



New York State
Area Health Education
Center System

UPDATE

Hudson Mohawk AHEC Building on Success of MedQuest Camp

Jill Walls, Hudson Mohawk AHEC Program Director

Building on the success of its 2008 MedQuest Camp, the Hudson Mohawk Area Health Education Center (HM AHEC) is now finalizing plans for this summer's MedQuest Camp.

Like its predecessor, the 2009 MedQuest Camp will be organized around the New York State AHEC System's mission by:

- Introducing students to health careers,
- Connecting medical students to the community, and
- Demonstrating a tangible commitment by the participating health care facility to support and improve the community.

MedQuest Camp introduces high school students to health careers through an intensive, multi-day experience. It is part of the AHEC pipeline strategy to recruit the next generation of the health care workforce, especially from underserved communities.

The 10 students in the 2008 MedQuest Camp spent 3 days last summer at Albany Medical College, which hosted the event. AMC medical students developed the itinerary and served as Camp Leaders, guiding the participating high school students through hands-on activities in the academic environment of a top-rated medical school.

Diana Zentko, a third-year medical student, served as MedQuest Camp Coordinator and worked with HM AHEC to develop all the health career exploration activities. She spent over 125 hours in her fall and spring semesters to create a multidisciplinary, hands-on experience. Diana and the 2 other medical student Camp Leaders not only educated the MedQuest Camp attendees about careers in health care, but they also learned about the communities and lives of the



MedQuest Camp 2008 MedFlight Session: Camp participant Rachel envisions a career working on the MedFlight helicopter

participating high school students.

MedQuest Camp participants complete a competitive application process that

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Catskill Hudson AHEC Awarded \$200,000 State Grant for HealthMatch Recruitment Project

Kathryn R. Reed, MHA, Catskill Hudson AHEC Executive Director

HealthMatch, an innovative and community-specific health professional recruitment service, has received a \$200,000 award from the Health Care Efficiency and Affordability Law for New Yorkers (HEAL NY) Grant Program. HealthMatch, developed by the Catskill Hudson Area Health Education Center (CH AHEC), is a collaborative effort that brings the

commitment of health care, business and civic leaders together in order to provide increased local access to quality health care.

CH AHEC recognized the vital need to recruit and retain qualified health care professionals to areas throughout New York State. As a result, HealthMatch



was established to increase the number of health care professionals who move to and work in our communities. By

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Eastern Region Office: Welcome and Thank You

Mary J. Sienkiewicz, MBA, New York State AHEC System Associate Director

It is a pleasure to welcome Henry Pohl, MD, to the New York State AHEC System as Eastern Region Medical Director.

Dr. Pohl is the Vice Dean for Academic Administration at Albany Medical College. He is very familiar with the New York State AHEC System, having served on the coalition that established the Hudson Mohawk AHEC in 2001. He recently completed his term as a founding member of the Hudson Mohawk AHEC Board of Directors and served 2 years as Board President. Dr. Pohl officially assumed

the post of Eastern Region Medical Director in September.

The NYS AHEC System also expresses appreciation to Mary Smith, PhD, who completed 6 years as AHEC Medical School Liaison with the Eastern Region Office in September. Dr. Smith is Professor and Vice Chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine and Director of Academic Programs at Albany Medical College. Her creative approach to medical student education included opportunities for the Hudson Mohawk AHEC and Catskill Hudson AHEC in the Medical



Mary Smith, PhD and Henry Pohl, MD

College's Predoctoral training award through the federal Health Resources and Services Administration.

Hudson Mohawk AHEC Collaborates to Help Emergency Medical Services in Adirondacks

Jill Walls, Hudson Mohawk AHEC Program Director

The Adirondack Mountains are a rustic home for some and a vacation spot for many others. Many communities are isolated, affecting health care in ways that include limited educational resources for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers.

Emergency Medical Services are an essential component of the health care system, and a 2004 report by the Adirondack Rural Health Network (ARHN) indicated improved EMS access to be an issue needing attention. Difficulties in maintaining skills and lack of training opportunities have been identified as contributing to shortages of EMS personnel.

An innovative solution was created when the Hudson Mohawk Area Health Education Center (HM AHEC) joined with ARHN and 2 other community partners — Albany Medical Center Emergency Medicine Services (AMC EMS) and the Mountain Lakes Emergency Medical Services Council (ML EMS) — to develop *NYEMTinfo.com*,

a web-based directory that outlines continuing educational resources available in the region for current and prospective EMS providers.

On July 4, 2005, *NYEMTinfo.com* was launched to:

- Provide information regarding becoming an EMS provider by outlining the educational requirements needed to become an EMS responder or paramedic;
- Communicate to EMS personnel the dates, times, locations, and distances (from a user's location) of available courses and resources for basic training, certification, and recertification;
- Identify key contacts in the area for regional EMS education;
- Create a secure location for credentialed organizations to post training courses and events to the website; and
- Offer a user feedback form to gather demographic data, provide an evaluation of *NYEMTinfo.com*, assess training needs, and help document its geographic reach.

To date, *NYEMTinfo.com* has over 1,000 registered users and between 65 and 100 courses listed on any given day. The most recent *NYEMTinfo.com* quarterly evaluation reported: 5,816 visits to the website; an average of 65 visits a day; 6 pages viewed during an average visit, resulting in over 33,800 page views; and 70% of visitors viewed more than one page on the site. During the quarter, 73% of visitors were categorized as "regular users."

The measures have indicated that 21% of visitors were referred to *NYEMTinfo.com* by another website, and these referral visitors viewed over twice as many pages as did those referred by a search engine. This indicates that partner organizations such as health care organizations, fire departments, emergency services, and county health departments across the service region provide an important link to *NYEMTinfo.com* via their websites.

Not only is *NYEMTinfo.com* innovative in its

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Eastern Regional AHECs Collaborate on Nursing Summit 2009

Katherine Doyle, Catskill Hudson AHEC Marketing and Program Coordinator

“Use of Technologies for Teaching and Staff Development” will be the theme of Nursing Summit 2009, which will be held this summer by the Catskill Hudson Area Health Education Center (CH AHEC) in collaboration with the Hudson Mohawk Area Health Education Center (HM AHEC).

Nursing Summit 2009 will be held August 6 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the New York State Nurses Association Conference Center in Latham. It will

be the fifth Nursing Summit, an event that has earned wide recognition for CH AHEC within the nursing community of its 11-county region. Last year’s Nursing Summit, “Topics in Developing Staff Excellence,” attracted 66 attendees, including nursing and staff development educators as well as those involved in health care education and training. Attendee evaluation-form comments from last year’s Summit included, “Excellent learning day!” and “I have some great ideas to incorporate into

my practice!”

Nursing Summit 2009 represents the latest in a series of grant and program collaborations between the Eastern Region AHECs, which have included the Nursing Summit 2007 “Online Curriculum Development Workshop” and the Emergency Medical Services Leadership Academy in 2005.

For information on Nursing Summit 2009 and other CH AHEC programs, visit: www.catskillhudsonahec.org.

Sending Students and Residents to National Conference Promotes Family Medicine Careers

Mary F. Smith, PhD, Albany Medical College Director of Academic Programs

One of the ways the New York State Area Health Education Center (NYS AHEC) System helps meet workforce needs is by supporting efforts promoting primary care. One such initiative at Albany Medical College (AMC) offers a notable example.

Each summer, AMC faculty, students and residents attend the Family Medicine Residents and Students National Conference, sponsored by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). The conference provides a unique opportunity for students and residents to begin networking with programs and employers.

Our Family Medicine Residency Program Director, Dr. Neil

Mitnick, introduces medical students to AMC alumni and other program directors and faculty so they can begin

to familiarize themselves with one another before the process of residency interviewing begins. If students are interested in rural opportunities or inner city programs caring for the

program strengths and weaknesses. Residents and students also have the opportunity to attend workshops and seminars of interest to them.

Attending this national conference is one way we try to open students’ eyes to the joys of family medicine, and we thank AHEC for supporting such efforts.

This year’s conference, being held July 30 to August 1 in Kansas City, Mo., has adopted health policy as its theme. Last summer’s theme was “Where Will Family Medicine Take You?” with a focus on “Global Health: Humanitarian Efforts and Health Opportunities at Home and Abroad.”

Residents attended sessions on sports medicine, women’s health, research during residency, and oral health in primary care.



Albany Medical College participants at the Family Medicine Residents and Students National Conference included Scott Pregont, MD (resident), Sean Roche, MD (faculty), Neil Mitnick, DO (Residency Program Director), Faith Cruz, MD (resident), Theresa Weinman, (staff), and Beth Locke, MD (resident).

underserved, they meet with these programs, discuss electives for their final year of schooling, and also discuss

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assesses their interest in a health care career and willingness to learn new things. Applicants from underserved areas receive preference — 60% of the MedQuest Camp attendees were from medically or educationally underserved areas.

The 2008 MedQuest Camp participants enjoyed being on the campus of a medical school as well as visiting various departments at Albany Medical Center. Professionals at the Medical Center and students and faculty at the Albany Medical College were gracious and educational hosts, providing not only their time but also insight into a variety of different departments and units.

One participating student said, “I enjoyed the camp a lot; it answered a lot of my questions about occupations in the health field...”

All participants were surveyed at the beginning and end of MedQuest Camp to determine their interest in entering a career in health care. The proportion saying they were “very likely” to pursue a health care career increased from 60% at the beginning to 90% in the post-test. Some of the things that participants liked best about MedQuest Camp included:

- “Seeing new things and being able to talk to experienced health professionals”
- “I met new people and got to explore new things”
- “I like that I got more insight on the career I am interested in”

The highest rated sessions during the Camp were the MedFlight Helicopter visit and the Medical Ethics session, where an actual case was vigorously debated. The participants also enjoyed the Emergency Room visit, meeting with two surgeons and watching surgeries, and casting one another’s arms while learning about First Aid. Other high points included the radiology session, standardized patient sessions, the Birthing Center visit, the



MedQuest Camp 2008 Casting Session: Camp participants, Edward and Nija learn how to make a cast from Camp Coordinator, Diana

Road to Success presentation, and the Medical Jeopardy game that wrapped up MedQuest Camp.

In an effort to determine MedQuest Camp’s impact, HM AHEC plans to capture longitudinal data on participants, including plans after high school and ultimately if they choose a career in health care. Participants will be surveyed annually to determine their current and future plans. HM AHEC has maintained contact with MedQuest Camp attendees, providing them with information about careers, upcoming HM AHEC programs, and planning tools/resources for graduating seniors.

MedQuest applications are expected to be posted in March. For information, visit: www.gohealthcare.org/programs.asp.

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approach to reaching rural communities, it also can be updated as enhancements are identified. To date the following upgrades have been implemented to improve the website:

- Course Registration: tools and features to enhance the site for users and ease the process for registering for EMT courses.
- Reports: creation of a simpler process to summarize and report the use of *NYEMTinfo.com*, including reports of the number of registered users, courses

HealthMatch

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bringing in health care professionals, community-based health care is improved, travel outside the community for care is reduced, the local economy is stimulated, and a healthier workforce is cultivated. There is a true return on investment when communities commit to HealthMatch because HealthMatch is committed to the communities it serves.

This funding will enable CH AHEC to take important steps to increase the number of health professionals and connect them with the communities in need.

The \$200,000 grant is awarded under the Local Health Planning Initiative of the HEAL NY Program. This grant program is intended to stimulate and subsidize the development of multi-stakeholder, collaborative local health planning efforts aimed at promoting healthy communities by identifying community health care needs and aligning the health care delivery system with those needs.

Grant funds will be used to launch this innovative approach to health professional recruitment as a demonstration project, with the goal of replicating this service across the CH AHEC 11-county region and throughout New York State.

posted, visitors to the website, and a mailing list of all registered users.

- Instructor Credential: tool to ensure that course postings are only done by approved EMT course instructors.
- Zip Code Database: tool to effectively track usage by ZIP code and to compute distance of each course from a user’s location.

Future plans include increasing the service area of *NYEMTinfo.com* and collaborating with additional partners that reflect a more extensive geographic service region.