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From: Missouri Area Health Education Centers

AHEC Impact on a Primary Care Physician

As a rural family medicine physician who started practice this month, I would like to share with you the impact AHEC has had on my personal and professional development, particularly as it has applied to my career in primary care medicine. AHEC has provided me with numerous opportunities for clinical observation, teaching, and service. I have had wonderful physician mentors and role models in the Rolla, Columbia and Joplin areas; opportunities to teach in the statewide PRIMO Academies for Missouri youth; had guidance and encouragement to participate in local hospice organizations and community care clinics; and guidance in medical career planning – all positive, life-changing experiences for me, and all these experiences were provided through AHEC.

In fact, were it not for my experiences with the AHEC in Rolla, I might not have chosen a career in medicine. With a doctorate degree in chemistry, I already had spent years teaching at universities and had ventured into the private sector.

As a medical student, I participated in the AHEC rural track rotations which were excellent ways for me to experience life as a rural physician and begin building professional relationships in the community I planned to serve. Through the network of rural track locations and participating providers, I had unparalleled opportunities for learning (especially in comparison to my colleagues who remained on-campus for all their rotations), and the medical and host communities were warm and welcoming. The encouragement, commitment to health education and guidance AHEC provides for those of us pursuing primary care careers in our state, have strengthened my commitment to practice medicine in a rural/underserved community. In addition, AHEC has been such a positive experience for me that I expect to contribute to the AHEC mission by serving as a role model, mentor, and teacher for aspiring health professionals through their programs.

Missouri AHEC has proven outcomes and is essential to Missouri's rural and underserved communities.

MAHEC: Connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health



Mark Barnett, MD, PhD

MAHEC is a partnership of seven locally-governed organizations and three university-based health professions education programs working statewide to increase the numbers of Missouri youth entering stable, high-paying jobs as healthcare professionals and the numbers of professionals caring for underserved populations.

The MAHEC partners include:

- A.T. Still University – Kirksville
- University of Missouri – Columbia
- Saint Louis University
- Northeast Missouri AHEC – Kirksville
- Northwest Missouri AHEC – St. Joseph
- West Central Missouri AHEC – Lexington
- Mid-Missouri AHEC – Rolla
- East Central Missouri AHEC – St. Louis
- Southeastern Missouri AHEC – Poplar Bluff
- Southwest Missouri AHEC – Springfield