



Chicago AHEC FY2018 Annual Report

September 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018

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, 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.



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CPS Student from the Career and Technical Education Schools on a Simulation Lab Field Trip with Chicago AHEC/Speakers Bureau at Malcom X College.

A Note from the Former Director

FY2017-2018

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. 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 including “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 who are otherwise involved with the justice system, and other underrepresented populations in the workforce. These strategies should also utilize interprofessional education to advance a team-based health care delivery system. This comprehensive and coordinated strategy requires stakeholders representing public, private, and community interests.

In FY18, Chicago AHEC continued to focus 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 (CTE) 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

Former Director, Chicago AHEC



Community workers attended a CPR Session with CPR facilitator Melody Young to learn about first aid, signs of strokes, and how to use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

Overview

In this report, you will find information about the many activities, people served, and major achievements of Chicago AHEC during FY 2018 (September 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018).

Activities

From September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2018, 736 people participated in 44 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 77 Chicago community areas and 35% reported they came from the Loop, near South Side (zip code 60628), Rogers Park (60626), and Bridgeport (60608). The total number of hours for program activities was 134.87. As participants engaged in an event, individual record and evaluation forms were administered. The response rate for evaluation forms was 65%.

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 a health career at the beginning versus after the event, the Chicago AHEC event increased health career interest by 11%. Also, only 35% of participants had their CPR certification prior to participating AHEC events and after the events there was 65%.

Chicago AHEC Speakers Bureau and Working Professionals Network members contributed 129.29 hours to Chicago AHEC work in FY 18.

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. The Chicago AHEC Internship Program helped to expose the interns to public health approaches and professional development. 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

Collaborating with many outside groups, Chicago AHEC leverages Health & Medicine’s broad policy expertise to advance our work, collaborating with program areas like the Illinois ACEs Response Collaborative, the Center for Long-Term Care Reform, Health & Medicine’s Court-Involved Youth Project, and others such as:

- **Health Literacy and Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition (CCLC)**
- **Literacy and the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP: CATCH-ON @ Rush)**
- **Parker Child Parent Center (PCPC)**
- **Women Employed (WE)**
- **Safer Foundation**
- **Shriver Center**
- **After School Matters**
- **Cook County Health and Hospitals System**
- **Alternative Schools Network**

- Youth Connections Charter Schools
- Health & Medicine Initiatives:

Demographics

Zip codes

Chicago AHEC provides services to a variety of locations including the south, west and northside of Chicago. These zip codes diversify our demographics because participants represented 40 different zip codes. 35.2% of participants are from the same five zip codes: 60626, 60628, 60608, 60609, and 60636.

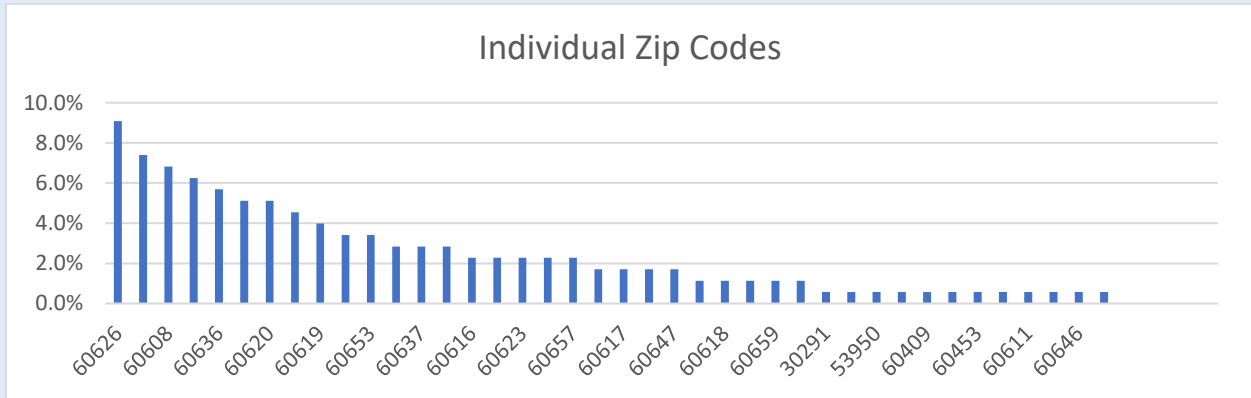


Figure 1. Zip codes of different neighborhoods

Age

Since events were mainly held at high schools and colleges, most participants (46.7%) were less than 17 years old and 53.2% were between 15-24 years of age. (figure 2)

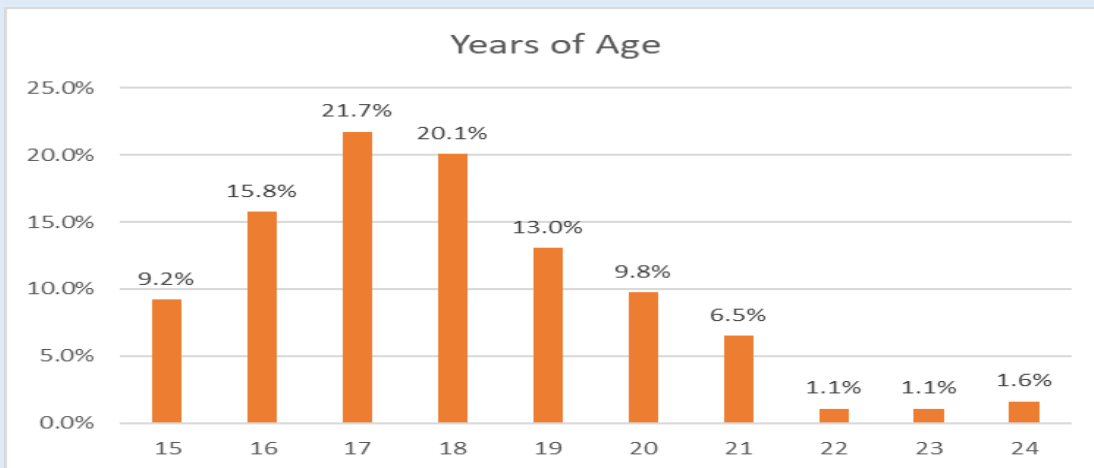


Figure 2. Age range of participants with Chicago AHEC

Gender

At Chicago AHEC, when data collecting is in process at events such as our 2018 summer programming (CPR, Career Clinics), we allow participants to self-identify their race and ethnicity, with no constriction. This makes the participants want to be more invested in our program, willing to give more information instead of feeling like someone is forcing them to do this. The same thing goes for gender. We do not acknowledge a gender binary (male or female) and we prefer for participants to self-identify their gender. Once again it's a level of comfortability among Chicago AHEC staff and event participants. Overall, females (88.2%) make up a larger proportion of Chicago AHEC participants compared to men (11.3%), as demonstrated in Figure 3. However, when asked to self-report their gender, 0.5% of respondents reported identifying as gender non-binary Figure 3

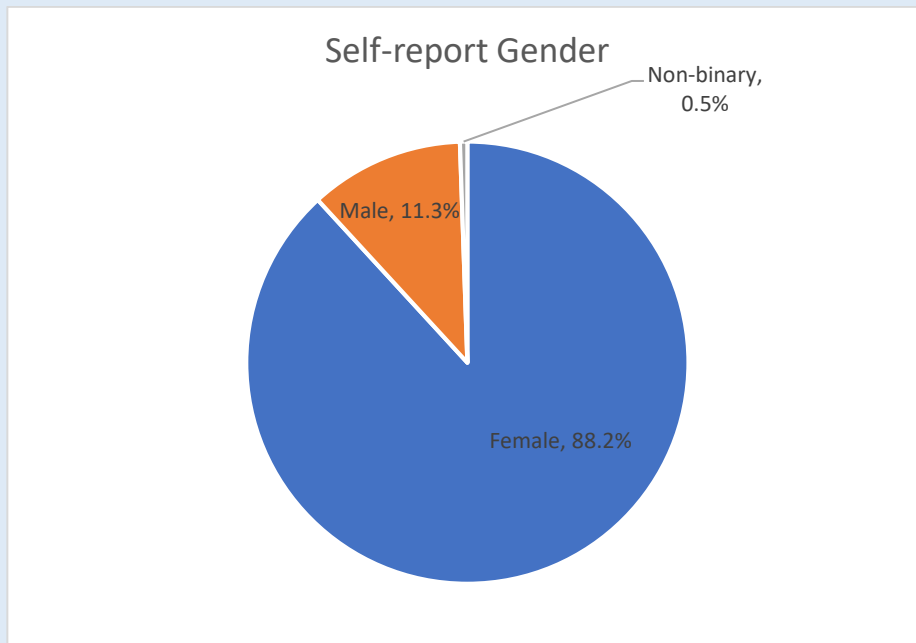
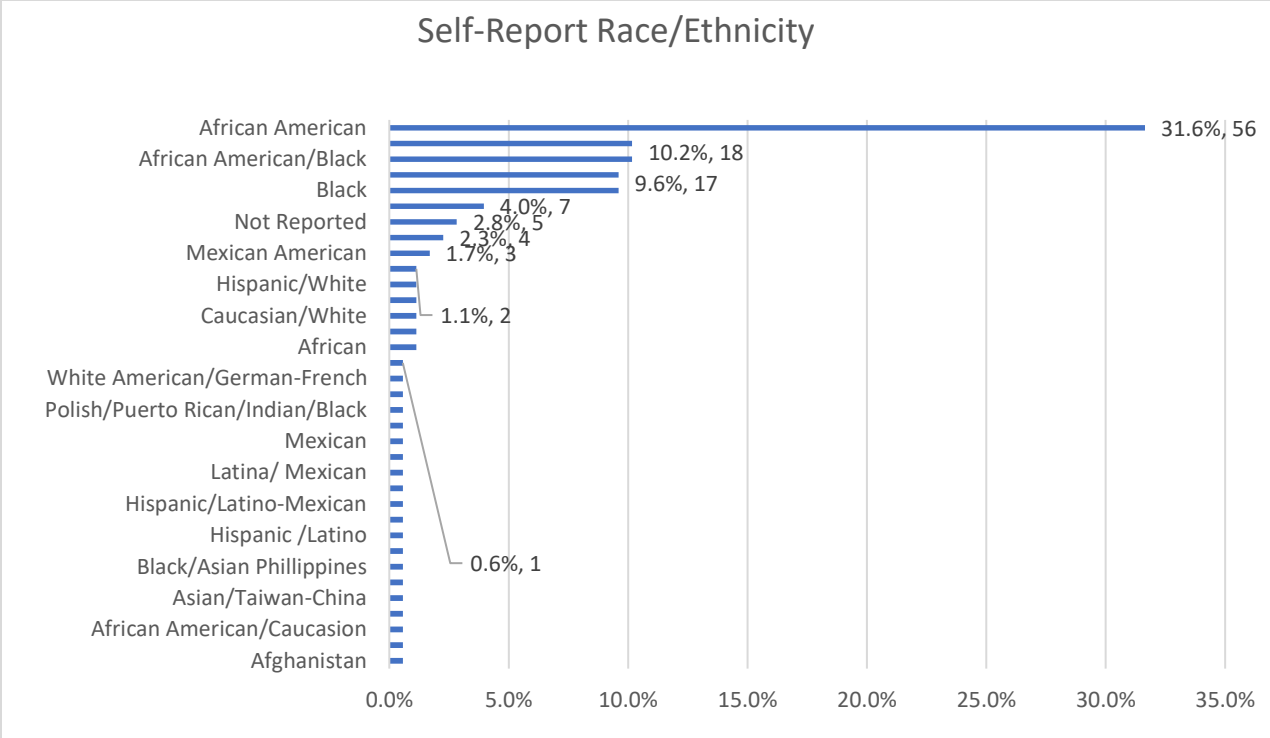


Figure 3. Participants who self-reported their gender

Race/Ethnicity

Similarly, when participants were asked to report their race/ethnicity, 1.1% identified as White, 31.6% identified as African American (with an additional 31.6% identifying as Black), and 2.3% identified as Latin (with an additional 1.1% identifying as Hispanic). Although the majority of respondents reported one race, some identified as multiracial and multiethnic, and a small percentage did not report at all. 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 correctly count multiracial and multiethnic respondents.

Figure 4 Participants who self-reported their race (see next page)



Achievements of FY 2018

Because Chicago AHEC 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

Programming

Working Professional Network Milestones

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. Our Speakers Bureau links professionals representing diverse health careers—from nursing and medicine, to public health and psychology—to career seekers to inform, motivate and empower them to pursue attainable health career goals. We give students an evaluation after speakers discuss their professions. Feedback included:

“I am very interested in a health career because I like helping people and it would be great to travel the world and help others in different countries.”

“I can see myself being interested in health career but as an additional career.”

From 2016, we introduced health professionals as career speakers to over 500 Chicago Public School students at 14 Career and Technical Education Schools such as Dunbar, Sullivan, Gage Park, and North Grand. Speakers included medical students, social workers, a phlebotomist and a Biomedical Illustrator. The Speakers Bureau provides members with networking opportunities both through their relationships with each other and through our wider Chicago AHEC opportunities. They bring vital expertise, skills, resources, and passion to Chicago AHEC's work.

Chicago AHEC Milestones

Chicago AHEC continues to support Chicago AHEC Interns and staff members with apprenticeship and other award opportunities as well as educational advocacy support. We are proud of their journeys and accomplishments.

- Tiffany Ford, former Policy Analyst (on left), speaking with an attendee at the 2018 Displacement Forum, departed from Health and Medicine to continue her studies and is currently working towards her PhD in Public Policy, with a concentration in Social Policy at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy in Baltimore. Congratulations (almost) Dr. Ford!
- Rachel Lackland (on right) is an internship alum pictured below at the Health and Medicine Gala Event with former Policy Analyst Erica Martinez. In FY18 she graduated from Chicago State University, receiving her Bachelors in Criminal Justice with Honors in Spring of 2018. She also received a promotion as to Chicago AHEC Program Coordinator. Go Rachel!



Tiffany Ford (left)



Rachel Lackland (left)

Community Health

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

CPR Certification

In FY18, Chicago AHEC collaborated with Melody Young—a Working Professionals Network member and CPR facilitator—to provide four opportunities for free CPR certification sessions in the community including free summer CPR Sessions at Chicago Public Library sites across the city. These sessions drew an enthusiastic response which resulted in waiting lists. Melody conducted a total of 6 sessions, each with twelve or more participants.



Participant on the left with CPR trainer Melody Young on the right.

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 Forum**
Chicago AHEC held a public health job shadow day through Health & Medicine's *Chicago Forum for Justice in Health Policy* event series. Chicago AHEC collaborated with the Center for Public Health Equity to provide opportunities to CPS Health Science students at a forum focused on "The Chicago Forum for Justice in Health Policy: Creating A Health Equity Agenda for Chicago's Elections." Approximately 10 CPS students registered for the event.



Jada H. at Dunbar (in front) presenting to students about social work.



CPS Health Science students at a HMPRG Forum having a table discussion with other participants about a Health Equity Agenda for Chicago's Elections.

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. Chicago AHEC participants engage 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 her job search.

Educational Advocacy Projects

Chicago AHEC connected working professionals with those returning to school and trying to find a job to help provide information. Chicago AHEC provided sessions with participation of the Chicago AHEC staff, community leaders, and young adults. Participants learned how to write resumes, practice interviewing, and how to start a business. Below are the projects we have been working on for the past few summers:

- Career Clinics
- Financial Literacy
- Financial Aid
- Umedics (Ujima Medics and Urban Emergency First Response)

(Next page for pictures)



Chicago AHEC provided sessions with AHEC staff, community leaders, and young adults on Financial Literacy, UMedics, and Career Coaching.

Upcoming Initiatives

AHEC Scholars

AHEC Scholars is a program for health professions students interested in enhancing their education by gaining additional knowledge and experience in areas experiencing a shortage of health professionals. This program will give students opportunities to refine their career choices and learn how health professionals from different disciplines can work together. The program is being launched at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), however any Chicago area students who fit the program requirements will be considered. In the fall of 2018, Chicago AHEC staff conducted a mini focus group at NEIU to gain feedback on what students want from this program. We found out through many more focus groups that students need assistance in job placement, career coaching, and mentorship. This set the stage in how we will help these students continue to be successful and gain useful resources throughout their careers. We plan on launching AHEC Scholars in the Fall of 2019.

Policy

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

Released in 2017, Chicago AHEC launched the first in a series of briefs on the many ways that the criminalization of people of color serves 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 <http://www.hmprg.org/Blog+Posts/AHECCriminalization>

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. We help to prepare individuals for a career trajectory with opportunities for life-long learning, stackable credentials, and jobs/positions earning a living wage, focusing on individuals from underserved and

underrepresented communities and delivered within a framework focusing on the social determinants of health, seeking a just health system which sees health care as a human right, part of the social justice endeavor, and challenging health inequity. These partners include:

- [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](#)
- [Chicago Public Schools \(CPS\)](#)
- **Adult Education Providers**
- [Archdiocese Chicago Catholic Schools](#)
- [Cabrini Green Legal Aid](#)
- [First Defense Legal Aid](#)

Next Steps

Overall, Chicago AHEC is happy to be part of so many collaborations and is excited to help the community in the best way possible. As mentioned before, Chicago AHEC works to recruit, train, and retain a diverse health workforce from early exposure to late education. We have prepared and supported individuals from underserved communities for a health career trajectory with opportunities for lifelong learning, stackable credentials, and jobs earning a living and thriving wage. We are continuing to navigate the barriers associated with pursuing a health career. Everyone deserves new and better opportunities to thrive, succeed, and become positive role models for other students, health professionals and the community at large.

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