



Oregon
Area Health Education Center

2024-2025 Annual Report

Director's message

Despite the challenges of the past year, Oregon AHEC remained steadfast in our mission. We are grateful to our five regional center directors and staff, volunteer board members, clinical preceptors, community partners, host organizations and Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) for their partnership and support.

We advanced priorities identified at our 2024 Statewide Advisory Board meeting — including strengthening advocacy and communications — and responded to calls for more robust outcomes data for our Pathway and AHEC Scholars programs.



Director Eric Wiser, MD

Highlights from the year

Health care career exploration camps

- **Expanded summer camps statewide** — all 5 regional centers and the program office hosted pathway camps in summer 2025, reaching more high school students than ever before.
- Launched the new **OHSU Experience day camps** — three free, hands-on programs on OHSU's Portland campus.
- **Secured Oregon Health Authority funding**, ensuring all camp participants could receive full scholarships.
- Cascades East AHEC **expanded camp access to Klamath Falls**, serving more students in southern Oregon.

Oregon AHEC strengthens advocacy & impact

- Launched **AHEC Scholars Alumni Survey** to track where graduates end up practicing.
- **Northeast Oregon AHEC honored** by U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley and visited by U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden.
- Dr. Wiser appointed to the Oregon Health Authority's **Health Care Workforce Committee**.
- National AHEC Organization (NAO) recognized Oregon AHEC as a **national advocacy leader**, incorporating our materials into its federal strategy.
- **Meredith Lair**, executive director of Northeast Oregon AHEC, was honored with the Christina Holmes Emerging AHEC Leader Award by NAO.

Who we are

Oregon Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is part of a nationwide system created by Congress in 1971 to improve the distribution, diversity, quality and supply of health care workers in rural and under-resourced areas.

Oregon AHEC has education programs across five regional centers and a central program office housed at Oregon Health & Science University. Programs are designed to engage aspiring health care professionals at each step of their journey, which starts with career exploration in their youth, follows them through their education and continues after they obtain their credentials.

Our Regional Centers



**Oregon Pacific
AHEC**



**AHEC of
Southwest
Oregon**



**Oregon
Healthcare
Workforce
Institute**



**Cascades
East AHEC**



**Northeast
Oregon AHEC**

Programs



**PATHWAY
PROGRAMS**

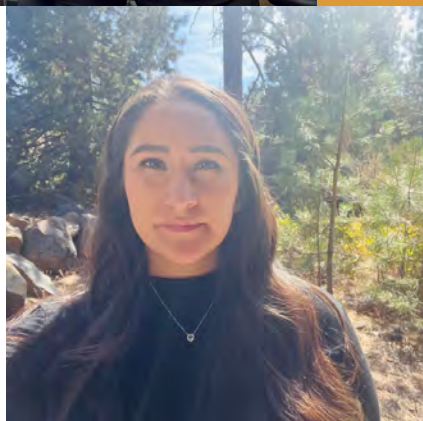
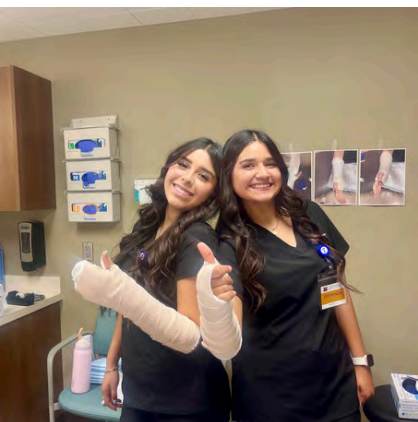


**PROFESSIONAL
PROGRAMS**



**CONTINUING
EDUCATION**

Pathway Programs



Janet Hernandez's journey with Oregon AHEC Pathway Programs shows the power of early exposure and mentorship. Starting in high school, she explored health careers through job shadowing and community outreach – and relied on AHEC mentorship to successfully navigate the path to nursing school. Now a registered nurse and OPAHEC board member, Janet works to expand opportunities for students in Northwest Oregon – demonstrating how AHEC Pathways help build a stronger, more connected health care workforce.

97% of campers said Oregon AHEC summer camps made them more interested in a health care career.



265

summer campers (2025),
26% increase from 2024

OUR PROGRAMS

Oregon AHEC Pathway programming includes career exploration summer camps, hands-on health care experiences, academic support, mentorship and guidance on college and career planning – designed to support students from high school through professional training, especially in rural and underserved communities.

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

“I really loved how many connections and jobs we got to hear about. It really helped me come to a much clearer decision for my future.”
-OHSU Experience camper

Professional Programs



Navigating the path from high school to Physician Associate (PA) school was daunting for Emily Sabins, but AHEC's pathway programs provided the guidance, opportunities and support she needed to succeed. After college, she was supported by AHEC Southwest's Reconnect Fellows program, which gave her first-hand experience in the medical field as a medical assistant, scribe and phlebotomist. The experience helped prepare her for PA School at Oregon Health & Science University.

93% of Reconnect Fellows placed in health professions programs

"I joined the Fellowship hoping to see if rural medicine would be for me, and I left feeling certain of it."

-Former Reconnect Fellow

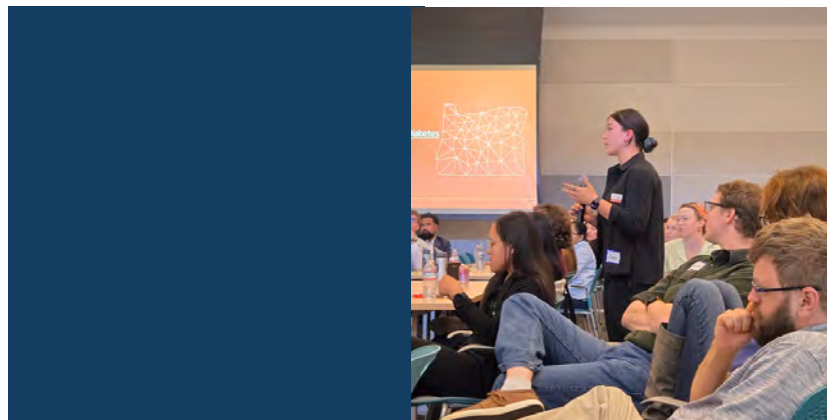
OUR PROGRAMS

Oregon AHEC offers pre-professional and professional programming to support students as they advance in their health care careers. This includes clinical training placements in rural and underserved areas, interprofessional education opportunities, cultural competency training and continued mentorship. These programs help bridge the gap between education and practice.

107

independent job shadows facilitated by Cascades East AHEC (FY 2025)

AHEC Scholars Program



Lauren March's path to becoming a physician associate started in middle school when she participated in Northeast Oregon AHEC's Girls in Science program, now known as Investigators of Science. That early mentorship stayed with her, and during her PA training at OHSU she reconnected with AHEC through the AHEC Scholars program — gaining the support, training and rural rotations that deepened her commitment to practicing in underserved communities.

AHEC Scholars is a two-year national program designed to better **prepare health profession students for future practice in underserved communities.**

Scholars gain hands-on experience and skills that prepare them to serve in high-need communities across Oregon.

"Having that kind of corner of AHEC where I got to see people and go to lectures and go on the didactics and learn from people who were also passionate about rural health care was very inspiring to me," she said, "and I really appreciated that, and it helped kind of fuel me a little bit through the program."

After graduating this summer, Lauren is returning to Eastern Oregon to practice at Winding Waters Medical Clinic in Enterprise, bringing her journey full circle back to the region she was raised in.

BY THE NUMBERS: AHEC SCHOLARS GRADUATES

49% Practicing in rural and underserved areas

63% Stayed in Oregon

*Of graduated Scholars in cohorts 1-5 who have completed their post-training and have an associated NPI.



The AHEC Scholars Program partners with public and private colleges and universities across the state to support student participation and broaden our impact.

- Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU)**
- School of Dentistry — DMD
- School of Medicine — MD
- School of Medicine — PA
- School of Nursing — NP

- OHSU and Oregon State University (OSU)**
- College of Pharmacy — PharmD

- OSU - Cascades**
- Doctor of Physical Therapy — DPT

- Mt. Hood Community College**
- Nursing program — B.S.N.



- Frontier Nursing University**
- Nurse Practitioner Program — NP

- Pacific University**
- College of Physician Assistant Studies — PA
- College of Pharmacy — PharmD
- School of Occupational Therapy — OTD

- Western University of Health Sciences**
- College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific Northwest — DO
- College of Health Sciences NW — DPT

WHAT SCHOLARS SAY

“I always knew I wanted to go into rural health, however AHEC has helped me feel supported as I make the transition. I've been so lucky to be a part of AHEC and I feel that this big move is much easier knowing I have many practitioners in Oregon to rely on for support.”

AHEC Scholars reported an increased working knowledge in key areas, including behavioral health, SDOH, cultural competency and practice transformation.



Continuing Education



In 2022, Oregon AHEC was one of five states to receive a competitive federal Simulation Education Training grant. The grant allowed us to make state-of-the-art simulation training resources available across the state to help prepare and train rural emergency responders to handle irregular trauma cases.

Oregon Pacific AHEC's work with health care providers and emergency responders on the North Coast last fall was featured in the local news.

"It's kind of been a huge blessing, and I know that fire departments are ready to get the manikins and use them, because they're very nice and we're creating more advanced life support personnel," Gearhart Fire Division Chief Adrienne Park told The Astorian.

OUR PROGRAMS

Oregon AHEC's continuing education programming provides health professionals a variety of educational opportunities, including a suite of Project ECHO programming, and other high-quality learning opportunities to maintain licensure, build skills and stay current with best practices.

1,476

hours of training delivered to agencies statewide using AHEC simulation equipment.

122

health professions students and 96 community members received Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training in FY 2025 through Oregon Pacific AHEC.

Our Supporters

Thank you for partnering with Oregon AHEC and our mission to improve the health of rural and underserved Oregonians through education and workforce development.



Oregon AHEC sustains programs with a diverse mix of funding and support:

- Federal grants
- State appropriations
- Statewide grants
- Nonprofit grants
- Host site contributions
- Other investments

Consider making a gift today!

The Dr. John Saultz AHEC Scholars endowment fund helps remove financial barriers for Oregon health care students by supplementing travel and housing costs during rural rotations and other educational needs.



Keep in touch

