



July 2016

From: Missouri Area Health Education Centers

National AHEC Organization Conference – June 2016

The 2016 National AHEC Organization (NAO) conference, “AHEC on the Hill, A Capitol Idea,” was held in Washington, D.C., the last week in June. One day of the conference was spent on Capitol Hill, with over 450 AHEC staff and board members from across the country advocating to Congress the importance of a \$40 million AHEC Program appropriation for fiscal year 2017.

Twenty Missouri AHEC staff members were able to attend the conference, representing all program offices and centers. Visits were made to the offices of Senators Claire McCaskill and Roy Blunt, as well as Congressmen Billy Long, Sam Graves, Blaine Leutkemeyer, Lacy Clay, Emanuel Cleaver, and Jason Smith and Congresswomen Vicky Hartzler and Anne Wagner.

Michael French, AHEC Program Office Director at A.T. Still University Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, was presented the Red Koelling Distinguished Service Award. The award is given to an individual who has exhibited exceptional active service to both his/her center/program and the National AHEC Organization. Missouri AHEC nominated Michael for this award for his leadership to Missouri AHEC since 1986. Michael currently serves on the NAO Board and on several of its committees in addition to his leadership roles in Missouri AHEC.

Dr. Luis Padilla, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Bureau of Health Workforce associate administrator, shared a vision for the next grant cycle of the AHEC program. HRSA has three priority areas, all of which AHEC already focuses on – quality services, a skilled health workforce, and innovative programs. AHECs anticipate the next grant cycle to begin September 2017.

In addition to dozens of break-out sessions, participants enjoyed several keynote speakers.

- Patti Dobrowolski, a critically acclaimed comic performer, internationally recognized speaker, writer and business consultant, introduced the group to innovative visual practices and creative processes as a means to accelerate growth and change.
- Dr. Damon Tweedy, author of *New York Times* bestseller *Black Man in a White Coat*, spoke of many broad social issues currently facing health care including the lack of diversity of health professionals and disparities in health care outcomes and access to care for minorities.
- Dr. Jonathan Oberlander with the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill shared his perspectives on the impact of the Affordable Care Act.

Missouri AHEC Staff in front of the Capitol in Washington, DC

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

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