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From: Missouri Area Health Education Centers

Missouri AHECs Training Rural Providers to Increase HPV Vaccination Rates

Since 2015, Missouri Area Health Education Centers (MAHEC) have been actively promoting the National AHEC Organization's (NAO) HPV Immunization Project to provide education to health professionals and health professional students regarding the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. NAO received funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for this project and has shared the funding with AHECs across the country to carry out state and local HPV project training activities. MAHEC joined the project in an overall effort to increase HPV vaccination rates as a means of preventing cancer.

Recently, two members of the NAO HPV Leadership Team, Gretchen Forsell and Terry Zollinger, attended the National Immunization Conference in Atlanta, GA to present two poster sessions: "Close to Home: AHECs Training Rural Providers" which showcased AHEC's unique niche in reaching providers in rural and underserved areas; and "Does 'You Are the Key' Training Increase HPV Vaccination Rates?", which highlights NAO's evidence-gathering special project to determine if HPV vaccination rate data indicated an improvement in rates after providers participated in AHEC HPV training.

Highlights from the poster, "Close to Home: AHECs Training Rural Providers", include the fact that of the 30,000+ health professionals and health professions students trained nationwide, 81% of the practicing professionals were from rural locations or serving locations focusing on underserved populations. Evaluation data from these trainings show 90% or more of participants reporting an increase in HPV vaccine awareness, knowledge and skills due to the trainings. A pilot project found that HPV vaccination rates increased from 36% in the patient population BEFORE the training to 59% AFTER the training.

Since the program started in Missouri almost three years ago, 614 health professionals (including some health professions students) have been trained through lunch and learn presentations at hospitals and educational institutions, grand rounds and student didactic lecture series, online webinars and self-study courses, and interprofessional conferences around the state and nation. Besides live presentations, some AHECs utilize technology through webinars and telehealth systems to impact a greater number of providers. In Missouri, three program offices and three regional centers have hosted the "You Are the Key to Cancer Prevention" presentations.

Missouri AHEC looks forward to continued success with the HPV trainings to increase HPV vaccination rates throughout the state.

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



*National Primary Care Week
HPV Panel*

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