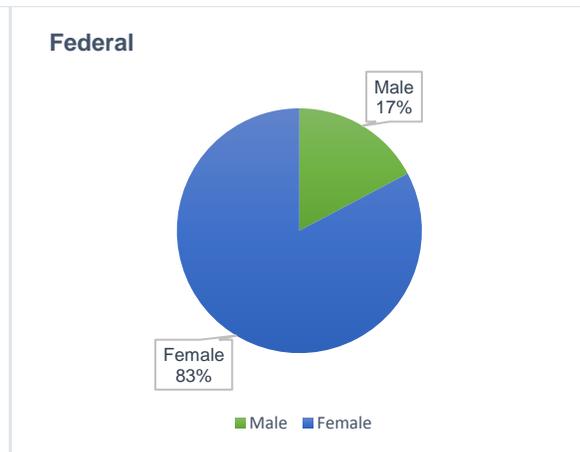


Figure 3. Gender Identity based on the U.S. census response

Race/Ethnicity

Similarly, when participants were asked to report their race/ethnicity, 17.9% of them identified themselves as White [0.8% as White disadvantaged and another 8.8% as White Non-disadvantaged (HRSA designations)], 17.2% identified as African American (with an additional 5.7% identifying as Black), and 9.5% identified as Latin (with an additional 8.8% identifying as Hispanic and another 8.0% as Hispanic/Latino). Although the majority of respondents reported one race, a few people identified as multiracial and multiethnic, which the current U.S. Census race and ethnicity categories do not capture well (Figure 4).

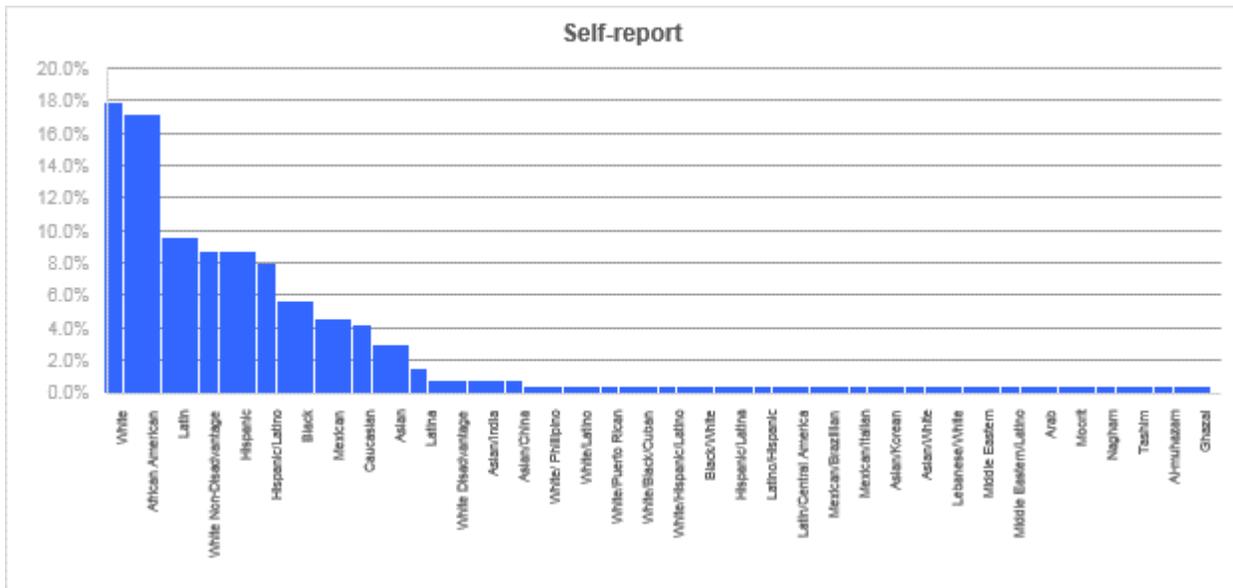
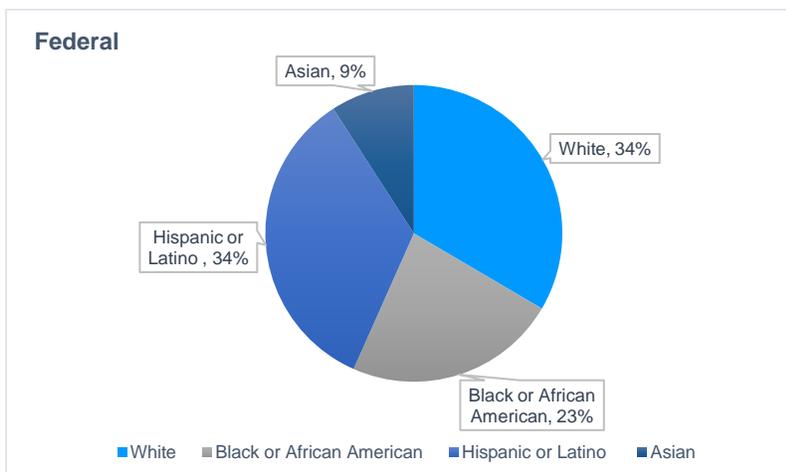


Figure 4. Distribution of Respondents by Self-reported Race/Ethnicity



Currently census questionnaires ask residents in the U.S. about their race and Hispanic ethnicity using a two-question format. This approach may fail to count correctly multiracial and multiethnic respondents. Figure 5 below shows the racial and ethnic breakdown of Chicago AHEC participants when they are required to fit within one of the U.S. Census race/ethnicity categories.

Figure 5. Distribution of Racial Distribution based on the census race/ethnicity question

Educational Advocacy

As part of its community responsiveness and innovation mandates, Chicago AHEC provides educational advocacy support to “underrepresented students who are enrolled in health career programs across the Chicagoland area” and those interested in a health career pathway. Educational advocacy efforts aid students on their health career preparation journey by helping them develop the tools needed to navigate the institutions and agencies they utilize to achieve their education and career goals. Support can include education and career planning, coaching, or tutoring as well as transit and housing referrals. During this period, Chicago AHEC participants engaged with our staff in various ways. For example, one participant sought our advice in progressing in her nursing career as she enrolled in a summer Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. Through previous AHEC activities she had secured a CPR credential and utilized AHEC staff familiar with her skills and goals as reference resources during a job search.

Achievements of FY 2017

Because Chicago AHEC at Health & Medicine is part of a larger federal program, it is required by statute to meet its stated mission. An innovations and “responding to community needs” component of the statutory requirement allows Chicago AHEC to do traditional AHEC work while incorporating our more expansive Health & Medicine vision and values. Chicago AHEC creates and implements innovative strategies that recruit, train, and retain a diverse health workforce from early exposure to late education. We prepare and support individuals from underserved communities for a health career trajectory with opportunities for lifelong learning, stackable credentials, and jobs earning a living and thriving wage, while helping them to navigate the barriers associated with pursuing a health career. This work is directly tied to the long-term maintenance of a diverse healthcare workforce in underserved and underrepresented communities.

Programming

Internship Alumni Milestones

In 2013 and 2014, Chicago AHEC hosted an internship program for community college students. Chicago AHEC continues to support Chicago AHEC Internship Alumni Network members with apprenticeship and other award opportunities as well as educational advocacy support. We are proud of their journeys and accomplishments.



- One of our internship alum earned her Bachelors of Science in Nursing degree in May 2017 and is now a Registered Nurse.
- Another alum is currently a student at Malcolm X College and, in Summer 2017, began working towards her CNA certification.
- One internship alum who received his Associate Degree from Malcolm X College joined us this program year as recipient of the Chicago AHEC Apprenticeship Award after having completed semesters at UIC School of Public Health. Jose Juarez is pictured on page nine (center) with internship alum and administrative assistant Rachel Lackland at the Chicago Jobs Council’s 2017 Annual Meeting. Lackland continues to matriculate at Chicago State University after earning her Associate Degree at Malcolm X College as well.

Working Professional Network Milestone

Our Working Professionals Network is comprised of those health professionals currently engaged in the health workforce who collaborate with Chicago AHEC. Many are members of the Speakers Bureau and are able to network with other members and through Chicago AHEC opportunities. They bring vital expertise, skills, resources, and passion to Chicago AHEC’s work to recruit and support a diverse health workforce focused on the underrepresented and the underserved.



In 2017, Melody Young, a Working Professional Network and AHEC Advisory Board member was honored by the Safer Foundation at its 2017 Spring Gala. In addition to looking at Safer's accomplishments, the organization “acknowledged individuals who have made significant contributions to criminal justice reform.” Melody was honored as a healthcare professional “for her outstanding achievements and relentless efforts to overcoming barriers to employment in the healthcare industry”.

Community Health

A cornerstone of IL AHEC Network's work is the community health initiative and related activities.

CPR Certification

In FY17, Chicago AHEC collaborated with Melody Young—our Working Professionals Network member is also a CPR facilitator—to provide four opportunities for free CPR certification sessions in the community including:

- A session for parents at our community partner's center, Parker Child Parent Center CPS as part of their required parent resource training. Chicago AHEC also contributed a copy of our Health Careers Handbook to the Center for parents that may be interested in health careers.
- Chicago AHEC held free summer CPR Sessions at Chicago Public Library sites across the city. These sessions drew an enthusiastic response which resulted in waiting lists.



CPR certified parents at Parker Child Parent Center in Englewood (top); CPR Sessions at CPL (bottom).

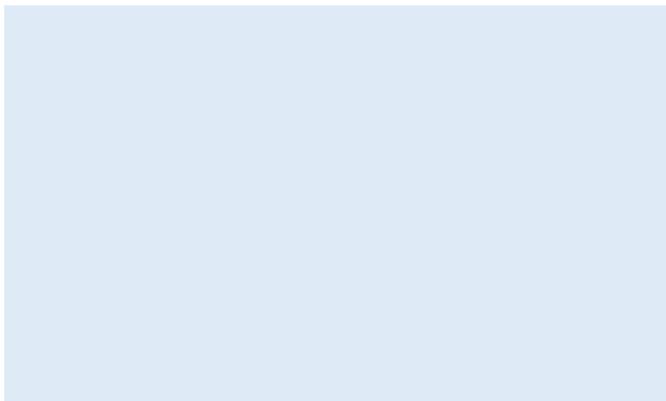
Street First Aid: UMedics Training

- Ujimaa Medics provides Street First Aid training. Chicago AHEC collaborated with the group to provide two training sessions with participation of the Chicago AHEC Speakers Bureau and Working Professionals Network members, Schweitzer Fellows for Life, Health & Medicine staff, and other members of the community. Participants learned how to handle gunshot wounds and asthma related concerns.
- Chicago Public Schools is currently working with Chicago AHEC to provide this training to CPS Health Science Cluster students



Educational Advocacy Project

- In collaboration with a Fellow from the Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellowship, Chicago AHEC developed and operates an Educational Advocacy Hotline
- As part of our summer programming, we were able to provide:
 - Financial Literacy workshops which empowered participants with creative tips to cut costs, new ways to save, and strategies to meet financial goals. Information on working with banks and credit unions as well as understanding financial habits was provided.
 - Career Clinics which offered participants support with resume building, networking tips, connections to job seeking resources and interviewing help.



Chicago Public Schools' Career and Technical Education Health Science Cluster

With support from the Michael Reese Health Trust as a partner in their Youth Workforce Hospital/High School Initiative, Chicago AHEC continued to provide health career speakers to classrooms within CPS and embarked on a Postsecondary Project pilot in three Health Science Cluster schools: Dunbar, North Grand, and Sullivan. The project included a HOSA participation survey with health science instructors and further facilitation of the United States Public Health Services Corp (another HRSA initiative) collaboration with CPS to assist with HOSA activities.

- **Health Careers Classroom Engagement**
 Speakers Bureau members routinely present at CPS Health Science Clusters Schools about health professions and related topics, informing and empowering under-represented populations to pursue health careers.
- **Public Health Job Shadow Day at Health & Medicine Forums**
 Chicago AHEC instituted its first public health job shadow through Health & Medicine’s *Chicago Forum for Justice in Health Policy* event series. Chicago AHEC collaborated with the Center for Health Equity providing two opportunities to CPS Health Science students at forums focused on “Police Violence and Public Health Data” and “Investing in Chicago’s Schools.” Approximately 10 students registered for each event. In addition, 17 students from the Community Youth Development Institute and Chicago State University participated in the forum on police violence.
- **Pre-High School Health Careers Exploration**
 - Sullivan High School’s Freshman Connection: As part of Sullivan High School’s freshman orientation, the Health Science Cluster instructor and Academy Coordinator collaborated on a day of programming for incoming freshmen. Participants learned about biomedical visualization and public health careers.

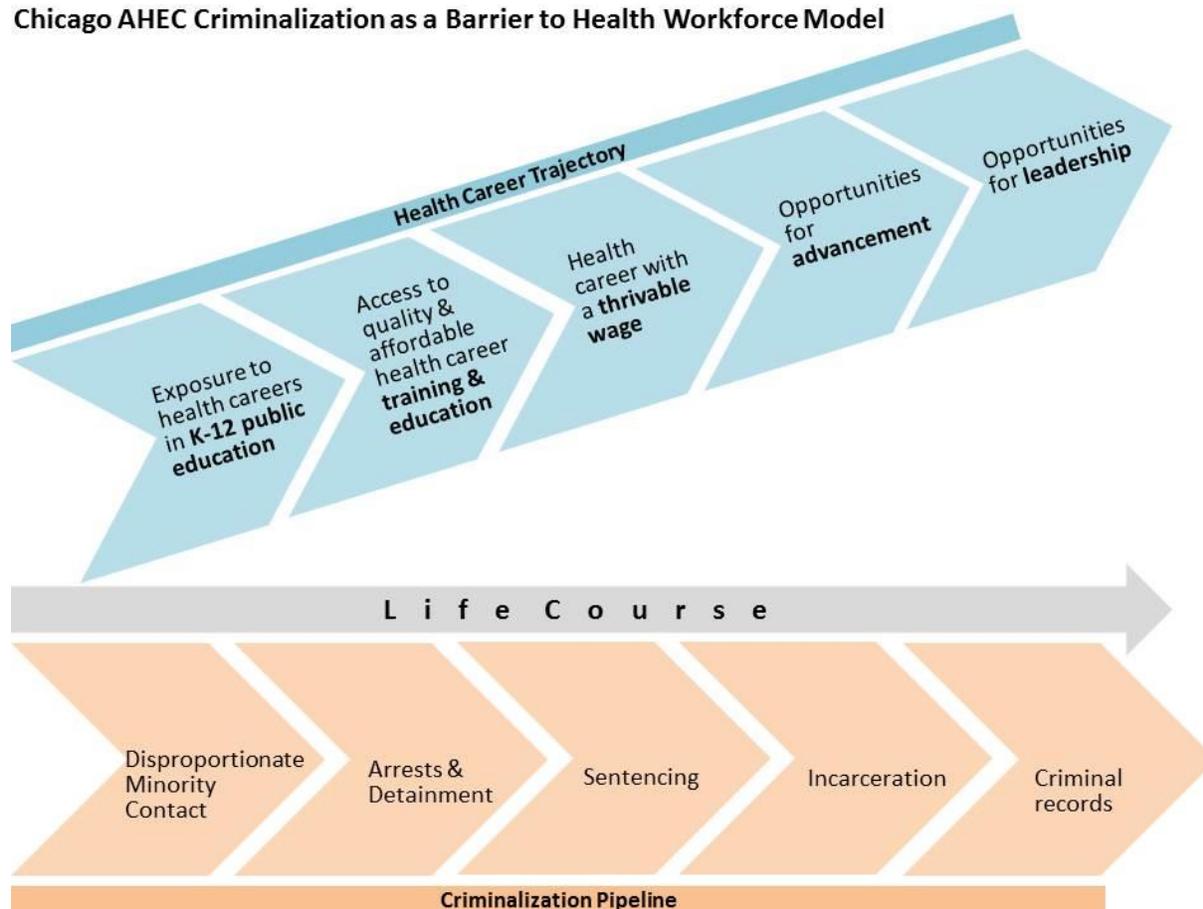


Policy

Criminalization of People of Color as a Barrier to Diversifying the Health Workforce

In late 2017, Chicago AHEC released the first in a series of briefs on the many ways that the criminalization of people of color serve as barriers to diversifying the health workforce. This series has reached many audiences including those engaged in policy advocacy and workforce development as well as healthcare providers. The Chicago AHEC team presented about this work alongside other Health & Medicine colleagues at the DePaul University Social Justice conference in 2017. The issue brief series is available on the Health & Medicine website [here](#).

Chicago AHEC Criminalization as a Barrier to Health Workforce Model



Health Workforce Development Strategic Partnerships and Leadership

Chicago AHEC works with other Health & Medicine colleagues and partners on workforce related policy issues and challenges and is intentional about engaging new workforce specific coalitions and partners, including:

- [Healthy Chicago 2.0 Workforce Collaborative](#)
- [City Colleges of Chicago - Malcolm X College Community Health Workers \(CHW\) Advisory Board](#)
- **Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative**
- [Chicago Jobs Council Workforce Workgroup](#)
- [CAEL Veterans Health Careers Pathways](#)

About the Chicago Area Health Education Center (AHEC)

The Chicago Area Health Education Center is part of the National AHEC Organization (NAO) developed by Congress in 1971 to recruit, train and retain a health professions workforce committed to underserved populations. Locally, within the Illinois AHEC Network, the Chicago AHEC program provides a link between needed health resources and local communities. Chicago AHEC creates and implements innovative strategies that recruit, train, and retain a diverse health workforce from early exposure to late education. We prepare and support individuals from underserved communities for a health career trajectory with opportunities for lifelong learning, stackable credentials, and jobs earning a living and thriving wage, while helping them to navigate the barriers associated with pursuing a health career. This work is directly tied to the long-term maintenance of a diverse healthcare workforce in underserved and underrepresented communities.

About Health & Medicine Policy Research Group

Health & Medicine is a Chicago based non-profit working to improve the health of all people in Illinois by promoting health equity. Founded in 1981 by Dr. Quentin Young, it was formed as an action-oriented policy center—nimble, independent, and focused on regional health issues. Health & Medicine’s mission is to promote social justice and challenge inequities in health and health care. It conducts research, educates and collaborates with other groups to advocate policies and impact health systems to improve the health status of all people. Health & Medicine has successfully developed health policy recommendations and implementation strategies for different public and private entities, earning the trust of the legislature, advocates, the media, researchers and policymakers at all levels of government in Illinois to become the region’s “honest broker” on healthcare policy matters. Learn more at www.hmprg.org.

