

Vermont SEARCH Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health

Vermont SEARCH: 2010 Summer Community-Based Projects Overview

VERMONT SEARCH AIM:

ENHANCE AND EXPAND ELECTIVE COMMUNITY-BASED ROTATIONS AND SERVICE-LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENTS

The focus of this aim is to expand the community experiences for students during summer or other unstructured time. The regional Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), in conjunction with the University of Vermont, offer a wide range of elective summer experiences for students. These experiences are developed by the regional AHECs, with the University of Vermont, and multiple community partners, to take advantage of the knowledge and relationships they have about the needs and interests of the local communities. The projects may include elements of research, service learning and practice- or hospital-based quality improvement.

Vermont SEARCH purpose

It is critical to support strong links among health profession education programs, healthcare workforce stakeholders, and communities. This is evidenced by the fact that 41% of primary care physicians currently practicing in Vermont were trained at the UVM College of Medicine and/or Fletcher Allen Health Care residency program. Fostering these links is essential to sustain and grow our health care workforce and thereby maintain access to health care for all Vermonters.

The goal of this program is to establish Vermont SEARCH as a collaboration among the UVM College of Medicine; the UVM College of Nursing and Health Sciences; residency programs at the academic medical center; the Vermont AHEC Network and the communities they serve; and primary care practices throughout the state. This will be facilitated in cooperation with the Vermont State Offices of Primary Care and Rural Health, the Bi-State Primary Care Association, rural primary care practices, regional hospitals, federal partners (e.g., the Health Resources and Services Administrators [HRSA], and National Health Service Corps [NHSC]), and other collaborators.

These experiences give students a deeper understanding of primary care in a rural Vermont community, serving underserved populations, the important role of the community, and of the challenges and the rewards of this work and setting.

Primary Care Quality Improvement in Inter-Professional Settings: Geriatrics

The Vermont SEARCH initiative will expand upon AHEC's successful summer project experiences. In 2010, six health professions students, working in teams of two, will be offered an opportunity to participate in summer experiences that combine research, service learning and practice- or hospital-based quality improvement objectives. There will be three projects, (one in each AHEC region) that target issues related to improved health and safety outcomes for geriatric patients. Students participating in this program are referred to as Vermont SEARCH Scholars.

The population of Vermont is aging more rapidly than the nation's population as a whole. Supporting an aging population of Vermonters to live safely and independently will be an increasing challenge for communities throughout the state. The 2008 U.S. Census estimates show that the percentage of Vermont residents over 65 is the 12th highest among the states at 13.9%, compared to 12.8% in the nation. A continued and significant increase in the number of Vermonters over age 65 is projected through 2030.

According to the Vermont State Plan on Aging (2006), the entire state meets the federal definition of "rural." Rural older adults are more likely to live at or near poverty than those in metropolitan regions. Nationally, 17.2% of non-metropolitan older adults are living near poverty level, as compared to 13.5% of older adults in metropolitan areas. Non-metropolitan older adults are less educated and reported themselves to be in poorer health than older adults living in metropolitan settings. Older adults living in rural areas have less access to health care, including specialized health care, and these services tend to be more costly than those provided in metropolitan areas. Rural older adults usually have to travel farther to access these key resources, and yet at the same time, they have less access to transportation. Because of this, many rural older adults have unmet needs. Vermont SEARCH chose geriatrics as its focus for community-based summer projects to address barriers and gaps proactively in an effort to provide more comprehensive and coordinated care options for older Vermonters, and to encourage students to explore the field of geriatrics.

~~Application Priority Deadline: FEBRUARY 22~~ **EXTENDED DEADLINE: March 22, 2010**

Email to swhite@svahec.org

This program is funded by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

Vermont SEARCH

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2010 Summer SEARCH Projects

During 2010, one new summer project in geriatrics will be initiated in each of the three AHEC regions (Champlain Valley AHEC, Northeastern Vermont AHEC, and Southern Vermont AHEC). These projects will be built upon in subsequent years, based on the project outcomes and recommendations of the collaborative community partners. Two Vermont SEARCH Scholars will be selected for each regional project to form an interdisciplinary team. Each student will be paired with a Vermont SEARCH Preceptor in their own discipline, and will be connected to a variety of community mentors, including an education resource professional from the regional AHEC, and others defined by the scope and objectives of the project. The duration of the Vermont SEARCH summer projects will be four weeks.

Vermont SEARCH Scholars will be provided with mentorship support in three areas:

- 1) In the practice setting by their Vermont SEARCH Preceptors,
- 2) In meeting specific learning objectives developed with faculty at the UVM College of Medicine Department of Family Medicine, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and
- 3) In connecting to resources & leaders in the community setting with assistance from a mentor at each regional AHEC.

Vermont SEARCH Scholars will have access to a Community Orientation Handbook via the Web that provides an overview of the project community, target population, socioeconomic and racial demographics, major employers, leading health indicators, community resource contacts (including primary care connections), and a bibliography of relevant resources for rural health practitioners.

In subsequent project years, new Vermont SEARCH Scholars will be linked to peer mentors, i.e., those Vermont SEARCH Scholars who previously completed summer projects in geriatrics throughout the state.

Vermont SEARCH Scholars may experience

- Guidance from clinicians practicing rural medicine and working with underserved populations
- A variety of rural interdisciplinary clinical settings
- Face-to-face interviews with active as well as frail elders
- Opportunities for individual research projects
- Elder care settings that are part of the continuum of care in the rural setting

Project output will include a poster presentation and a short narrative summary that addresses the project objectives, community assets and gaps, findings, practice implications, recommendations for next steps, and suggestions for future projects.

Vermont SEARCH Scholars Selection Priority Order

1) UVM National Health Service Corps Scholars, 2) Other National Health Service Corps Scholars, 3) UVM medical and nurse practitioner students, 4) Other UVM health professions students, 5) Other health professions students. Must have completed first year of training and be making satisfactory academic progress. Best fit for projects will be considered based on complete application.

Access to an automobile is necessary for most project sites.

Vermont SEARCH Scholars Receive

Stipends: \$2,000

Housing: arranged and paid via Vermont SEARCH; scholars may live with a family in the community.

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2010 SUMMER SEARCH EXPERIENCES: APPLICATION FORM

Important Dates

Application priority deadline: ~~February 22, 2010~~; **EXTENDED DEADLINE: March 22, 2010**

Selection decisions: ~~March 10, 2010~~; Rolling basis and *no later* than April 9, 2010

Vermont SEARCH Orientation: May 26 (12-1pm), UVM HSRF 200

SEARCH project start/end dates: July 12 to August 6, 2010; Community Orientation on July 12

Mid-Project Conference Call with all Vermont SEARCH Scholars, preceptors, and mentors: July 26, 2010

Final meeting—all Vermont SEARCH Scholars, a time to share, debrief, and celebrate: August 6, 2010

Final project posters and narratives due: August 16, 2010

2010 offers three specific SEARCH projects, in different regions of Vermont.

Champlain Valley AHEC summer SEARCH project

Seniors Aging Safely at Home (SASH) is an evidence-based, multi-disciplinary project to demonstrate that integrating and delivering individualized, comprehensive services to seniors in congregate housing can improve quality of life *and* reduce service and health care costs. The Cathedral Square Corporation leads the SASH project. Design of the model will be completed in June 2010. Implementation will begin summer 2010 at the Heineberg Senior Housing in Burlington, with replication in six other Vermont communities anticipated in 2011. SASH residents receive an in-depth, multidisciplinary assessment leading to a comprehensive, resident-focused healthy aging plan. The plan establishes healthy aging goals, and provides for coordinated, comprehensive services, including preventive services. Based on a review of all residents' needs, the SASH multi-disciplinary committee plans building-wide activities and services to take advantage of opportunities to improve health among residents as a community. In summer 2010, a SEARCH team of health professions students will work with SASH as follows:

1. Participate in SASH services and activities with residents and staff, and weekly multi-disciplinary team meetings.
2. Investigate how to strengthen primary care practitioner linkages to the multi-disciplinary SASH team and present options to practitioners and the team.
3. Work with the Project Manager and Wellness Nurse to identify and prepare a component of the SASH program for dissemination as a stand-alone activity until the full model can be replicated.

Northeastern Vermont AHEC summer SEARCH project

Linking Elders with Local Food for Better Health

Hardwick, VT is the center of a dynamic movement in the agricultural economy: a community-based, sustainable agricultural system that “closes the loop” in food production. In this ecological vision of agriculture, growers and food producers link to local consumers through restaurants, food retailers, and direct sales; food waste from local consumers is diverted to community composting programs that in turn support local growers. This project seeks to connect elders to this innovative system. Results will be measured in improved health and social outcomes. Partnering with the Hardwick Clinic (a Federally Qualified Health Center), the Northeastern VT AHEC and the Area Agency on Aging, student participants will identify, establish and promote the links that can be made to improve the current food distribution systems for low-income elderly in the Hardwick area.

Southern Vermont AHEC summer SEARCH project

TEAM CARE: Interdisciplinary Student Health Professions Geriatric Learning Opportunity--It Takes a Community to Care for our Elders

Spectrum of elder care: Least institutionalized - most affordable care options. Students will interact with a variety of levels of functionality in which Vermont elders live: primary care practices, long term care, assisted living centers, adult day, private homes, and hospitals. Students will be mentored by two Family Medicine Preceptors in the Brattleboro and Townshend regions. Focus is on the continuum of care in the community and how a family medicine practice coordinates and collaborates within different care settings. Final project will be a paper and poster on a topic related to elder care.

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Professional References

One must be a faculty member with your health profession training program who can verify your enrollment and satisfactory academic progress.

Reference 1 (faculty member)

Last Name	First Name	Relationship
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Title	Organization
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Phone Number	Email
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Street Address	City	State	Zip Code
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Notes about courses taken, or projects completed working with Reference 1 (Optional)

Reference 2

Last Name	First Name	Relationship
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Title	Organization
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Phone Number	Email
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Street Address	City	State	Zip Code
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Notes about courses taken, or projects completed working with Reference 2 (Optional)

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Statement of Interest

Please provide a brief, maximum of one page, typed statement that addresses the following:

What is your interest in rural primary care? Please include any experience with and/or interest in interdisciplinary team practice and geriatric care. You may wish to describe why you'd like to participate in SEARCH, experiences you have had interacting with older adults, what you bring to the project, or how you envision geriatric care fitting with your long-term professional goals.

Your AHEC Region and Project Preference

Rank 1 (first choice), 2, or 3. Rank only the projects that you are willing to participate in if selected. Visit www.vtahec.org for map of Vermont and AHEC regions.

- Champlain Valley AHEC (Seniors Aging Safely at Home) ****Criminal Background Check is Required****
- Northeastern Vermont AHEC (Linking Elders with Local Food for Better Health)
- Southern Vermont AHEC (It Takes a Team to Care for our Elders)

I have access to a car during this project: Yes No

If you have any special connection to one of these community, regions or projects, please describe below:

Resume or Curriculum Vitae

Please attach a copy of your most recent resume or CV.

Criminal Background Check

Some projects and community organizations require a criminal background check prior to the project start date. AHEC will contact you if a criminal background check is required.

Application Check List

Incomplete applications will not be considered. Your application should contain the following:

- Applicant info, two references, and your statement of interest
- Prioritize preference for AHEC region and project
- Attach Resume or Curriculum Vitae
- Application must be submitted via email no later than February 22, 2010 to meet priority deadline

Submitting Your Application

E-mail your completed application, Statement of Interest, and CV to Susan White at swhite@svahec.org. Applications will be shared and reviewed by the three regional AHECs. Decisions will be made based on the best match for each project. Applicants will be notified via email on March 10, 2010. **This is a competitive process.**

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