



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Students prepare for health careers in medically underserved communities

CHICAGO, IL – Students interested in health careers will gather with public health professionals on August 14-15, 2021 to learn, teach, network, and discuss best practices for improving health in and with marginalized communities across Illinois.

Co-convened by three urban administrators of Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) -- Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) for Northeast Illinois AHEC, Health & Medicine Policy Research Group for Chicago AHEC, and Project Brotherhood for Chicago South AHEC – the AHEC Summer Institute is open to graduate and undergraduate students pursuing health careers with a commitment to serve marginalized populations, whether or not they are currently involved with the AHEC Scholars Program. Participants in the AHEC Summer Institute will have the opportunity to earn certifications in topics such as Blood Borne Pathogens and Mental Health First Aid, receive career coaching and training, network with one another, and learn from leading health professionals in various industries.

“COVID-19 has dominated the healthcare discussion and renewed the importance of the global public health infrastructure,” says Ruthie Moore, PHIMC Education and Training Manager and co-organizer of the AHEC Summer Institute. “Here in Illinois, the AHEC program is equipping Scholars with tools they need to combat opioid addiction and palliative care in our communities, as well.”

The National AHEC Organization was developed by Congress in 1971 to recruit, train, and retain a health professions workforce committed to underserved populations. Today, AHECs across the country are preparing the next generation of public health professionals to better serve low-income communities, rural communities, communities of color, and people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or gender-nonbinary, and to encourage young people from these communities to consider careers in the health professions.

AHEC Scholar Rayan Salih noted after the recent national AHEC conference, “There's a lot left to be done but it's inspiring to see all the leaders that we have on the ground already. I thought the sessions were super engaging and interactive... and I would recommend that all future scholars should attend!”

The AHEC Summer Institute falls in AHEC’s 50th anniversary year. For more information, visit

<https://bit.ly/SummerAHEC>

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Area Health Education Center (AHEC) provides experiential learning opportunities to students who are committed to improving healthcare in rural and underserved communities. AHEC Scholars are part of a dynamic leadership development program. Upon completion of the AHEC Scholars Program, all participants will earn a nationally recognized certification from Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA). <https://www.nationalahec.org/>

Health & Medicine Policy Research Group (HMPRG) promotes social justice and challenges inequities in health and health care. An independent policy center, HMPRG conducts research, educates and collaborates with other groups to advocate policies and impact health systems to improve the health status of all people. <https://hmprg.org/>

Project Brotherhood (PB) increases health awareness in Black men by training Black men and providing preventive health messages and literature in a cultural gender specific way. PB defines health as complete physical, mental, social, economic, and spiritual wellbeing. <https://projectbrotherhood.net/>

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) enhances the capacity of public health and healthcare systems to promote health equity and expand access to services. Through organizational development, systems transformation, fiscal management, and program implementation, PHIMC leads efforts to strengthen public health infrastructure in Illinois. <https://phimc.org/>