

National Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Organization (NAO)

NAO represents a network of more than 300 AHEC program offices and centers that serve more than 85% of U.S. counties.

Mission: NAO helps its members achieve the AHEC mission through advocacy, education, and research. The AHEC mission is to enhance access to quality healthcare, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals via strategic partnerships with academic programs, communities, and professional organizations.¹

Project period: September 30, 2014–September 29, 2019

Projects:

- NAO HPV Immunization Project



¹<https://www.nationalahec.org/About/AHECMission.html>

NAO HPV Immunization Project: NAO aims to provide education to health professionals to strengthen HPV vaccination recommendations, resulting in a decrease in missed opportunities to vaccinate adolescents ages 11–12.

Project strategies:

- Provide clinician outreach and training
 - ✓ Utilize CDC’s “You Are the Key” and other materials to provide continuing education opportunities in all 50 states, targeting primary care clinicians, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, and physician assistants as well as vaccine influencers such as medical office staff and others. An emphasis is also placed on educating health professions students in their final years.
- Disseminate educational materials
 - ✓ Distribute CDC and other evidence-based educational materials to health professionals and health professions students through the AHEC regional, state and local connections
 - Increase and form strong partnerships
 - ✓ Develop national-level partnerships with other CDC-funded projects as well as national healthcare and cancer organizations; increase partnerships with health profession schools to integrate training into curriculum and provide training to high-level health profession students
 - Push for the prioritization of HPV vaccination efforts
 - ✓ Bring the HPV vaccine as cancer prevention message to national level officials, insurers, and others to increase awareness

State AHECs: One AHEC entity per state has been selected to carry out state and local HPV project training activities with coordination by four project specialists in the areas of marketing; partnership development; continuing education and AHEC integration.

Project impact:

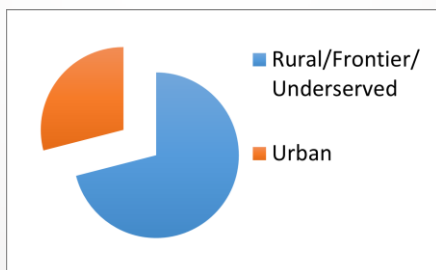
- 32,647 health professionals trained
- 731 HPV education programs
 - ✓ Nearly all (96%) of participants reported an increase in their effectiveness in raising HPV vaccination rates among their patients
 - ✓ Nine out of 10 trained were definitely or somewhat using the training information or enhanced their practice to increase their patient HPV immunization rates three months after the training
- 5,454 health professions student trained
- 1.2 million materials disseminated
- Targeted, uniform awareness messages for Cervical Health Month and National Immunization Awareness Month

Impact

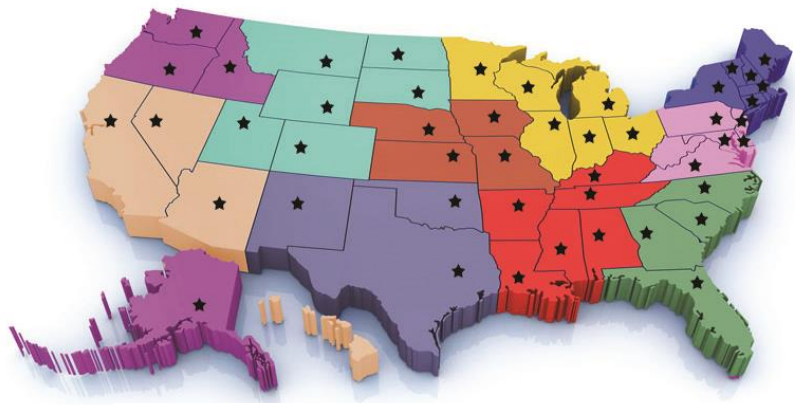
AHEC Centers use their unique niche in serving the *rural and underserved* to reach healthcare providers and students that *don't have access* to large-scale quality improvement projects most often available in urban settings.

Over 71% of health professionals trained at AHEC events serve rural/frontier and/or urban underserved populations!

Education participant work setting



Frontier settings are located in sparsely populated locations and serve a large geographical area



NAO HPV Project State Participation

Resources:

- CE/CME Self-Study Guide “Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine Safety” with credit awarded for physicians, physician assistants and nurses: <http://bit.ly/2rb9TzE>
- Individualized state HPV Cancer & Prevention Profiles to share current rates and ways to increase HPV vaccination rates: <http://bit.ly/2lcNCQ4>
- The HPV Vaccination Resource Guide to help facilitate professional education and provider outreach to increase HPV vaccination rates: <http://bit.ly/2DehvGf>
- Social media toolkit to target healthcare professionals with HPV and cancer awareness messages: <http://bit.ly/2Ddavn2>
- Archived webinars for health professionals on HPV topics: <http://bit.ly/1YBZ9ko>

Partnerships: AHECs have historically leveraged multiple partnerships. Through this project, new partnerships have been developed and existing partnerships enhanced to broaden reach and extend impact. Here are just a few:

- American Cancer Society HPV Roundtable
- American Cancer Society Vax Project
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Academic Pediatric Association
- National Association of County and City Health Officials
- Public Health Training Center
- Educational institutions health professions programs
- State and national professional organizations
- Local, state and national immunization coalitions
- Local, state and national cancer coalitions

Contact NAO

Project Director: Gretchen Forsell, MPH, RDN, LMNT
Email: gforsell@ntc.nationalahec.org
Website: <http://www.nationalahec.org/hpv>