The History of Georgia AHEC

A partnership with
The Medical College of Georgia
at Augusta University
1972
- Nationally, 11 Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) program offices were awarded a 5-year contract through the Federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to recruit, train, and retain health professions workforce committed to underserved populations
- The National AHEC Organization (NAO) was created

1984
- The Southeastern Primary Care Consortium (SPCC)-Atlanta AHEC was opened through Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) with basic federal funds with Robert Hall as the founding Board Chair and Marcellus Lewis as Founding Director

1987
- CHEP AHEC was opened with Dr. Charles Rapella as founding Board Chair and Charles Lang as founding Center Director
- The SOWEGA AHEC was opened with James Hotz, MD as founding Board Chair and Pam Reynolds as founding Center Director
- CHEP-AHEC rotated off full federal AHEC funding

1990
- Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM) received a "Bridge" Grant to begin the formation of the Statewide AHEC Network

1991
- MSM convened a meeting for the four medical school deans to discuss AHEC’s future in Georgia
- The first edition of Health Careers in Georgia was published
- The Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM) AHEC Program office was established through a federal grant provided by the DHSS

1992
- Three Rivers AHEC was opened in Columbus with Brian McCluskey as founding Board Chair and Jan Pittman as founding Center Director

1993
- Health Careers in Georgia became a statewide project
- Southwest Georgia experienced catastrophic flooding, now known as the “Year of the Great Floods”
- Microsoft Word was utilized as the primary data system for the Network

1994
- Blue Ridge AHEC was opened in Rome; founding board chair was Steve Murdock, founding Center Director was Sharon Norman
- The Medical College of Georgia (MCG) and MUSM created an integrated statewide AHEC Network program
- The first AHEC Network Advisory Council Meeting was conducted

1995
- MCG & MUSM received a grant to operate as a federally funded AHEC. The grant requested money for establishment of a statewide program office, continuation of MUSM program office, years 4-6 for Three Rivers, and startup funds for Blue Ridge & Foothills AHEC
- MCG received the statewide AHEC Network grant from DHHS

1996
- Word Perfect was utilized as the primary data system

1997
- Atlanta AHEC, CHEP AHEC & SOWEGA AHEC received first state funding
- SOWEGA funded $420,000
- CHEP-AHEC funded $420,000
- SPCC-Atlanta funded $290,000
- Word Perfect was utilized as the primary data system

1998
- Foothills AHEC was opened in Gainesville; founding board chair LaTrell Simpson and founding Center Director was Sheila Griffin
- MSM office funded $206,000
- SOWEGA funded $432,600
- CHEP-AHEC funded $432,600
- SPCC-Atlanta funded $298,700

1999
- Three Rivers AHEC received first state funding
- The first “Program Industry Certification Model and Handbook for Secondary Health Occupations Education” in the nation was created by Blue Ridge AHEC
- MSM funded $212,180
- SOWEGA funded $445,578
- CHEP AHEC funded $445,578
- SPCC-Atlanta funded $307,661
- Three Rivers funded $445,578

2000
- Three Rivers received the NAO Award of “Excellence in Continuing Education”
- CHEP AHEC received NAO “Outstanding Non-Border Health Education and Training Center Program” award
- SPCC-Atlanta received the NAO “Outstanding Community Service” award
- CHEP-AHEC developed the Farmworker Health Project and co-sponsored Hometown Health Careers Project
- University System of Georgia Board of Regents (BOR) provided funding for AHEC, and $600,000 in funds were matched through the Department of Community Health (DCH) for a total of $1,200,000 (there was also an extra space between Regents and (BOR))
- Microsoft Access was used to create the statewide electronic reporting service
2001
- CHEP AHEC changed its name to Magnolia Coastlands AHEC
- Magnolia Coastlands AHEC received the “Outstanding Rural Program” award and expanded the Farmworker Health Project
- Three Rivers AHEC received a third grant from the National Library of Medicine to expand the TRIAD Network project
- SOWEGA funded $472,715
  Magnolia Coastlands funded $472,715
  Three Rivers funded $472,715
  SPCC-Atlanta funded $326,398
  Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Southern Rural Access grant awarded
- The MUSM program office funding transitioned to state dollars
- SOWEGA developed Teachers Exploring and Advocating Careers in Health (TEACH) and was awarded the 2001 NAO Center Award for Health Careers Student recruitment
- SOWEGA funded $486,897
  Magnolia Coastlands funded $486,897
  Three Rivers funded $486,897
  SPCC-Atlanta funded $336,190
- Total state appropriation increased to $725,000
- Foothills AHEC office transitioned to state dollars
- Statewide Health Careers Academy was held for the first time at MCG
- SOWEGA funded $501,504
  Magnolia Coastlands funded $501,504
  Three Rivers funded $501,504
  Foothills funded $501,504
  SPCC-Atlanta funded $346,276
- SOWEGA AHEC developed a two-part program that enables non-practicing RNs to re-enter nursing
- The legislature increased funding for the AHEC contract in rural health in the amount of $125,000
- The statewide AHEC Network sponsored the “Advanced Health Careers Academy” and the Statewide Health Careers Academy was held at MCG
- Magnolia Coastlands AHEC received the “Center of Excellence in Health Careers Recruitment” award as well as the “Leadership for Changing the World” award
- SOWEGA established the “Pathways to Med School” program
- SOWEGA funded $516,550
  Magnolia Coastlands funded $516,550
  Three Rivers funded $516,550
  Foothills funded $516,550
  Blue Ridge funded $516,550
  SPCC-Atlanta funded $356,663
- The MCG and MUSM partnership remains
- Three Rivers AHEC collaborated with West Georgia Cancer Coalition to produce the “Careers in Oncology” CD that was distributed to Georgia high schools
- MSM funded $253,358
  MUSM program office funded $253,358
  MCG program office funded $253,358
  SOWEGA funded $532,047
  Magnolia Coastlands funded $532,047
  Three Rivers funded $532,047
  Foothills funded $532,047
  Blue Ridge funded $532,047
  SPCC-Atlanta funded $367,363
- DCH funding cut; Lost $725,000 federal administrative match on state appropriation, lost $550,000 with the abolition of Workforce Policy Advisory Board, lost $365,000 Program Office Federal Administrative match, and a reduction in federal AHEC funding from Core to Model
- DCH provided additional funding to AHEC in the amount of $590,000 with total state appropriation of $1,315,000
- DCH provided additional funding to AHEC in the amount of $150,000
- The first Primary Care Summit was held in 2008; AHEC established the Primary Care Shortages Task force
- The appropriation amount for the state was increased by $500,000
- DCH increased funding to the AHEC with $163,000 to support student housing while on community based clinical rotations and $337,000 to increase the core operating resources for the six regional AHEC Centers
- GA Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine - Georgia Campus (PCOM) Anchor Program was created in Columbus, Georgia
- SOWEGA received a $25,500 grant for strengthening and sustaining health nonprofit organizations
- The State Office of Rural Health (SORH) provided additional funds for housing and stipends in the amount of $55,000
- The Georgia Rural Medical Scholars Program (GRMSP) was established in Magnolia Coastlands
- Loss of SORH funding in the amount of $55,000; legislative funding cut through BOR by 8% at $156,371; amended BOR legislative funding cut of 2% at $34,865
- MCG became Georgia Health Sciences University
- The Primary Care Summit became an annual event
- The Georgia AHEC launched the “Expert Preceptor Training Series” that provided 6 hours of Continuing Education (CE)
- Magnolia Coastlands was awarded GRHA’s 2010 Outstanding Rural Health Program of the Year
- SOWEGA was awarded the 2011 Technology Innovation Award
- Legislative funding cut through BOR from PY2011 original budget by 4% in the amount of $70,950
Georgia Health Sciences University and Augusta State University merged to become Georgia Regents University and the College of Medicine was renamed to the Medical College of Georgia

SOWEGA, Foothills, and Magnolia Coastlands AHEC awarded $12,000 for strengthening and sustaining non-profit organizations

AHEC primary data management system transitioned to the AHEC Database Management System (ADMS) and the AHEC Reporting Management System (ARMS) on the Salesforce platform (SERS)

BOR legislative funding cut from FY11 original budget by 2% in the amount of $35,476; total funding increase from DCH by $693,750

The Mercer University Physician’s Assistant Program partnered with Georgia AHECs to encourage PAs to work in rural Georgia by creating the Community Integration Program

Georgia became the first state to offer a tax deduction, through the Preceptor Tax Incentive Program (PTIP), to community-based physicians who provided uncompensated training to medical students

MCG commits to funding the administrative costs associated with implementing the PTIP legislation for the state

ADMS was implemented statewide

Georgia Regents University became Augusta University

The first tax deductions letters were certified and distributed

The Pathways to Medicine offered by Foothills AHEC in addition to SOWEGA AHEC

Housing funding increased through DCH by $300,000

Foothills AHEC awarded support from the Georgia Academy of Family Physicians for 2016 Pathway to Med School Program

A total of $1,517,000 in deductions were certified by PTIP for 2015

Total funding: $4,511,643

Colorado created their own preceptor tax incentive program; Kentucky and South Carolina introduced legislation for PTIP but they remained as pending items in their legislatures

The Primary Care Summit was changed to a biannual event

Total funding: $4,511,643

Foothills AHEC coordinated a Nurse Practitioner cohort for a post-masters certification in acute care

The Foothills AHEC Intensive Program Scholarship was developed to assist with tracking high school students after graduation

Program Office at Augusta University became the sole AHEC program office for Georgia

Total funding: $4,706,893

The AHEC Scholars program was developed nation wide in 2018

Hawaii’s preceptor tax credit was passed

DCH funding increased for housing by $150,000

The Georgia legislature took the existing PTIP further by abolishing the old tax deduction and replacing it with a tax credit applicable to an individual’s state income tax

The statewide AHEC Network received the substance abuse mental health supplemental grant to train 15 Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) instructors

On January 9th, the World Health Organization announced that the SARS-CoV-19 Coronavirus had emerged in Wuhan, China. Several months later COVID-19 had become a global pandemic

South Carolina passed SB314 as a result of the preceptor tax incentive initiative

AHEC received the supplemental COVID-19 grant in the amount of $95,455

The Statewide AHEC Network received an additional grant to fund the training of an additional 15 MHFA instructors

AHEC primary data management system consolidated to one database, ADMS 2.0, on the Salesforce platform

The Statewide AHEC Network received the Simulation Education Training grant

The National AHEC Organization (NAO) celebrated its 50th anniversary

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