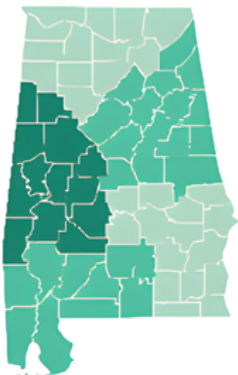


**2024-  
2025**

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**Annual  
REPORT**

ALABAMA  
AHEC



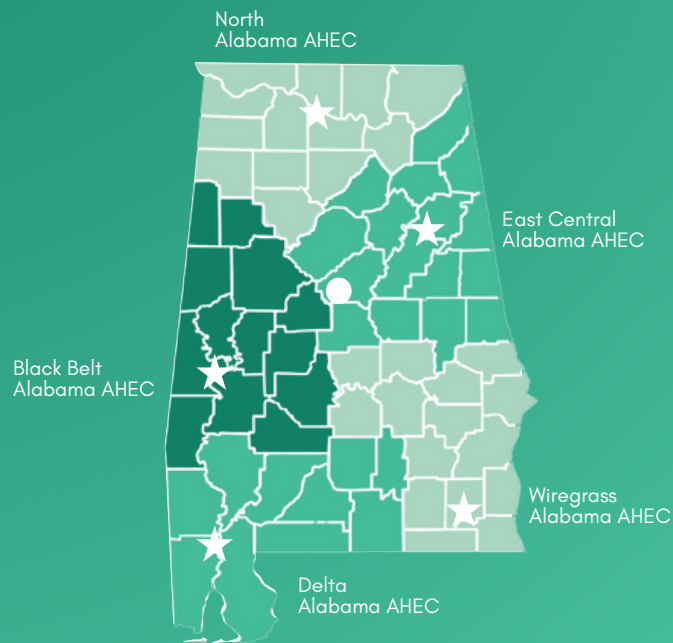
Alabama  
**AHEC**  
NETWORK

A green EKG (heart rate) line graphic that starts under the word 'NETWORK' and extends to the right, ending under the 'AHEC' text.



# Alabama AHEC Network

Our education, recruitment and retention programs serve as a bridge between academics and communities, connecting students to health careers, health professionals to communities and communities to better care.



1 Program Office ●

5 Regional AHEC Centers ★

## Alabama AHEC Network Programs Build and Support the Healthcare Workforce Alabama Needs

### + Healthcare Pathways Programs

Supports high school and college students on their paths to becoming healthcare professionals, building a future healthcare workforce that is representative of the communities it serves. through strategic partnerships with four-year institutions, community colleges, and non-profit organizations.

### + Alabama AHEC Scholars

A two-year multidisciplinary program giving graduate-level health professions students a unique opportunity to practice hands-on training and gain experience providing care in rural or under-resourced areas.

### + Continuing Education

Approved by the Alabama Board of Nursing to provide Alabama nursing continuing education contact hours, underscores our commitment to supporting the ongoing professional development of nursing professionals across the state.

### + Community Health Worker Network

Strengthens efforts to connect and support CHWs across the state, as they play a vital role in improving health outcomes by serving as trusted liaisons between healthcare providers and under-resourced populations.

### + Alabama Preceptor Tax Incentive Program

Administers a tax credit to uncompensated healthcare professions preceptors in our State. The goal of APTIP is to increase medical student training in rural and underserved counties in Alabama.

### + Alabama Office of Healthcare Workforce

Analyzes data and provides policy-relevant information about the healthcare workforce in Alabama.

# MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM OFFICE

"As we reflect on the past year, I am proud to share the progress and partnerships that have shaped the Alabama AHEC Network's 2024-2025 program year. Our five regional centers and statewide office have continued to advance healthcare access, education, and workforce development across Alabama, especially in rural and medically under-resourced communities. At the core of our mission is a commitment to strengthening health professionals' education and training, supporting the recruitment and retention of providers, and encouraging community-based learning and service. This report offers a snapshot of how our mission is being brought to life across the state.

Among our key statewide accomplishments is the successful implementation of the **Alabama Preceptor Tax Incentive Program** (APTIP). Established in 2023 and administered by the Alabama AHEC Network Statewide Program Office, APTIP helps address provider shortages by supporting clinical training in rural and underserved communities. This year, we registered 600 preceptors, certified rotations for 75 preceptors, and facilitated over \$81,000 in tax credits. With 20 academic programs across 10 institutions engaged, we are working with our advisory group to amend legislation to expand eligibility and better meet workforce demands.

Each regional center continues to contribute significantly to the communities they serve:

- **Black Belt Alabama AHEC**, in partnership with the University of West Alabama, successfully transitioned its CNA training program to a more flexible ITA model. This shift expanded access for out-of-school youth, resulting in 24 participants completing training and clinical rotations in local nursing homes. These efforts directly address the region's healthcare workforce gaps.
- **Delta Alabama AHEC**, hosted by the Mobile Area Education Foundation, built a solid foundation while also earning national recognition. As one of only two centers nationwide selected for the NTC Lupus Pilot, Delta Alabama AHEC is promoting the SELF app, a digital self-care tool designed to empower individuals living with lupus.
- **Wiregrass Alabama AHEC** achieved a great deal during its first year. From establishing office infrastructure to developing bylaws, policies, and a strategic plan, the team is setting the stage for long-term success rooted in community engagement and sustainability.
- **North Alabama AHEC** continued to lead robust programs, including AHEC Scholars, high school student pathways, community-based education, and a regional Community Health Worker (CHW) network. Through trusted outreach and workforce training, the center continues to make a difference in health equity and system improvement.
- **East Central Alabama AHEC** deepened its role as a connector in rural health. The center serves on multiple advisory boards, helped develop a new training site for UAB Dental Students and Gadsden State Dental Assisting Students, and remains a key partner to FQHCs, free clinics, detention centers, and faith-based organizations across the region.

The story of Alabama AHEC this year is one of collaboration, resilience, and opportunity. Change has created new paths and prospects for impact. We have embraced those opportunities to grow stronger and more connected. Our name is becoming increasingly associated with trusted service and education.

Looking ahead, I am confident that the Alabama AHEC Network will continue to lead innovative solutions that address Alabama's evolving healthcare needs and workforce demands. Our many stakeholders' commitment to our mission makes this progress possible."



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca A. Reamey". The script is fluid and cursive.

Rebecca A. Reamey, PhD  
Alabama AHEC Network Executive Director



# Scholars Program

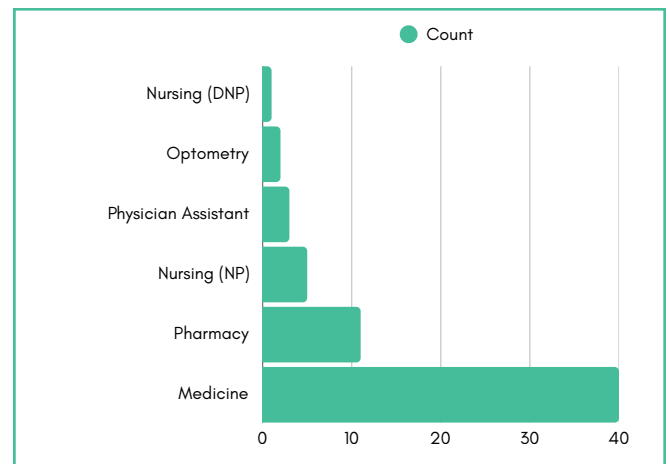
The AHEC Scholars Program is a national initiative that prepares health professions students to serve in under-resourced rural and urban communities. Open to students enrolled in healthcare programs, the two-year curriculum combines clinical training, didactic learning, and community-based projects to build skills in delivering equitable, community-centered care.



Scholars participate in **hands-on clinical experiences** and statewide networking with healthcare leaders, while completing specialized training in areas such as cultural competency, behavioral health integration, interprofessional collaboration, social determinants of health, practice transformation, and emerging health issues.

**370** Experiential Events offered  
**2622** Total experiential hours completed by Scholars

During the last fiscal year, the AHEC Scholars Program achieved:

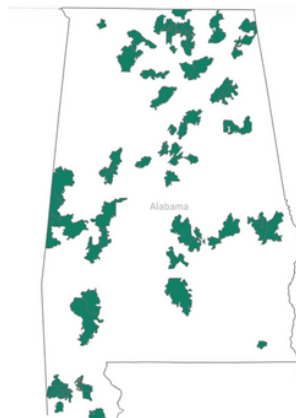


**118** Scholars Representing  
**Over 15** Disciplines

Scholars represented **20** educational institutions:

Alabama A&M University  
Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine  
Athens State Community College  
Auburn University  
Faulkner University  
Gadsden State Community College  
Jacksonville State University  
Jefferson State Community College  
Northeast Alabama Community College  
Samford University

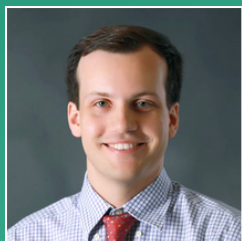
South University  
Troy University  
Troy University at Montgomery  
Tuskegee University  
University of Alabama  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
University of Alabama in Huntsville  
University of North Alabama  
University of South Alabama  
University of West Alabama



**33**  
**Counties**  
Represented  
Across the State

# AHEC Scholars Leadership Team

The Alabama AHEC Network is excited to introduce the inaugural **AHEC Scholars Statewide Leadership Team**, composed of **six exceptional students**. After a rigorous selection process, these highly qualified individuals were chosen to represent various regions of Alabama and **guide their peers** in exploring the state's varied healthcare landscapes.



**Chair**  
David Russo  
*ECAAHEC  
UABHSOM*



**Secretary**  
Kina Talton  
*WAAHEC  
ACOM*



**Community  
Outreach  
Coordinator**  
Jenna Hardin  
*ECAAHEC  
JSU Nursing*



**Community  
Outreach  
Coordinator**  
Tyler Jahraus  
*WAAHEC  
ACOM*



**Advocacy  
Officer**  
Jayla Palacio  
*ECAAHEC  
Samford  
Pharmacy*



**Advocacy  
Officer**  
Amanda Neal  
*DAAHEC  
USA Clinical  
Psychology*

## Community Impact Projects

This year our Alabama AHEC Scholars participated in **Community Impact Projects** designed to address **real health needs** within under-resourced communities across the state. These projects are the heart of the AHEC Scholars experience—**where knowledge meets action, and passion meets purpose.**

Our Scholars work in interprofessional teams of 3-5 students from at least three disciplines, **collaborating across fields** and regions to develop **creative, hands-on solutions**. Conducted in person or virtually, each project demonstrates a strong **commitment to service** and **community engagement**.

- 13 Community Impact Projects
- 59 Scholars led project efforts
- 22 Community partnerships

# Community Impact Project Highlights

## *Pay it Forward*

*Savanah Townley, Victoria Sexton, Kylee Strate, Nero Jallad, Hart Williams, Carly Stuppiello, Jasmine Corpuz*

Aimed to improve health literacy in the younger patient population (8-12 years old) by creating age appropriate, readable educational content. They wrote a book for children about common health ailments, like diabetes, using simple language and explanatory pictures to explain the condition. They sought to provide content that remains accurate, while also being understandable and even entertaining to a younger audience.



## *Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Scores in an Underserved Population*

*Tara Hicks, Chandler Hinson, Emily Cleveland, Kate Sims, Charsade Howard, Amanda Neal*

Adverse childhood experiences (ACE) scores recognize rough childhood experiences that may lead to adverse health outcomes and choices. We hope to educate patients at the Salvation Army and McKemie Place in Mobile, AL about ACE scores to help them understand their unique experiences and their contributions to events in their lives. Both facilities house underserved and vulnerable patient populations who we think would benefit from this education and understanding. As healthcare providers, we hope that this information will extend beyond the patient to also include healthcare next steps and individual treatment.

## *Family Health Screening Day*

*Jayla Palacio, Markayla Peoples, Ellie Williams, Allison Cupps, Kellyn Morales*

The project consisted of health screening stations for adults and health related activities for children. The purpose of the event was to provide health screening for the adult population and refer them for further care if needed. These screenings would be provided at no cost to the patients, and they would be carried out by the health professional students under the supervision of licensed preceptors. The stations for children would consist of activities that are fun and reinforce health habits.

## *Healthy Futures: Educating Rural Students on Health Maintenance and Healthcare Careers*

*Wade Jones, David Russo, Jenna Hardin, Hilary Richards, Gavin Baker, Jordan Dozier, Luke Frost*

This project aims to educate students in rural schools about available healthcare programs and careers, while simultaneously teaching them basic health maintenance strategies. Students will receive instruction on how to recognize medical red flags for conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and mental health issues, and they will also be provided with information pertinent to pursuing a career in the healthcare sector. By engaging students early, the program seeks to empower communities to prioritize health and inspire future interest in healthcare related fields.

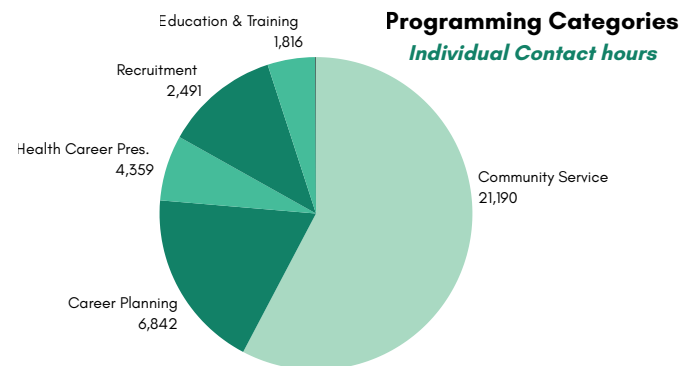


# Pathway Programs

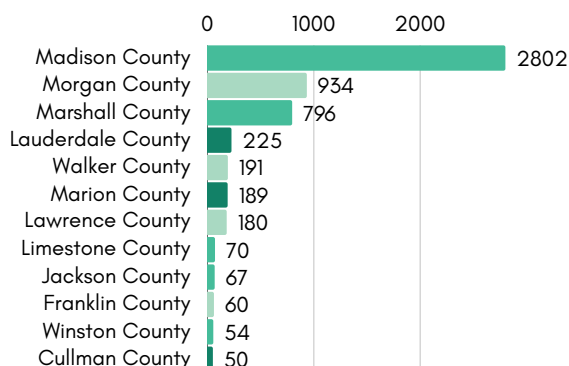
Across the state, the Alabama AHEC Network is committed to building a strong pathway that **guides Alabama students into healthcare professions**—addressing critical workforce shortages that impact nearly every health-related field. A key focus of the regional centers is on early engagement, particularly through programs that introduce middle and high school students to healthcare careers. To ensure a more even distribution of healthcare providers throughout Alabama, especially in **rural communities**, it is essential to **recruit students** from those very regions and support their journey into the healthcare field.

During the last fiscal year, the **Pathways Programs** achieved:

**36,717** Total contact hours of programming delivery  
**8,642** Total students reached  
**51** CNA completers



Students by County  
NAAHEC



## North Alabama AHEC



**North Alabama AHEC** reached students through a variety of school-based engagement efforts, including classroom visits, career fairs, and special events as part of its Pathways Program for high school and middle school students. These activities play a vital role in raising awareness about health careers and building early interest in serving rural communities.

In Lawrence County, the center launched the **Rural Access to Community Care and Education (RACCE) Youth Community Health Worker (CHW) Program**, supported by a grant from Johnson & Johnson. **Five students** completed the program, gaining firsthand experience in public health and community outreach.

# Delta Alabama AHEC

**Delta Alabama AHEC** significantly expanded its impact in healthcare workforce development through its strong partnership with the **Mobile Area Education Foundation (MAEF) Workforce Center**.



To meet this increasing demand, **Delta Alabama AHEC** is actively developing new training pathways, including **EKG** and **Medical Assistant** certification programs. Community outreach efforts have also grown, with robust participation in the **Gulf Coast Challenge Career Fair** and **Opportunity Days** at regional high schools—efforts that continue to connect students with meaningful career opportunities in healthcare.

**462** Total students reached

**42** Students enrolled in Healthcare Pathway Programs

**27** Students earning CNA credentials

**143** Students currently on the waitlist with interest

## Black Belt Alabama AHEC

The program continues to grow through innovative partnerships and initiatives. A collaboration with a local high school offers students early exposure to healthcare careers and direct pathways to **CNA certification**, advancing workforce development at the foundational level.

**Black Belt Alabama AHEC**, in partnership with the **University of West Alabama (UWA)**, guided a key transition of its CNA Training Program—from a **WIOA Youth model** to an **Individual Training Account (ITA) structure**.

**24** Students earning CNA credentials

**150** Total students reached



# East Central Alabama AHEC

**East Central Alabama AHEC** made significant strides in reconnecting with middle and high school students through a targeted health careers marketing initiative, launched in collaboration with UAB-sponsored health screenings for young athletes.



AHEC Scholar **Jake Beede** volunteering at BCS youth athlete health screenings



Scott Boyd of ECAAHEC sharing health careers information at youth athlete health screenings

Through strategic partnerships with institutions such as **Samford University's McWhorter School of Pharmacy**, the **Boys and Girls Club of Gadsden and Etowah County**, and several **Birmingham-City schools**, East Central AHEC promoted healthcare career awareness to approximately 1,550 students. Additional collaborations with **UAB Hospital Highlands Sports and Exercise Medicine** and **UAB Family and Community Medicine** further enhanced the reach and impact of these initiatives.

**1875** Total students reached

Promoted healthcare career awareness to

**1550** Students at **6** Birmingham City schools

# Wiregrass Alabama AHEC

**Wiregrass Alabama AHEC** Scholars took the lead in guiding the next generation of healthcare professionals through their *Pathways to Health Professions* virtual event, held on May 1st as part of their Community Impact Project. The webinar attracted **54 high school students** from across the region, offering them a firsthand look into a variety of health careers.

**513** Total students reached

Led by an interprofessional AHEC Scholars team—**Jeff Yi** and **Quinton Laudadio** (Medicine), **Chigozie Chinakwe** (Pharmacy), and **Lauren Turner** (Nursing)—the event featured 15-minute presentations on various healthcare fields. Each Scholar shared their educational path, offered academic and career tips, and answered student questions.



# Statewide Programs

## Alabama Rural Health Conference AHEC Scholars Pre-Conference

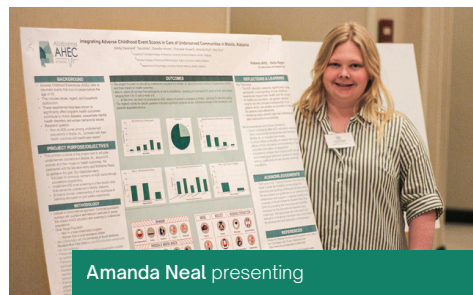
On April 3, **Alabama AHEC Scholars** participated in a special pre-conference event during the **Alabama Rural Health Association's** annual conference. The day began with **Stop the Bleed certification** training led by **UAB's School of Nursing**, giving Scholars hands-on experience with life-saving emergency techniques.



They also attended an inspiring **advocacy session** with **Dr. D'Ann Somerall**, who encouraged students to engage in policy efforts and join professional associations to expand their impact. Scholars then joined rural health policy sessions and presented their **Community Impact Projects** during a poster showcase, highlighting their innovative work addressing local health needs. The following day, they attended a policy panel with Alabama legislators, gaining firsthand insight into healthcare legislation affecting rural communities.



### Poster Presentations



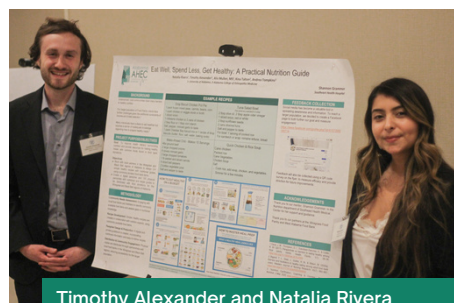
Amanda Neal presenting  
*ACE Scores: Insights into Health and Life Choices*



Lauren Farrell and Nikolette Hurrinus  
presenting  
*Click to Fit: An Exercise is Medicine Program*



Jonathan Lunsford, Sarah Khan, and Thomas  
Creech presenting  
*Beyond the Golden Hour*



Timothy Alexander and Natalia Rivera  
presenting  
*Simple Recipes for Health*



Allison Cupps and Jayla Palacio  
presenting  
*Prevention Pals*

# Scholars Webinars

The Alabama AHEC Program Office and regional centers collaborate to host webinars throughout the year, offering AHEC Scholars engaging opportunities for professional development, interprofessional learning, and rural health education.

## Statewide Sessions

### **AHEC Kick-Off Meeting**

October 18 & 21, 2024

### **Service, Volunteerism, and Social Determinants of Health**

with Dr. Tulsi Patel, MD  
November 15, 2024

### **NAO Advocacy Training**

with Mike Anderson, Alabama AHEC Scholar Alumni  
December 5, 2024

### **Maternal Health & Substance Use**

with Stephanie Galbreath  
February 19, 2025

### **Poverty Simulation Debriefing**

with Dr. Kala Dixon, Scholars Director  
February 25, 2025

### **Social Work and Interprofessional Collaboration**

with Katie Lynn Owens, MSW  
March 21, 2025

### **Teamwork Makes the Dream Work - UAB CU2RE & AHEC Scholars Interprofessional Speed Dating Activity**

with Dr. Chip Tucker, DMD  
April 14, 2025

### **Expert Oral Health Panel**

with Dr. Stuart Lockwood, DMD, MPH; Dr. Conan Davis, DMD, MPH; and Dr. Lew Mitchell, DMD  
April 14, 2025

### **Spring Networking Event**

with Shereada Harrell; Jennifer Park, DNP, RN, PCNS-BC; Jim Nolin, PhD, FNP-C, CHSE; CharLeigh Stevenson, PharmD; Chistopher Jahraus, MD, FACRO  
April 14, 2025

## Regional Sessions

### **Not So Medical Marijuana and The Role of Social Media In Drug Use**

with Celestine Parker, DNP, CRNP  
Black Belt Alabama AHEC  
February 19, 2025

### **Optimizing Lifestyle Modifications to Prevent Gout Attacks**

with Celestine Parker, DNP, CRNP  
Black Belt Alabama AHEC  
March 14, 2025

### **Medical Marijuana in Holistic Healthcare**

with Natelie Williams, MSN, FNP-C  
Black Belt Alabama AHEC  
March 26, 2025

### **National Nutrition Month - How to Care for Tube-fed Patients**

with Teresa Johnson, DCN, RDN , FAND  
Wiregrass Alabama AHEC  
April 3, 2025

### **MedlinePlus and Health Literacy**

with Megan Bell  
Black Belt Alabama AHEC  
April 16, 2025

### **The Impact of Disease on Human Populations**

with Dr. Nancy Brooker  
Black Belt Alabama AHEC  
April 28, 2025

### **Sexual Health Stigmas**

with WilNadia Murrell  
Black Belt Alabama AHEC  
May 14, 2025

### **Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome**

with Dr. Lee Sharma  
Black Belt Alabama AHEC  
May 21, 2025



# Community Health Workers

Our statewide Community Health Worker efforts **bridge gaps** between **healthcare providers** and the **communities** they serve. They provide essential services such as health education, preventive care and support for managing chronic conditions, particularly in under-resourced and vulnerable populations. By building **trust** and **fostering communication** within their communities, Community Health Workers empower individuals to make **informed health decisions** and **access care** they need.

With our Community Health Workers program, we strive to touch every county. Each center has tailored their community health workers program to address the specific needs of their communities.



NAAHEC Youth CHWs assisted in community health fair with 29 participants on February 8, 2025. They also organized a school-based initiative called Heart Health; they distributed 365 health bags to students and community members.

During the last fiscal year, our **Community Health Workers** achieved:

**4200+**

Rural or  
under-resourced  
Alabamians reached

**22**

Community  
Health Workers  
across the state

**130**

Transportations services  
provided to health  
related appointments



ECAAHEC CHW, Sumika MacRoy at the Veteran's Health Fair held on June 28 in Etowah County. It was hosted by the American Legion Post 71 and the VFW Post 2760.

# Community Events

## Wiregrass Alabama AHEC

Wiregrass Alabama AHEC partnered with **the American College of Surgeons** to host a hands-on **Stop the Bleed and Narcan training** on March 10, 2025, at the Troy University Dothan Campus. This in-person event equipped approximately **35 participants**—including students, community members, and future health professionals—with critical skills to respond effectively in emergency situations.



Participants learned how to **recognize life-threatening bleeding** and administer immediate care using **tourniquets, wound-packing techniques, and pressure application**. The Narcan training component provided instruction on how to safely **respond to opioid overdoses** and administer life-saving **naloxone**.

*WAAHEC Scholars  
Jonathan Lunsford,  
Thomas Creech and  
Sarah Khan at the  
Stop the Bleed  
Training*



## East Central Alabama AHEC

East Central Alabama AHEC, in collaboration with **Gadsden State Community College** and **Gadsden Regional Medical Center**, hosted a successful **Mental Health Conference** at Gadsden State's Wallace Drive Campus on **October 18**. The event brought together approximately **120 attendees**, including healthcare providers, educators, and first responders, for a day of learning and dialogue focused on **key mental health issues**.



Conference sessions addressed a range of critical topics, including **role strain, dementia care planning, grief, and mental wellness in sports**, equipping participants with practical tools and new perspectives. The event also offered continuing education units (CEUs) to support the professional development of those in attendance.

# Community Events

## NAAHEC's Camp LEAP

From July 14-17, 2025 **North Alabama AHEC** hosted its **Camp LEAP Health Careers Summer Enrichment Program**, welcoming **nine students** from Lawrence, Madison, and Colbert Counties. In partnership with the **North Courtland Rural Access to Care and Community Education (RACCE) project**, the four-day camp offered students immersive, hands-on experiences designed to spark interest in healthcare careers and community leadership.



Students participated in a range of engaging activities, including **anatomy dissections, mental health workshops, and campus visits** to **Calhoun Community College** and **UAB Huntsville**. They also toured the Lawrence County Water Treatment Facility, learning how infrastructure impacts community health. The program introduced foundational public health concepts, emphasized the importance of **Community Health Workers (CHWs)**, and encouraged students to see themselves as part of the solution to rural health outcomes.

A key outcome of Camp LEAP was launching students into the **CHW certification onboarding** process through the **Alabama Community College System's Innovation Center**. With continued support from North Alabama AHEC, these students will work toward becoming **Youth Community Health Workers**, empowered to provide peer support and promote wellness within their schools and communities.

## BBAHEC's STEM Camp



From June 16-18, 2025, **Black Belt Alabama AHEC** supported a **three-day STEM Camp at the Livingston Civic Center**, offering hands-on learning for students from kindergarten through high school. Each day focused on a specific age group, with students rotating through interactive stations in **robotics, LEGO engineering, math, and environmental science**.



# Alabama Preceptor Tax Incentive Program

In 2023, Alabama legislature approved the Alabama Preceptor Tax Incentive Program (APTIP) to offer a tax credit to uncompensated healthcare professions preceptors in our State. The goal of the APTIP is to increase medical student training in rural and underserved counties in Alabama.

**Administered by the Alabama  
AHEC Network, APTIP provides:**

**\$500**

income tax-credit  
incentive  
for each eligible

**160**

hour clinical  
preceptorship rotation  
per calendar year

*for preceptors who are physicians  
(MD, DO), optometrists, and dentist*

with a

**\$6000**

annual maximum

## Successes

Launched in  
**April 2024**

**740**  
Registered Preceptors

**25**  
Registered Programs  
across the State

**\$81,875.00**  
in tax credits certified  
by the  
Alabama AHEC Network  
for 2024 state income  
tax filings

**\$425**

income tax-credit  
incentive  
for each eligible

**160**

hour clinical  
preceptorship rotation  
per calendar year

*for preceptors who are nurse  
practitioners, certified nurse  
midwives, certified registered nurse  
anesthetists or physician assistants*

with a

**\$5100**

annual maximum

**Learn more  
and register**  
[alahec.org/aptip](https://alahec.org/aptip)



# Community-Based Experiential Training (CBET)

Through collaborations and partnerships, **CBET students** are **placed in rotations** and **reimbursed** for their **mileage** and housing to eliminate barriers while precepting in rural and urban under-resourced settings. Students training in rural and under-resourced Alabama are more likely to return to these communities to provide quality care. Compensating for mileage and accommodations for CBET students is one of the many ways AHEC supports the healthcare workforce in rural and under-resourced communities.

During the last fiscal year, the **CBET Program** achieved:

**15,116**

CBET Rotations Hours

**187**

CBET Rotations  
Completed or Trained

**135**

CBET Students who rotated

**116**

CBET Rotations  
Completed at a Rural Site

**173**

CBET Rotations Completed  
at a Primary Care Site

**713,682**

CBET Clinical Training Hours  
(All Time)

## Healthcare Careers Booklet

**130** Healthcare  
Professions

The **Alabama Healthcare Careers Booklet 2025** serves as a guide for students exploring careers in healthcare. Developed by the **Alabama Office of Healthcare Workforce (AOHW)** and the **Alabama AHEC Network**, the booklet highlights pathways into healthcare professions, educational requirements, and career outlooks, particularly emphasizing opportunities in Alabama's rural and under-resourced areas.

- The booklet outlines key **Healthcare Career Pathways**.
- The **Career Spotlights** section provides insights into specific healthcare roles, detailing job responsibilities, required education, median salaries, and work environments.
- This guide emphasizes the growing demand for healthcare professionals, offering students a roadmap to a fulfilling and impactful career. It encourages students to explore educational programs and take advantage of workforce development initiatives in Alabama.

# Continuing Education (CE) Hours

The AHEC Network Program Office has been approved by the **Alabama Board of Nursing** to provide **Alabama nursing continuing education** contact hours. This accreditation underscores our commitment to supporting the ongoing professional development of nursing professionals across the State.

## What does this mean for you?

The AHEC Program Office offers **high-quality educational opportunities** that meet the rigorous standards set forth by the Alabama Board of Nursing. Nurses can earn continuing education (CE) contact hours through our programs, which are designed to **enhance clinical knowledge, improve patient care outcomes**, and **foster professional growth**.

During the last fiscal year, our **continuing education program** provided:

**334**

Continuing education  
events hosted or  
sponsored

## Collaborate

If you are interested in collaborating with the Alabama AHEC Network Program Office to offer CE contact hours for your programs, please **visit our website** for more information or contact Paulisha Holt at pholt@uab.edu.

**Learn More**



## NAO P.A.C.T. with NAAHEC

**North Alabama AHEC** was selected as one of eight AHEC centers across the country to participate in the prestigious **Pri-Med P.A.C.T. (Practical Approaches to Comprehensive Treatment of Pain)** initiative, in collaboration with the **National AHEC Organization (NAO)**. The goal of this project is to recruit **30 healthcare providers** from under-resourced communities, particularly those serving rural populations, to complete a specialized **4-hour Continuing Medical Education (CME) training series**. The course, hosted by Pri-Med, will equip providers with practical, evidence-based strategies to manage and treat chronic pain comprehensively.

# Reconnecting with Alumni

This year, we've made intentional efforts to reconnect with **AHEC Scholars alumni** across the state—celebrating their accomplishments, highlighting their impact in under-resourced communities, and sharing their stories of continued service and leadership in healthcare.

## Katlyn Norton, CRNP

*Cohort 3 (2020-2022)*

For **Katlyn Norton, CRNP**, rural healthcare is a calling. Originally from Millport and now in Vernon, AL, Katlyn began volunteering at **Lamar Family Medicine** during her time as an **AHEC Scholar**. After completing her clinical rotations there, she assumed ownership of the practice in January 2023 following the previous physician's retirement.



With the **nearest hospital 60 miles away**, Katlyn plays a critical role in providing access to care. Her commitment is deeply personal—after her father faced delays during a medical emergency, she became determined to **bridge healthcare gaps** in rural areas.

### Her advice to future providers

“

Always be honest. Once trust is lost, it's hard to regain.

”

Her experience in the Tuscaloosa NICU highlighted stark differences in access between urban and rural settings. In Vernon, limited specialist availability and transportation barriers push Katlyn to deliver broad, **patient-centered care** and rely heavily on **interprofessional collaboration**.



## Mike Anderson Joins National AHEC Organization Board

**Mike Anderson**, an **East Central Alabama AHEC Scholars alumnus**, was selected to represent AHEC Scholars on the **National AHEC Organization Board** for the next two years. His appointment is a proud milestone for both Mike and the Alabama AHEC Network. With a strong commitment to underserved communities, Mike brings valuable insight and leadership to the NAO board. His role will help foster new opportunities and strengthen Alabama's presence on the national stage.

# Reconnecting with Alumni

## Caroline Sullivan, CRNP

Caroline Sullivan's journey as a **Nurse Practitioner** was deeply influenced by her **rural clinical rotations** through **East Central Alabama AHEC**. While enrolled in Samford University's NP program, Caroline was connected with **a preceptor at Quality of Life Health Services**, where her exposure to the realities of under-resourced care reshaped her professional goals. Initially planning to work in private practice, she instead found herself drawn to serving uninsured and rural populations after witnessing the healthcare outcomes many face.



During her 2016–2017 rotations in Gadsden, Sardis, Boaz, and other rural communities, Caroline encountered patients with **complex needs** and **limited access to care**. One memorable case involved a homeless woman with untreated diabetes—Caroline coordinated treatment through a local church and helped secure stable housing. That experience taught her the value of meeting patients where they are and going beyond traditional clinical roles.

Her AHEC-supported rotation led to her first job at Quality of Life Health Services, where she served as a primary provider for many patients who couldn't afford to see a specialist. Today, Caroline continues that mission as a Nurse Practitioner at the **University of Alabama at Birmingham** and as a **professor in the Family Nurse Practitioner Program** at **Herzing University**. She credits her AHEC experience with shaping her commitment to health equity and believes **rural clinical exposure** is essential for every future healthcare provider.

## Amber Noffke, BSN, RN

*Cohort 4 (2021–2023)*



Amber Noffke's path into community health was shaped directly by her time as an Alabama AHEC Scholar. Just before graduation, **Lamont Dupree**, Director of North Alabama AHEC, shared her resume with the **CEO of HEALS, Inc.**, leading to her first job in **pediatric community health**—where she started just days after graduating.

When life circumstances led her to seek remote work, Amber applied to more than 100 positions before finding the right fit with **Stride K12**. She now serves as the virtual nurse for Alabama Virtual Academy and ALDCA, helping ensure that students—especially those in **rural and under-resourced areas**—receive the care and guidance they need.

From coordinating safe in-person testing to supporting **immunization schedules** and **advising families**, Amber continues to make a meaningful impact. Amber's story is a testament to the power of AHEC's mentorship and mission in shaping healthcare leaders for under-resourced communities.

**Amber credits AHEC with setting her on this path:**

“

I learned so much about myself, and Lamont continues to inspire me and stand proud with me.

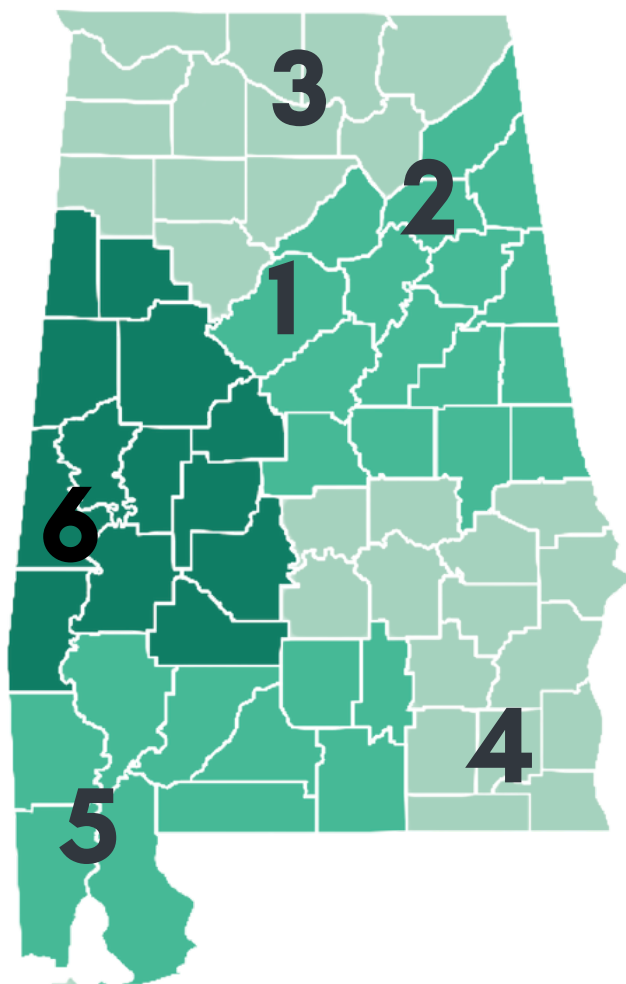
”



# Meet the Team

## Alabama AHEC Network Program Office

With outreach efforts across all 67 counties of Alabama, the **Alabama Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Network Program Office** resides within the **University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Department of Family and Community Medicine**. The Alabama AHEC Network remains committed to expanding the healthcare workforce of Alabama by maximizing diversity and facilitating distribution—particularly within its underserved and rural communities.



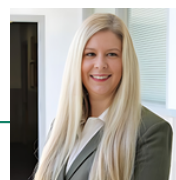
**Rebecca Reamey, PhD**  
Director



**Alia Tunagur**  
Director of Marketing  
Program Director of Alabama  
Office of Healthcare Workforce



**Paulisha Holt**  
Program Director of  
Finance and Evaluation



**Kala Dixon, PhD**  
Program Director of  
AHEC Scholars



**Rachel Watts**  
Digital Marketing  
Coordinator

**1** Alabama AHEC Network Program Office  
Birmingham, AL

**2** East Central AHEC  
Gadsden, AL

**3** North Alabama AHEC  
Huntsville, AL

**4** Wiregrass Alabama AHEC  
Hosted by Troy University–Dothan Campus  
Dothan, AL

**5** Delta Alabama AHEC  
Hosted by the Mobile Area Education Foundation  
Mobile, AL

**6** Black Belt Alabama AHEC  
Hosted by the University of West Alabama  
Livingston, AL

# Meet the Centers

Covering all 67 counties of Alabama, our regional AHEC centers are the **boots on the ground**—building **trust**, fostering **relationships**, and serving as the direct lines of communication with the **communities we serve**. Through grassroots efforts, they ensure that AHEC’s mission reaches every corner of the state, connecting local needs with statewide solutions.

## North Alabama AHEC (NAAHEC)

Established as a community-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in 2016, the North Alabama Area Health Education Center (NAAHEC) is located on the campus of **Alabama A&M University** in Huntsville.

The aim of NAAHEC is to improve access to quality healthcare, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals in underserved Alabama communities through community/academic educational partnerships.



**Lamont Dupree**  
Executive Director  
North Alabama AHEC  
(NAAHEC)

## 13 Counties in Service Region

- Colbert
- Cullman
- Franklin
- Jackson
- Lauderdale
- Lawrence
- Limestone
- Madison
- Marion
- Marshall
- Morgan
- Walker
- Winston



[alahec.org/locations/north/](https://alahec.org/locations/north/)



### Karen Leeling



Financial  
Administrator

### Salana Usher



Program  
Coordinator

### Shonda Miller



Pathways  
Program Coordinator

### Cesar Hernandez



AHEC Scholars  
Program Coordinator



**Angela Anderson**  
Executive Director  
East Central Alabama  
AHEC (ECAAHEC)

## East Central Alabama AHEC (ECAAHEC)

Established as a community-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, the East Central Alabama Area Health Education Center (ECAAHEC) began serving the healthcare needs of its region in 2015.

ECAAHEC aims to improve the quality of healthcare in Alabama by providing training, education, and resources to healthcare professionals and students of healthcare.

### 16 Counties in Service Region

- Blount
- Calhoun
- Chambers
- Cherokee
- Chilton
- Clay
- Cleburne
- Coosa
- DeKalb
- Etowah
- Jefferson
- Randolph
- Shelby
- St. Clair
- Talladega
- Tallapoosa

**Chip Tucker, DMD**



AHEC Scholars  
Program  
Coordinator

**Scott Boyd**



Office Manager &  
CBET Program  
Director



[alahec.org/locations/east-central/](http://alahec.org/locations/east-central/)



## Delta Alabama AHEC (DAAHEC)

Delta Alabama Area Health Education Center (DAAHEC), in partnership with the **Mobile Area Education Foundation Workforce Center**, strives to improve healthcare quality in Alabama by providing healthcare professionals and students with essential training, education, and resources.

### 10 Counties in Service Region

- Baldwin
- Butler
- Clarke
- Conecuh
- Covington
- Crenshaw
- Escambia
- Mobile
- Monroe
- Washington



[alahec.org/locations/delta/](http://alahec.org/locations/delta/)



**Shernita Taylor**  
Center Director  
Delta Alabama AHEC  
(DAAHEC)



**Nagina Inge**

AHEC Scholars  
Program  
Coordinator

## Black Belt Alabama AHEC (BBAHEC)

Black Belt Alabama Area Health Education Center (BBAHEC) is hosted by **the University of West Alabama**. BBAHEC is dedicated to enhancing Alabama's healthcare quality through comprehensive training, education, and resources for healthcare professionals and students.



**LaWanda Prestage**  
Center Director  
Black Belt Alabama  
AHEC (BBAHEC)

### 13 Counties in Service Region

- Bibb
- Choctaw
- Dallas
- Fayette
- Greene
- Hale
- Lamar
- Marengo
- Perry
- Pickens
- Sumter
- Tuscaloosa
- Wilcox



[alahec.org/locations/black-belt/](https://alahec.org/locations/black-belt/)



**Armisha Perry**



AHEC Scholars  
Program  
Coordinator

**Nicole Watson**



AHEC Scholars  
Program  
Coordinator



**Ian McFadden,**  
D.Sc., FACHE  
Center Director  
Wiregrass Alabama  
AHEC (WAAHEC)

## Wiregrass Alabama AHEC (WAAHEC)

Wiregrass Alabama Area Health Education Center (WAAHEC), hosted by **Troy University at Dothan**, is committed to improving healthcare quality in Alabama by providing extensive training, education, and resources for healthcare professionals and students across the region.

### 15 Counties in Service Region

- Autauga
- Barbour
- Bullock
- Coffee
- Dale
- Elmore
- Geneva
- Henry
- Houston
- Lee
- Lowndes
- Macon
- Montgomery
- Pike
- Russell

**Shelly Olive**



AHEC Scholars  
Program  
Coordinator



[alahec.org/locations/wiregrass/](https://alahec.org/locations/wiregrass/)



# Strategic Plan

## Mission

Enhance access to quality health care, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals via strategic partnerships with academic programs, communities and professional organizations



### HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE:

FUTURE OF RURAL AND UNDERSERVED  
HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

#### GOAL:

Build a ready workforce so all Alabamians have equal access to quality healthcare

#### ACTION:

- Recruit and support future workforce from rural and underserved areas and encourage their return for healthcare practice
- Increase long-term retention of healthcare providers in rural and underserved communities
- Increase participation and engagement in statewide workforce development programs and initiatives
- Promote and support Community Health Workers as an integral part of the healthcare workforce



### COMMUNITY

AWARENESS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

#### GOAL:

Increase awareness and understanding of AHEC and strengthen partnerships in communities across the state

#### ACTION:

- Clearly articulate and share widely AHEC's purpose, value, programs and services
- Promote vibrant partnerships to expand reach and support initiatives
- Promote and expand AHEC's influence through strategic recruitment for center boards and state advisory council



### RESOURCES

CENTRALIZED SUPPORT AND FUNDING

#### GOAL:

Grow and diversify funding and leverage resources to multiply statewide impact and ensure sustainability

#### ACTION:

- Create a robust fund development plan
- Develop a centralized infrastructure to support fundraising
- Identify and leverage available resources statewide (physical plant, people, transportation, housing, etc.)



### ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

BUILDING TRUST AND ADAPTABILITY

#### GOAL:

Cultivate a collaborative culture that fosters innovation, trust, and adaptability

#### ACTION:

- Articulate and demonstrate the value and benefit of an inclusive, engaged statewide organization so all communities have improved health and wellness outcomes
- Strengthen communication and promote transparency between state program office, centers, state agencies, advisory boards, boards of directors and other stakeholders
- Increase trust and promote healthy working relationships



# FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



- Alabama AHEC Network
- North Alabama AHEC
- East Central Alabama Area Health Education Center



- Alabama AHEC Network
- North Alabama AHEC



- [alahec.org](http://alahec.org)
- [na-ahec.org](http://na-ahec.org)
- [ecaahec.com](http://ecaahec.com)



- [alahec@uab.edu](mailto:alahec@uab.edu)
- [reamey@uab.edu](mailto:reamey@uab.edu)



Sign up for our Statewide Newsletter  
at [alahec.org](http://alahec.org) at the bottom of the page.

*The Alabama AHEC Network is dedicated to recruiting, training, and retaining the Alabama healthcare workforce while expanding the variety of health professionals, broadening the distribution of the health workforce, enhancing the quality of care, and improving healthcare delivery to rural and under-resourced populations in Alabama. The following centers are members of the Alabama AHEC Network and are federally funded HRSA AHEC Programs and nationally recognized Area Health Education Centers: Alabama AHEC Network Program Office, North Alabama AHEC (NAAHEC), East Central Alabama AHEC (ECAAHEC), Black Belt Alabama AHEC (BBAAHEC), Wiregrass Alabama AHEC (WAAHEC), Delta Alabama AHEC (DAAHEC).*





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