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From: Missouri Area Health Education Centers

### **A Decade of AHEC Involvement Spanning Three Centers and Schools**

This month we'd like to highlight a student and her involvement with three AHECs. This is only one example of the long-term relationships developed through AHEC programs. Jessica Snyder is a third year medical student from the University of Missouri who is completing seven months of rotations in the Northwest Missouri (NWMO) AHEC region through the MU AHEC Rural Track Program. NWMO AHEC first met Jessica personally as a first year medical student who came to the region for her MU Summer Rural Community rotations, but Jessica was not new to AHEC.

Jessica was first introduced to AHEC while attending a middle school career exploration camp (M\*A\*S\*H) in July 2006 through the AHEC in northeast Missouri. Jessica's involvement now spans a decade.

Jessica continued with the AHEC Career Enhancement Scholars (ACES) program in high school. Michelle Mollick, former director at Northeast Missouri AHEC, shared her memories of Jessica: "She applied to the NEMO AHEC ACES/PRIMO program as a 9th grader and stood out among peers because of her proven ability to balance the responsibilities of family, school, athletics, work, and free time with remarkable maturity and grace. Even at that young age, Jessica's employer and school counselor raved about her dedication toward excellence in all that she undertook. Through her high school ACES participation, I witnessed this talented young lady crystalize her goals for admission to MU Bryant Scholars and Rural Track. She left a sincere and lasting impression on me as one of those rare and shining beacons. I am so delighted for Jessica and her family!"

Jessica was selected by the MU School of Medicine as a Bryant Scholar as a sophomore in college. The Bryant Scholars program, coordinated by the MU AHEC, provides these students many opportunities to learn more about rural medicine prior to beginning their first year in medical school.

Jessica is from the small central Missouri community of Newtown, and plans to return to north central Missouri as a family medicine physician. Jessica says, "I've really enjoyed my time here in St. Joe. The rotations here are great because you learn a lot and are very involved in the care of the patients you see. I am also very thankful for the one-on-one time you get to spend with physicians."

Jessica's AHEC story is replicated across the state by many students whose experiences with AHEC span multiple years in multiple AHEC regions and culminate in practice in Missouri's underserved communities.



*Jessica Snyder, third year medical student with preceptor, Tara Brown, DO, and patient. Dr. Brown was also an AHEC participant in college and through clinical training placements.*

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