



Serving Elmore, Montgomery and Pike Counties.



AHEC Program Highlight The Central Alabama Neighborhood Health Initiative

The [Southeast Alabama AHEC Program \(SEAAHEC\)](#) consistently works to update their recurring programs and health initiatives to better serve the community throughout Alabama. This month we are highlighting SEAAHEC's [Central Alabama Neighborhood Health Initiative \(CANHI\)](#).

In July 2021, the Southeast Alabama AHEC, along with the City of Montgomery and [other grant partners](#), were awarded \$3.9 Million by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' - Office of Minority Health as part of the federal initiative to Advance Health Literacy to Enhance Equitable Community Responses to COVID-19. The Central Alabama Neighborhood Health Initiative (CANHI) was founded to collaboratively increase the rates of COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, increase health literacy, improve patient experience, and patient-provider relations in Elmore, Montgomery, and Pike Counties. The grant focuses primarily on addressing disparities related to health literacy among minority populations within the service area.

Activities include:

- **Health literature distribution.** It has become increasingly important for people to have access to factual health-based literature. At distribution sites within the grant service area, literature, is readily available to any individual seeking knowledge on a given health-related topic, including COVID-19.. A variety of credible sources including the CDC, NIH, etc, provide the health-based literature to these communities. Distribution sites include schools, colleges, businesses, clinics, and social service organizations.
- **Health literacy workshops.** SEAAHEC's Program Manager; Ayanna Sterling, conducts health literacy workshops which focuses on empowering community members to ask questions, identify their health care advocates, and identify credible sources of health information.
- **Health literacy training opportunities.** In collaboration with Health Literacy Expert [Dr. Michael Paasche-Orlow](#), Health Literacy training has been offered to all grant partners, AL AHEC center CHWs, AL AHEC Scholars, and AL AHEC center staff. Sessions provide participants with the opportunity to practice the skills being taught.
- **Community health workers (CHWs).** There are currently 14 CHWs serving as Vaccine Ambassadors for the Health Literacy Program. All CHWs must be vaccinated and receive online training on health literacy-related topics.
- **Health events.** CHWs and SEAAHEC's Program Manager, Ayanna Sterling, maintain a regular presence at community events, where they distribute literature and CANHI swag, field surveys, and promote the grant offerings and activities. The goal is to bring social service providers to communities with limited access to resources. This helps to mitigate accessibility challenges and allows community members to encounter resources that they may not know exist or have access to otherwise.
- **Healthcare surveys.** The CANHI evaluation team developed a Healthcare survey to field questions related to patient-provider communication. The data collected is then used to develop health literacy training and continuing education opportunities for providers. Anyone can complete the survey by visiting the [website](#) or by texting 'HEALTH' to 69083.
- **SMS Text Messaging Campaign.** One of the most distinguishing components of CANHIs activities is the implementation of a text messaging campaign facilitated by Leafpoint. Anyone completing a survey can opt-in to the campaign to receive valuable information about COVID-19 and CANHI activities.

[Learn More](#)



AHEC Scholar Highlight Callie Mims

The Alabama AHEC Scholars Program enhances the education and training of current health professions students committed to serving Alabama's rural and underserved populations. AHEC Scholars dedicate their future careers to improving health and health care, community service, and improving their own knowledge and skills while working with other professionals in team-based care.

This month we enthusiastically highlight AHEC Scholar Callie Mims from Rockledge, FL. Callie is a Doctoral Candidate of Clinical Psychology and 2nd year AHEC Scholar, Class of 2023.

"AHEC has been a wonderful learning opportunity and a valuable supplement to my academic career. As someone whose goal is to work with patients with eating disorders, I knew for a while that interdisciplinary experiences would be invaluable, but I struggled with finding opportunities to work with individuals in other health disciplines. Southern Alabama AHEC, in both its didactic and experiential training opportunities, has given me the opportunity to work with students in a wide variety of health programs. In addition, working with individuals in other disciplines to provide health education to rural and underserved populations through experiential training gave me the space to recognize not just how important interdisciplinary work was for my own education, but how much it enhanced our ability to provide holistic care to these populations. The networking opportunities provided to me by the program and facilitated by our fantastic program director, Md. Ikbal Parveg, has also been extremely beneficial. Meeting with the Statewide AHEC Advisory Council in Birmingham allowed me to share my experiences with those in charge of program advising and enhancement as well as highlight the great work that Southern Alabama AHEC is involved in. I am exceedingly proud to be an AHEC Scholar."

[Learn more about the South Alabama AHEC Scholars Program](#)

Get to Know the AHEC Team Earl Johnson

In January 2022, Earl Johnson joined the Statewide AHEC Program Office after six years of service at the West Central AHEC. Mr. Johnson is a cattle farmer and native of Uniontown, Alabama. He attended the University of Alabama where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Public Health with a concentration in Health Education. Earl is a product of the Blackbelt Health Scholars, Rural Health Scholars and Rural Minority Health Scholars programs provided by the University of Alabama College of Community Health Sciences.



"Coming from a small community I have a firsthand understanding of what it means to live in an underserved community. This is what inspired me to pursue a career in which I could help people as well as effectively impact similar communities."

Mr. Johnson's experience includes interning as Assistant Executive Director at the Good Samaritan Clinic in Northport, AL. The Good Samaritan Clinic provides free healthcare services to low-income and uninsured individuals. Johnson also brings 5 years of experience with West Central Alabama AHEC where he has designed and implemented numerous high school enrichment programs including the Health Professions Academy which is a year-long high school enrichment program providing students with ACT prep, ACT waivers, mentoring, free dual enrollment, and exposure to various health careers and academic institutes. Johnson has a dedication to providing students insight into health careers and the resources needed to be a successful health practitioner in our underserved rural communities.

About Alabama AHEC Statewide



The Alabama Statewide Area Health Education Center is dedicated to recruiting, training, and retaining the Alabama healthcare workforce while increasing diversity among health professionals, broadening the distribution of the health workforce, enhancing the quality of care, and improving health care delivery to rural and underserved populations in Alabama.