

Western Montana Area Health Education Center

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



# WESTERN MONTANA AHEC

The Western MT AHEC, at the University of Montana, in Missoula, was established in 2008. WMT-AHEC is affiliated with the College of Health at the University of Montana-Missoula and is located at the Missoula College Campus. WMT-AHEC is closely affiliated with the 13 health professions programs offered through the University of Montana Health & Medicine (UMHM) programs. WMT-AHEC serves the following Western counties: Flathead, Lake, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, Sanders, and Ravalli.

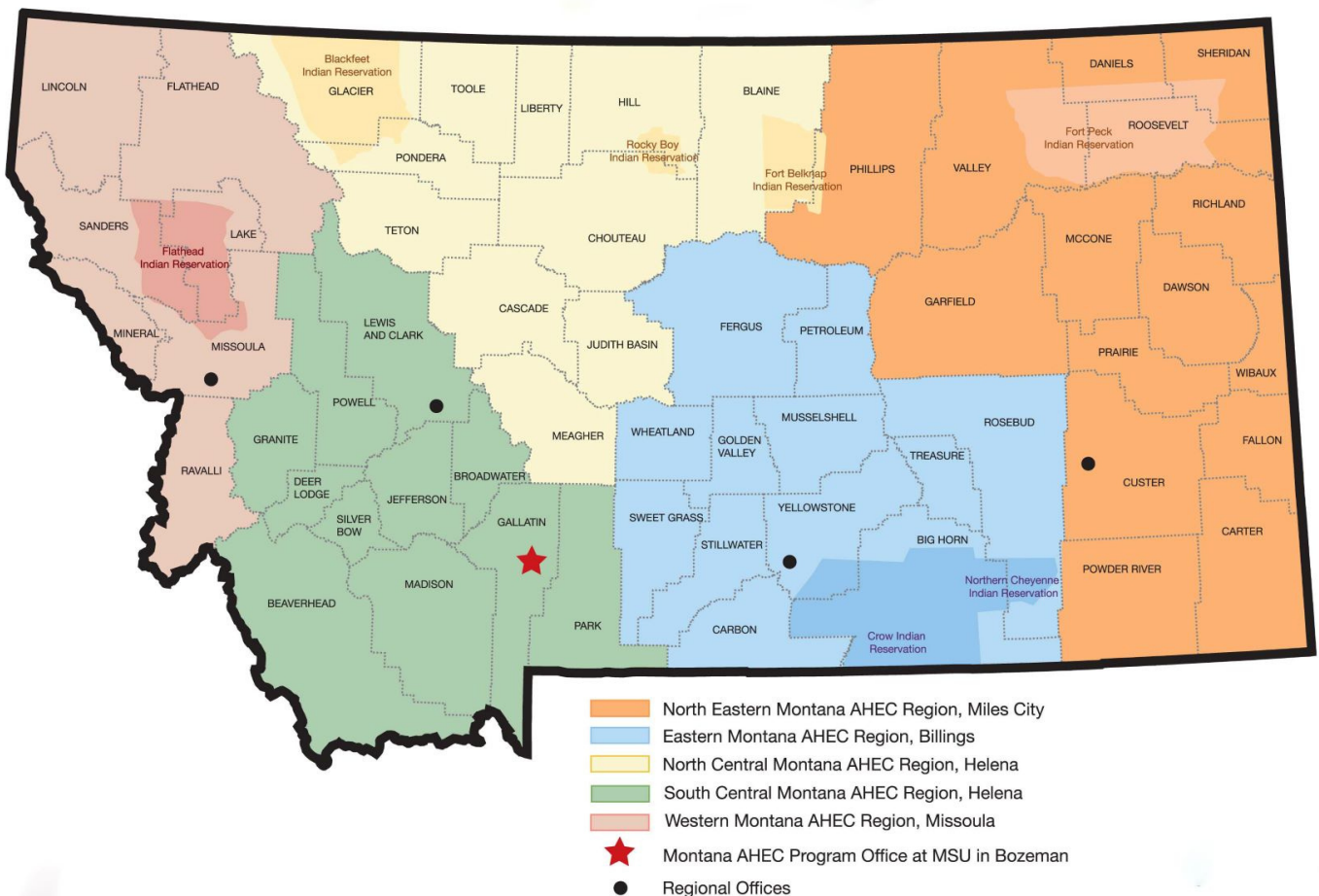
## MISSION

The AHEC Mission is to enhance access to quality healthcare, particularly primary and preventative care, by improving the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals via strategic partnership with academic programs, communities, and professional organizations.

## GOAL

A diverse, culturally competent primary care/healthcare workforce representative of Montana communities, that is prepared to deliver high quality care in a transforming system and is distributed throughout the state, particularly in rural and underserved areas and populations.

## Montana AHEC Regions



# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to Western Montana Area Health Education Center (WMT-AHEC). At WMT-AHEC, we partner with five Area Health Education Centers throughout Montana, in the communities of Billings, Bozeman, Helena, Miles City, and Missoula. The unique landscape, geography and sheer size of Montana present unique challenges for accessing health care, health science education and to establishing partnerships. AHEC works to lessen this challenge by increasing access for students, faculty, patients and health professionals to work together to create a system that serves and improves health outcomes for all Montanans.

2020 has been an exceptional year. COVID-19 has simultaneously demonstrated the strength of our health care providers and frontline workers and further revealed barriers and gaps in services. During this time, telehealth has become a reality, increasing access to care for many Montanans. The need to support the frontline as they battle this disease has become increasingly important. WMT-AHEC has been able to collaborate with campus, state and regional partners to provide expanded Friday Medical Conference, COVID related and resiliency training and support for our health care professionals.

While we, collectively, have faced unique challenges this year, we have also been afforded opportunities to re-think learning for health professions students, support existing partners and cultivate new collaborations. These opportunities have allowed WMT-AHEC to provide our 7-county region quality and relevant programming.

**Molly M. Molloy, MSW LCSW**  
**WMT-AHEC**  
**Director**





# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

- University of Montana Health & Medicine
- MUS IPE Institute
- Northcentral AHEC, Southcentral AHEC, Eastern AHEC, Northeastern AHEC, and AHEC Program Office
- St Luke Community Healthcare
- Providence St. Patrick Hospital and St. Joseph Medical Center
- Clark Fork Valley Hospital
- Community Medical Center
- Mineral Community Hospital
- Kalispell Regional Medical Center
- Montana Hospital Association
- Montana Primary Care Association
- Montana Family Medicine-Residency
- Salish Kootenai College
- Flathead Valley Community College
- Missoula County Public Schools
- Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital
- Western Montana Clinic
- Cabinet Peaks Medical Center
- North Valley Hospital
- Partnership Healthcare Center
- Northwest Community Healthcare Center
- Montana Department of Labor & Industry
- Family Medicine Residency of Western Montana
- Headwaters Foundation
- Central Montana Medical Center



# WESTERN MONTANA AHEC TEAM



**Ilsa Seib,  
Director of  
Budgets and  
Personnel**



**Kaye Norris,  
State Director  
AHEC Scholars**



**Liz Kelsey,  
WWAMI  
Coordinator**



**Sara Laney,  
BHWET  
Program  
Coordinator**



**Robin Mochi,  
Continuing  
Education  
Coordinator**



**Bonnie Bishop,  
AHEC Scholars  
and MUS IPE  
Institute Program  
Manager**



**Lily Apedaile,  
Career  
Awareness  
Coordinator**



# OUR PROGRAMS

## **BWHET**

BHWET is a joint project between the University of Montana and Montana State University that seeks to place teams of graduate students in their final years in clinical rotations in rural primary care settings. The emphasis is to connect students with underserved populations who have little access to behavioral health services, while simultaneously training students in integrated behavioral health.

## **MedStart**

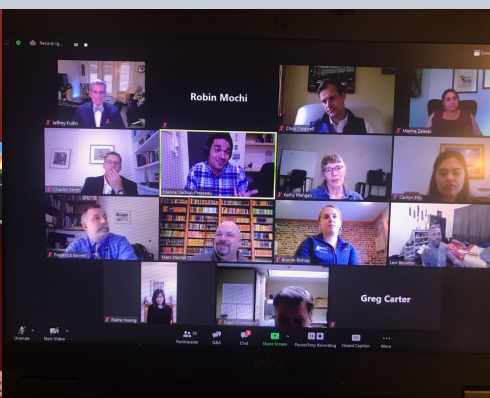
A week-long summer camp for high school students hosted at the University of Montana that focuses on healthcare degrees and careers.

## **REACH**

A ½ day-long camp for high school students that is hosted at a local hospital or on the University of Montana campus that engages students in hands-on healthcare-related activities.

## **Friday Medical Conference**

Friday Medical Conference (FMC) is a weekly Continuing Medical Education (CME) opportunity for physicians, healthcare professionals, and several healthcare student programs. This 'Grand Rounds' style lecture series provides a cross-section of recent advances in medicine along with clinical etiology, diagnosis, and management information.



# OUR PROGRAMS (CONT.)

## **Pain Conference**

The Montana Pain Conference utilizes an interdisciplinary approach, the conference focuses on sharing innovations in chronic pain care. With an emphasis on effective pain assessment, special attention is paid to research, education, and advocacy. Effective pain management aims to empower providers and patients as they navigate complex treatment needs.

## **WWAMI**

WWAMI is a cooperative program of the University of Washington School of Medicine and the states of Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho. It is a program which makes medical education accessible to students in the northwestern United States by decentralizing the educational process and by sharing existing facilities and personnel in universities and communities in the WWAMI states

## **Rural Clinical Rotations**

Supports health professions students participating in clinical rotations at rural and underserved sites in Montana. Students will receive travel reimbursement for personal car mileage. Clinical rotations must be at a Critical Access Hospital (CAH), a rural health clinic, a tribal health service, or a Community Health Center (CHC) in Montana.





# OUR PROGRAMS (CONT.)

## **Resiliency for Healthcare Workers**

A collaborative effort to offer workshops for healthcare workers in Montana at no cost. The workshop provides easy to implement strategies to deal with burnout and challenging situations like COVID-19 response. These workshops are offered via Zoom.

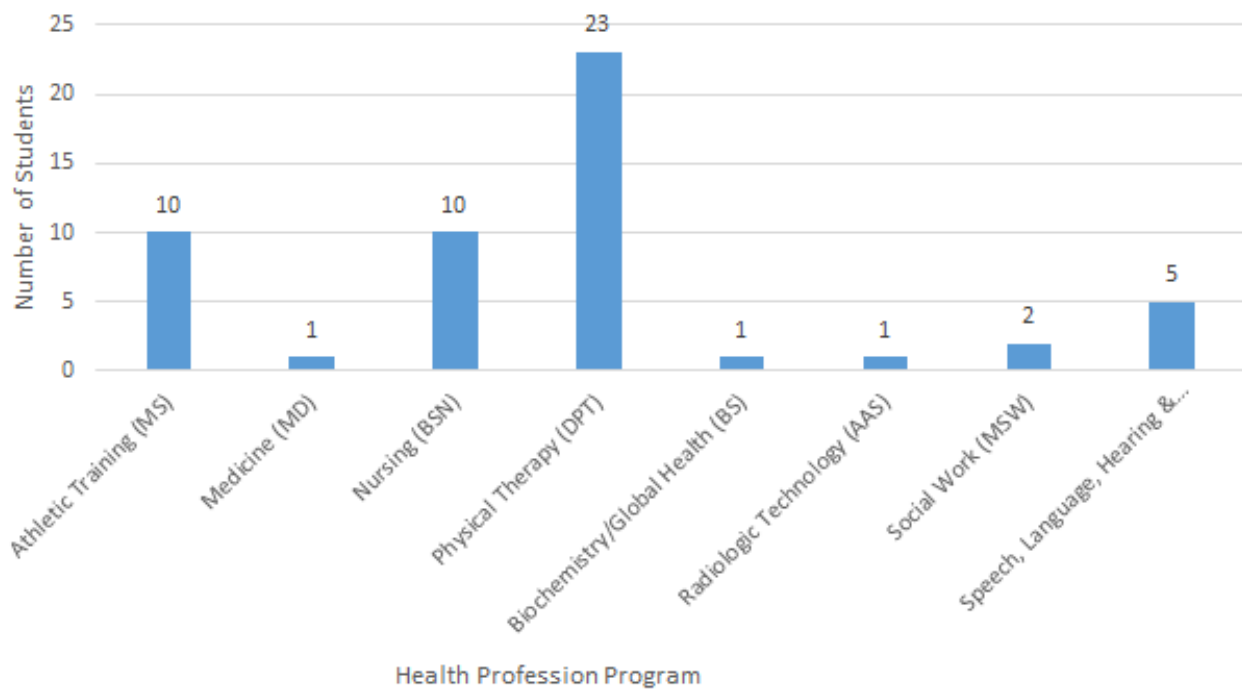
## **Rural Health Scholars Program**

A pilot collaboration with St. Luke Community Healthcare that involves a 3 week-long, paid job shadowing opportunity along with specialized ACT tutoring and career/college advising for students

## **Classroom Chats**

Classroom Chats is a program that connects healthcare professionals to 5-12th grade students across Montana and students at UM. The format is conversational, Q and A style so that the students feel they've had direct contact with healthcare professionals. The goal of this program is to help students gain a better understanding of the various careers in healthcare and what the day to day looks like for a healthcare professional. This program is especially meant for schools in remote, rural areas that do not have easy access to a healthcare facility and a way to interact with healthcare professionals.

Graduated AHEC Scholars 2019-2020



# AHEC SCHOLARS

## About

AHEC Scholars is a national program developed by the U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration and state AHECs (National AHEC Organization). It is a program for health professions students interested in enhancing their skills in interprofessional practice in rural or underserved settings. Over the next two years, the AHEC Scholars Program will train scholars who will join a national cohort of approximately 3,900 scholars in 49 programs across the country. These programs are supported, in part, by the federally funded Health Resources and Services Administration. The Montana AHEC Scholars Program began with a pilot project that included 22 students from 4 programs and who graduated in 2019. Data for these students is included in this analysis. In 2020, 31 students from 7 programs graduated and their data is also included. All 53 students completed pre and post knowledge questions, and also answered questions about their intent to practice in a rural, primary care, or medically underserved setting.

## Certification

A certification as an AHEC Scholar will signify that the student has additional knowledge, skills, and experiences that will give them an advantage in moving forward in their chosen health profession.

## Benefits

- Learn to work effectively in a team-based setting
- Develop new skills, experiences, and strategies to improve both access and delivery of healthcare
- Have the chance to meet leaders in healthcare and interact with health care professionals creating an invaluable network for your future career
- Make connections with other participants
- Receive a certification, which will set you apart from other students in an increasingly competitive environment
- Receive recognition at graduation

# RURAL CLINICAL ROTATIONS

**30**

Students  
Supported

**15**

Clinical Rural Sites

**\$3,000**

Dollars in  
Donation

**5**

Different  
Health Professions

**\$5,800**

Dollars  
Disbursed

**19,331**

Miles Travelled

## WWAMI CLERKSHIPS/ ROTATIONS

**11**

Different training sites

**88**

Clerkships/  
Rotations/Electives

**34**

Medical students  
participated

**30**

Medical students  
from a rural background

## BHWET PROGRAM

**20**

Students  
Participating

**13**

Clinical Sites

**4**

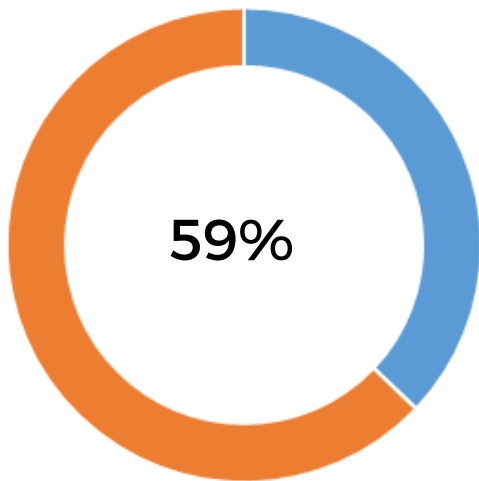
Different Behavioral  
Health Disciplines  
Involved



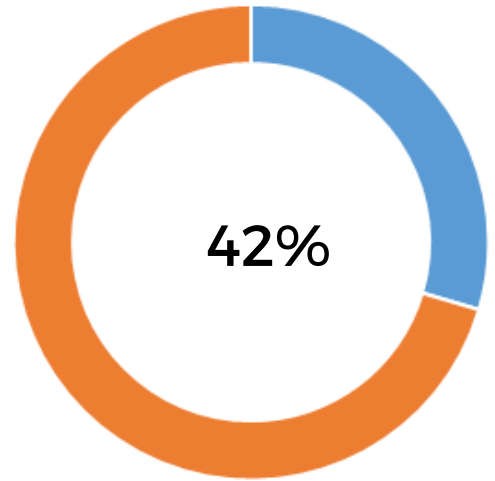
# Career Awareness Programs



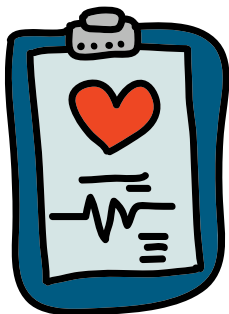
305 In-Person Program Participants  
1020 Virtual Program Participants



from a rural background



from a disadvantaged background



1,246 Hours of Structured Activities

# Career Awareness Impact

For the past 8 years our office has been keeping up with the impact our health professions pipeline programming has had on the lives of the participants. Below is a glimpse at where our students have ended up!

\*Data is incomplete (i.e. no degree declared, not able to track where student ended up, etc.) and only looks at students that participated in our MedStart program.



**223**

Students  
Participated

**61%**

Attended/attend  
college  
in-state

**22%**

have  
graduated  
from a  
degree program

**38**

different health  
professions programs  
pursued/  
being pursued

**53%**

pursued/are pursuing  
a health professions  
degree

# Pre-Med/Pre-PA Job Shadowing

**72 Job  
Shadowing  
Experiences**

**25  
Different  
Specialties  
Shadowed**

**317 Hours  
of Job  
Shadowing**

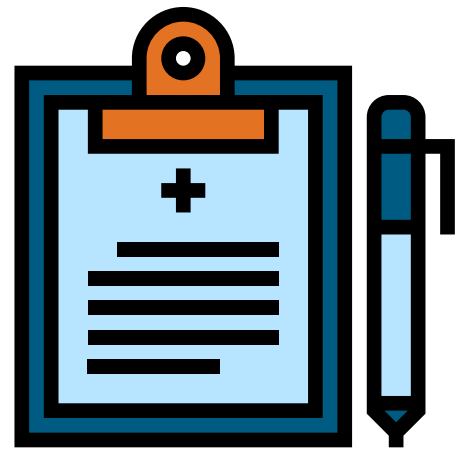


# Continuing Education Programs



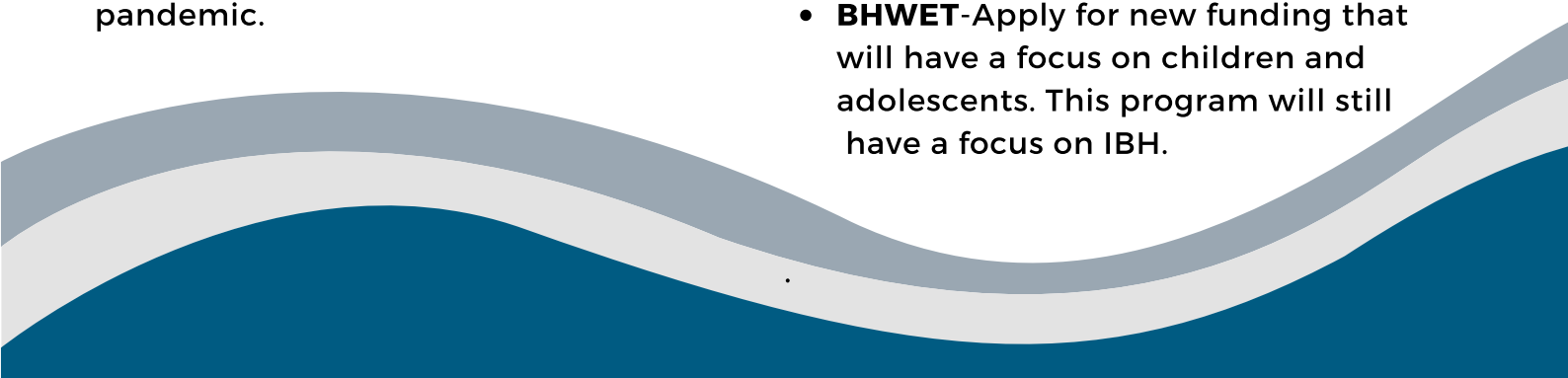
1,002 Participants

62 hours of training provided



Friday Medical Conference	Resiliency/Mental Health Skills Training	Montana Pain Conference
882 Participants	90 Participants	90 Participants
32 Hours of CME	18 Hours of CE	12 Hours of CME
9/2019-05/2020	04/2020-07/2020	10/2019

# Looking Ahead to 2020-2021

- **Responding to COVID-19**-The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has disrupted many aspects of everyone's lives. Most of us in the WMT-AHEC office have been working remotely since March 2020, but are still very dedicated to finding ways to continue offering our programs in these challenging times. We will also continue to pursue grant funding to help support our partners.
  - **AHEC Scholars**-The statewide AHEC Scholars program is continuing to enroll healthcare professions students from all healthcare professions areas. One area that the program is looking to expand is recruiting more two-year health professions program students. The program is also continuing to work with employers to demonstrate the benefits of this program in the workplace.
  - **Continuing Education**-Increase attendance of all continuing education opportunities, including increasing attendees from other parts of Montana. Offer more continuing education opportunities, such as COVID updates, and other applicable presentations.
  - **WWAMI**- Work with healthcare providers and facilities in Western Montana to continue providing clerkship opportunities during the pandemic.
  - **Pre-Med Job Shadow Program**- Since in-person job shadowing opportunities have been stopped during the pandemic, we are developing a program to use telepresence robots to create a virtual job shadowing experience. We are also implementing a new scheduling and data management software, Sonia, that will streamline the job shadowing onboarding process.
  - **Career Awareness:**
    - Partnering with WWAMI and the UM Pre-Med job shadowing programs to start virtual job shadowing experiences using Double 3 Telepresence Robotics.
    - Medical Detectives is a new partnership with UMHM. We will be transitioning the Medical Detectives program to a remote program. Teachers in Montana will be able to check out biotechnology equipment to use in their classroom. They will also have the opportunity to do video conferencing with biomedical science faculty at UM.
    - REACH camps will be moved to a virtual format so that teachers and students can still participate in hands-on learning activities with healthcare professionals.
  - **BHWET**-Apply for new funding that will have a focus on children and adolescents. This program will still have a focus on IBH.
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Connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health.

