

ANNUAL REPORT **2017-18**







Letter from the Director



I am proud to present the 2017-2018 Area Health Education Center for Western Washington (AHECWW) Annual Report. Here you will read about the significant growth of the AHECWW in its first full year since its move to its current home at Whatcom Community College. We are honored to have worked with many gracious collaborators across Washington this year, in service to our rural and urban underserved communities. We are grateful to our advisory board for their dedication and insight.

Our work is made possible by funding from the Washington State Department of Health, the Office of Rural Programs and the WWAMI AHEC Program Office at the University of Washington School of Medicine, the U.S.

Department of Health & Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Whatcom Community College Foundation. To these funders, thank you for your guidance and support! We are also grateful to Whatcom Community College (WCC) for hosting the AHECWW; WCC's stellar reputation has been a powerful springboard for establishing AHECWW.

Sincerely,

Cori Garcia Hansen, B.A.,B.S.,CMA AHECWW Director

Letter from Whatcom Community College



Whatcom Community College is extremely proud to host the AHECWW and delighted with the accomplishments that the Center has realized in this first year. The important initiatives that AHECWW has undertaken are already having considerable impact in Western Washington. AHECWW programs foster important connections and inform, grow, and improve health programs and student initiatives in rural and urban underserved communities throughout the region.

The College is honored to work with the dedicated staff and board members of the AHECWW who bring so much initiative to their work. Their accomplishments to date are truly inspirational. We extend our

congratulations and appreciation to the funding agencies and partnerships who have made this work possible, and look forward to their continued support in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Janice Walker, M.Ed.

Dean for Workforce Education

Whatcom Community College

AHECWW Staff



Cori Garcia Hansen, BA, BS, CMA, AHECWW Director. Cori has worked in rural communities, immigration law, agriculture, primary care, and behavioral health, and has experience with grants in various allied health programs. She has background teaching and developing curriculum, and ten years of experience working in clinics and health centers. Cori also serves as an active volunteer in the Bellingham community. She brings ambition, collaborative spirit, and immense work ethic to the AHECWW team.



Kate Di Nitto, MFA, AHECWW Associate Director. Kate has worked in behavioral health, higher education student services, and as a writer and writing teacher. She brings perspective from her eight years working in community mental health as a service provider, and her volunteer work with youth. She is passionate about increasing access to career pathways and comprehensive healthcare. She is also our Youth Mental Health First Aid trainer.



Ellen Barton, AHECWW Health Projects Coordinator. Ellen brings 13 years' experience in community engagement and grant management to her work at AHECWW. Prior to AHECWW, she worked in transportation planning in Washington and California at the county level with a focus on increasing opportunities for healthy daily physical activity. She supports AHECWW projects and grant development. A Mental Health First Aid trainer, she schedules and conducts trainings in rural areas around western Washington.



Deborah Elliott, AHECWW Program Assistant. Deborah brings an invaluable eye for administrative support to the team. Her experience working at the Bellingham School District, Western Washington University, and University Christian Ministries is evident in her organization and enthusiasm for educational administrative support. A recent graduate of Whatcom Community College, Deborah is familiar with the campus community as well as being passionate about her global work with refugees.

About AHECWW- Board of Directors

Chair: Yong Ki Shin, MD

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Co-Chair: Dan Ferguson

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Associate Director, WWAMI AHEC Program Office

Mykenzie Puckering

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Jacqueline Barton True

Director of Rural Health Programs Washington State Hospital Association

Jaice Walker, ex officio

Dean for Workforce Education Whatcom Community College

Cori Garcia Hansen, ex officio Center Director, AHECWW

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About AHECWW



In spring 2017, Whatcom Community College (WCC) was named the site of the Area Health Education Center for Western Washington, due to its leadership in allied health education. AHECWW joins the national Area Health Education Center Programs. Originally established by Congress in1971, the Area Health Education Centers Program is authorized under Section 751 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 294a), as amended by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Public Law111-148 (Affordable Care Act). The AHEC Program has a long-standing history of supporting program activities that focused on health careers exposure at the elementary and secondary school levels, with a particular emphasis on innovative, evidence-based strategies to strengthening the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills at the pre-college levels. In addition, AHECs have focused heavily on health professions continuing education and professional development through conferences, seminars, colloquiums, and workshops."

—Health Resources and ServicesAdministration (HRSA)

Our many thanks to Suzanne Allen, MD, former Director of the WWAMI AHEC Program Office, and Sue Skillman, former Associate Director of the WWAMI AHEC Program Office, for your support during AHECWW's initial year. Thank you, also, to Naveen Kanithi, former Workforce Program Manager at the Northwest Regional Primary Care Association, and former AHECWW Advisory Board member.

About AHECWW

Mission

The Area Health Education Center for Western Washington works with the national AHEC movement to support healthcare delivery systems and access to care through activities that strengthen the healthcare workforce in rural and urban-underserved communities.



Values

- · Health, wellness, and education are the foundation for the vitality and sustainability of communities
- Balanced mental and physical health, as well as social determinants of health, are important factors in promoting health and wellness
- Creative and innovative community centered programs and services
- Stewardship of equity and the right of all people to access quality healthcare and education
- Working with intention to make the greatest impact with the resources available
- Accountability to the rural and urban-underserved communities to listen, recognize their strengths, and serve their needs
- Strength in diversity health care and educational programs that are inclusive and empowering
- Strength in partnerships to work towards common goals and use resources efficiently and effectively

Vision

The Area Health Education Center for Western Washington is an innovative center, providing leadership engaged with diverse rural and urban-underserved communities to ensure access to quality healthcare and health workforce education.

About Whatcom Community College

Whatcom Community College is a regionally and nationally accredited college with an accomplished faculty and staff who serve nearly 11,000 students annually. On its 72-acre campus in Bellingham, WA., and through online courses, Whatcom offers transfer degrees, professional technical training programs, as well as basic education, job skills, and Community & Continuing Education classes. WCC is rated one of the country's top 15 community and technical colleges (Aspen Institute 2018) for four consecutive years. Established in 1967, Whatcom has been accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities since 1976.

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AHECWW 2017-2018 Highlighted Tasks

1.	WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTIONpp	8-9
•	Participate as a member of Washington Resources Group collaborative	
•	Participate with Washington Mental Health Summit Workforce Work Group	

- 2. ACADEMIC PATHWAY/PIPELINE ACTIVITIES.....pp 10-13Pipeline Mapping and Summit
- · Health Professions Affinity Community
- Scrubs Camp

3. COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING & WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION......pp 14-17

- Lead a work group to review the Rural Outreach Nursing Education model and other innovative models
- Assist with the Rural/Underserved Opportunities Program (RUOP) at the University of Washington School of Medicine for western Washington students
- Collaborate with the WWAMI AHEC Program Office for the implementation of AHEC Scholars, Fall 2018

4. TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE DELIVERY......pp 18-21

- Participate in the Northwest Rural Health Conference planning and coordinate workforce intensive track for the conference
- Increase Mental Health First Aid trainings in western Washington
- Provide continuing education to medical providers



1. Workforce Recruitment and Retention

Washington Resources Group

The Washington Resources Group (WRG) is a collaborative partnership of nonprofit and government agencies that provides recruitment services for healthcare facilities located in rural and undeserved areas of Washington state.



Sample postcard front



Sample postcard back

In the 2017-2018 year, AHECWW's participation in WRG supported the development of additional outreach targeting behavioral health provider education programs. AHECWW also created postcards and video interviews of rural providers describing their experiences in rural primary care. These projects engage with the recruitment effort in a creative, community-oriented way.

Video of Dr. Shin & life in Montesano





The Washington State Mental Health Summit is a convening of key stakeholders across Washington, whose aim is to **improve access to effective mental health care through a series of bold initiatives**, each of which is undertaken by a work group. The Summit was created via partnership between Chad's

Legacy Project and UW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Two summits have taken place thus far, October 2017 and May 2018, and work groups developed at the summit are proceeding with actionable steps.

AHECWW is involved in the summit's initiative, "Expanding the Mental Health Workforce," which was developed by summit attendees interested in workforce initiatives. The role of AHECWW on this work group is as a facilitator and to promote the process of developing educational, licensure, and certification programs. The core Workforce Work group consists of Dr. Anna Ratzliff, Director of UW Advancing Integrated Mental Health Solutions and UW Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Division of Population Health (AIMS) Center, Dan Ferguson, Director of Allied Health Center of Excellence, Cori Garcia Hansen and Kate Di Nitto. In partnership with the with AIMS Center and the Allied Health Center of Excellence, the AHECWW is moving forward with two proposals to expand the behavioral health workforce in response to practice transformation and bidirectional integrated care:

- (a) Develop educational, licensure, and certification programs for medical assistants in behavioral health;
- (b) Develop a bachelor's degree pathway to train providers with advanced training in evidence-based mental health treatment to expand the mental health workforce.



2. Academic Pathway/Pipeline Activities

Pipeline Summit and Mapping Project

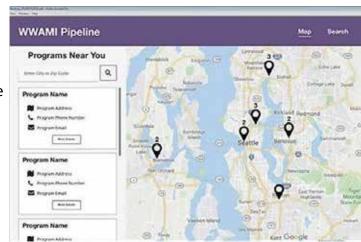
There are a vast number of outreach programs throughout the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho (WWAMI) region striving to bring minorities who are underrepresented in the health care fields toward college level training in the health sciences. Although it has been shown that outreach programs are most successful when they work together to form a "pipeline," our region lacked any systematic effort to encourage programs to work together with a coordinated approach. Partners also recognized the opportunity to provide professional development to programs to strengthen the overall impact, improve data and evaluation of programs, and address any gaps in service.

Pipeline mapping: AHECWW and project partners are compiling data about all the career pathway programs in the WWAMI Region, making it accessible in a searchable database and interactive map to students, advisors, and educators via a website and app:

- Link participants and volunteers to programs.
- Encourage programs to work with neighbors and create opportunities for cooperation.
- Identify both areas of overlap and where there are gaps in programming.
- Improve data collection and measurement of the impact of pipeline programs.
- Research methods to track student outcomes.

Pipeline Summits: AHECWW and project partners are convening annual information-

sharing events to link programs with each other and with participants.



The AHECWW and project partners hosted a kickoff event November 2017, a professional development summit April 2018, and launched a WWAMI-wide survey of pipeline program. The data collected was used to build a prototype website with interactive map and searchable database of pipeline programs created by students of the UW Informatics School. UW and Seattle Data For Good provide IT support and maintenance. The AHECWW will work with the WWAMI AHEC network to collect and maintain data into the future.

AHECWW Pipeline Project Partners:

- Students (UWSOM and Informatics School)
- UW Center for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (CEDI)
- UW School of Medicine Service Learning
- UW Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG)
- Seattle Data for Good
- UW Institute for Translational Health Sciences

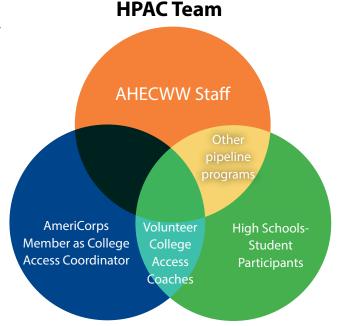
Health Professions Affinity Community (HPAC)

The AHECWW received grant funds from the Washington State Campus Compact to start a Health Professions Affinity Community (HPAC) in Whatcom County, launching fall 2018. The HPAC program AHECWW emulated was designed by Northeast Ohio Medical University. AHECWW will supervise an AmeriCorps Member who will act as a College Access Corps Coordinator—coordinating and overseeing College Access Coaches, who will be local college student volunteers.

This team will facilitate the development of an HPAC at four pilot schools.

Student participants will learn about health career pathways and receive academic support such as tutoring in STEM subjects and college access coaching. Students also design and implement a simple community health project.

The HPAC program also offers valuable experience for its **AmeriCorps Member** and **College Access Coach volunteers**, who are often on health professions pathways themselves. The AmeriCorps Member will be provided training in Washington State's Community Health



Worker Program, Social Determinants of Health, Cultural Humility Training, and data collection.

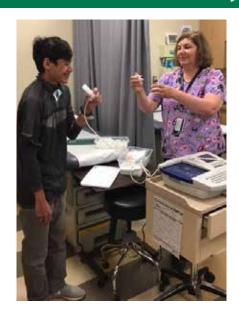
The HPAC coordinator will assist with maintaining regional data and other related duties for Waypoint. The College Access Coaches will use Waypoint to connect students at regional high schools with healthcare-based and STEM pipeline activities.

AHECWW's HPAC project plan consists of phased implementation, starting with a small scale pilot project to be staffed by an AmeriCorps member. AHECWW successfully applied for an AmeriCorps member through the Campus Compact/College Access Corps program to start in August, 2018.

AHECWW staff conducted outreach to potential partners and pilot-project schools during spring 2018. AHECWW staff promoted the HPAC project concept at the Northwest Rural Health Conference in March.

AHECWW is preparing grant proposals for funding phase 2 of the HPAC project with the goal to expand participation to schools in Skagit, Island, and Snohomish Counties.

2. Academic Pathway/Pipeline Activities, cont'd







Other AHECWW pipeline work that seeks to recruit and support under-represented and first generation youth in their pursuit of healthcare careers includes the AHECWW **Scrubs Camp**. This year, AHECWW ran its first Scrubs Camp at Whatcom Community College on July 19, 2018. This camp was held in collaboration with TRIO Upward Bound, a federally-funded grant program that is also housed on the Whatcom Community College campus. Upward Bound holds a sixweek Summer Academy on the Whatcom campus designed to introduce first generation high school students to the college experience. AHECWW offered to host a Scrubs Camp as a field trip to complement their studies in Health Sciences. Twenty-one students participated in a day of hands-on learning activities and presentations. Topics included:

- **Medical Assisting**
- Opportunities in Nursing
- Simulation Technician

- Physical Therapy Assistant
- Massage Therapy
- **Certified Emergency Response** Team demonstration





STUDENT FEEDBACK

I learned about different careers I didn't know about.

Showed me different paths of what I can do and the expectations of what that job does.

Extremely fun and eye opening. I enjoyed it a lot.



AHECWW Pipeline Projects Continuum

"Science in a Box" Curriculum—
to be used with K-12 aged youth as a
classroom tool for interested teachers,
& used as an activity within HPAC.

Scrubs Camp—

where High School students can gain hands-on experience and exposure to different health careers at a one-day workshop, and learn about steps to take for college access.

Health Professions Affinity
Community (HPAC) — introduces
high school students to health-related
careers while empowering them
to address their community's most
persistent health disparities.

Also includes volunteer opportunity for college students to serve as College Access Coaches.

AHEC Scholars—

once students are in a college level health professions education program, they can participate in AHEC Scholars for an added certificate and to connect with industry at events. K-12 Youth

High

School

Aged

Youth

College

Students

3. Community Based Learning & Workforce Distribution

Rural & Tribal Nursing Workforce Development & Education Project

In response to ongoing concerns about nursing shortages and geographic and racial/ethnic disparities in nursing in Washington State, the AHECWW was asked to **evaluate innovative nursing education options** to address these issues. There has been interest in such a program since the 1990s, leading to the creation of the Rural Outreach Nursing Education (RONE) program, which operated from 2009 to 2015. RONE provided a distance learning model, where students could stay in their own communities, working and training at the local hospital—a kind of "homegrown" model. After closing the RONE program, there continues to be a niche for distance learning in rural and remote communities. The AHECWW was also asked to explore how such a program could address nursing shortages in tribal communities.



The AHECWW facilitated a work group on the Rural Distance Learning and Diversity Initiative, to review the feasibility of reestablishing the RONE program, and examined other innovative practices in workforce education. The group pursued options that would meet the needs of rural and tribal partners. The primary objectives of the group were to:

- 1) Improve affordability and access to nursing education in rural and tribal communities;
- 2) Educate and hire a nursing workforce that reflects the diversity of the community.

While industry partners have expressed desire to re-establish RONE and continue creating "home-grown" nurses, it has proven not feasible primarily based on the business model. However, the work group has garnered enthusiasm from nursing and healthcare leaders statewide to design new innovative education options that would address nursing workforce distribution, diversity, and career pathways, such as:

- Nursing Apprentice-like program, potentially emulating Washington State's Core Plus Model for skilled trades.
- Provide options for a "step-in step-out" distance learning program:
 Nurse Assisting, Nursing prerequisites, Practical Nursing, and
 Associates and Bachelors level nursing.
- Create a leadership education pathway for mentorship, preceptorship, nursing education/faculty professional development, and masters/ doctorate education.
- Increase use of simulations to offset barrier of limited clinical practice placements and low census in some regions.
- Create a nurse exchange program between rural and urban communities.

The AHECWW is committed to remaining engaged with the nursing workforce education work group's momentum in the following ways:

- Maintain resources and provide consultation regarding nursing education and training programs.
- Work in partnership with the University of Washington School of Nursing project for the Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention (NEPQR) – Registered Nurses in Primary Care (RNPC) Training Program grant to increase the number of registered nurses prepared to work in primary care, by partnering with rural and tribal communities to provide:
 - relevant curriculum
 - immersion experiences
 - clinical practice placement

3. Community Based Learning & Workforce Distribution, cont'd

Rural/Underserved Opportunities Program

The Rural/Underserved Opportunities Program (RUOP) is a four-week, elective immersion experience in community medicine for students between their first and second years of medical school. Students are



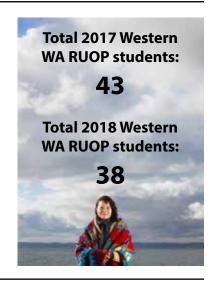
matched with community preceptors in rural or underserved communities. They spend four weeks immersed in these communities, to gain insight into the nature of practicing in rural/underserved areas.

In 2017, RUOP coordination for western WA was shared by UWSOM Office of Rural Programs and AHECWW.

AHECWW took the lead in recruiting and confirming preceptors for the 2018 RUOP summer placements, collaborating with the UW Rural Program office and building on previous RUOP processes.

AHECWW also spearheaded the creation of an online preceptor recruitment form, as well as providing student profiles to preceptor sites.

of 2018 returning preceptors: 30 # of 2018 new preceptors: 8



AHECWW conducted RUOP site visits to:

Sea Mar Everson Medical Clinic • Tulalip Health Clinic • Sea Mar Monroe Medical Clinic

AHECWW also coordinated housing for students participating in RUOP in the Western Washington region in 2017 and 2018. In 2018, AHECWW created a home-stay agreement to facilitate mutual understanding between hosts and students, and reimbursed students for some of their travel.





WWAMI AHEC Scholars Program

WWAMI AHEC Scholars Program



"A HRSA/AHEC branded interdisciplinary educational and training program that focuses on a diverse, culturally competent healthcare workforce that specializes in rural and underserved areas."

—Health Resources & Services Administration



WWAMI AHEC Scholars is an inter-professional and nationally recognized certificate program that emphasizes a team-based approach to addressing health disparities. This two-year program is designed to complement students' existing health professions coursework and provide them with the agile skill set needed to lead health care transformation in rural and urban underserved environments.

AHECWW has been working closely with the WWAMI AHEC program office at University of Washington School of Medicine, and the Eastern Washington AHEC (EWAHEC) on program development and implementation. The pilot year begins in fall 2018 with an initial cohort of students choosing between an online or in-person model.

AHECWW has also been collaborating with Western Washington University to develop a Bellingham-based in-person cohort for 2019, with a combination of students from Community Health, Human Services, Nursing, and more.





AHEC Scholars
Curriculum Topic Areas

Interprofessional Education
Behavioral Health Integration
Social Determinants of Health
Cultural Competency
Practice Transformation
Current and Emerging Health Issues

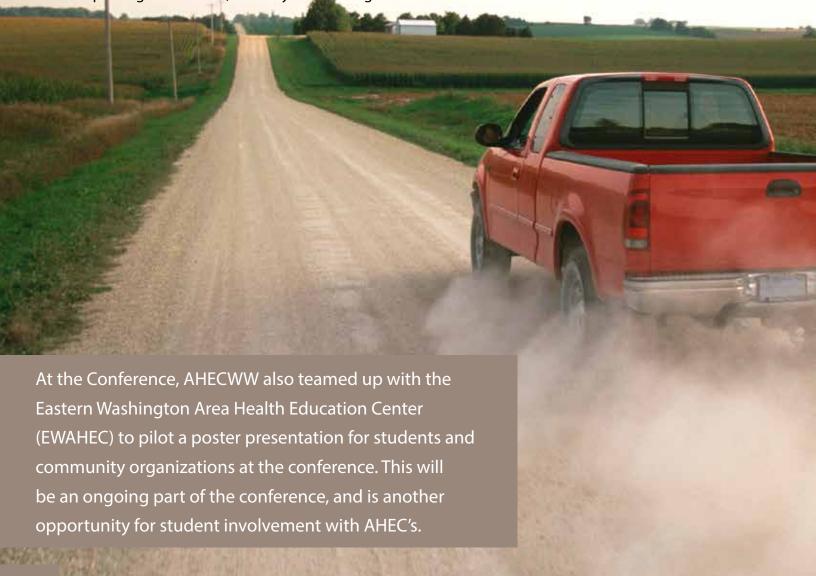
4. Transforming Healthcare Delivery

Northwest Rural Health Conference

In collaboration with the conference planning committee, AHECWW curated and coordinated a Workforce Track for the Northwest Rural Health Conference, held March 2018 in Spokane. The track included three days of presentations, panel discussions, and workforce intensives. Facilitation during the track emphasized building active partnerships to support implementation of innovative practices in participants' communities.

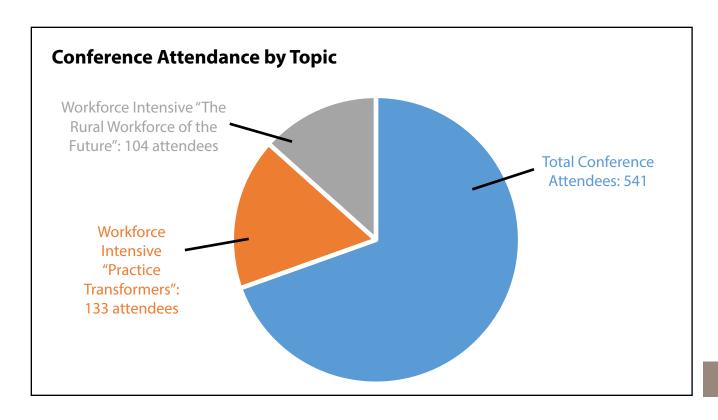
Conference Workforce Topics Included:

- Using data for workforce planning
- Practice transformation: team development, strategies, and workforce need
- Medication assisted treatment for Opioid Use Disorder
- Changing roles in workforce: Community Health Workers & Behavioral Health Assistant
- The workforce pipeline
- Improving distribution, diversity and nursing care in rural communities



2018 Northwest Rural Health Conference Workforce Track Session Titles

- Intensive I: The Rural Workforce of the Future: Strategies to Innovate, Apply Data, and Develop Partnerships
- Intensive II: Practice Transformers: Caring for Communities through Team Development
- Rural Insights from Washington's Behavioral Health Workforce Assessment
- Bi-directional Behavioral Health Integration Toolkit: Building Integrated Teams for Rural Communities
- Demystifying the Behavioral Health Assistant Roles, Services, and Training
- Overcoming barriers to providing medication assisted treatment for Opioid Use Disorder and the expanding supply of providers with a waiver in the WWAMIO region,
- Demystifying CHW What do they do and how can they help your rural community
- The Workforce Pipeline: Creating the Health Workforce of the Future
- Evening Reception University Health Science & RUOP/WRITE/TRUST Student Poster Presentations & Community Projects organized by the AHECs
- Panel Discussion on Improving Distribution, Diversity, and Nursing Care in Rural Communities
- Launching Rural Workforce Development Strategies: Facilitated Discussion
- Building Industry Partnership to Address Nursing Education in Rural & Tribal Communities



4. Transforming Healthcare Delivery, cont'd

Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a training designed by the National Council on Behavioral Health. It teaches community members how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders in their communities.

AHECWW promoted, registered participants, and implemented the following community MHFA trainings in 2018:

January 12: Whatcom Community College: 10 participants

April 9: Penninsula College: 25 participants

April 27: Lifeworks, Longview: 16 participants

May 2: Nooksack Tribe Community Center: 19 participants

May 25: Aberdeen High School: 11 participants



AHECWW partnered with Highline Community College to offer a trainer training for new Mental Health First Aid community trainers. As a result, Washington now has 12 new MHFA trainers across the state.

Mental Health First Aid-What Participants Learn



- *Risk factors and warning signs of mental health and substance use problems
- Information on depression, anxiety, trauma, psychosis and substance use
- *A 5-step action plan to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or in crisis
- *Available evidence-based professional, peer and self-help resources







Continuing Education

AHECWW provides continuing medical education (CME) for medical providers. AHECWW has offered the following CME's this grant year:

"Collaborative Care - New Opportunities for Nursing."

Presented by Dr. Anna Ratzliff, MD, PhD, University of Washington, Advancing Integrated Mental Health Solutions (AIMS) Center.

"Moving from Cultural Competency to Cultural Humility in Free Clinic Settings." Presented by Dr. Carlos Mejia Rodriguez, Community Engagement Coordinator, Molina Healthcare.

21 Participants 8/31/17

90 Participants 5/17/18

Visit AHECWW at www.ahecww.org

Here you will find information for community members, educators, students and employers. AHECWW acts as a statewide resource for training programs, Health Information Technology, current healthcare events, practice transformation, accountable communities of health, and the Sentinel Network. As a part of building our resources, AHECWW staff performed a number of environmental scans in the past year, that inform our work and curated resources. AHECWW strives for relevance, no matter where you are on the health workforce pathway.







THANK YOU

Our Funders







Scrubs Camp and MHFA donors















Pipeline Mapping project partners

- Students (UWSOM and Informatics School)
- UW Center for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (CEDI)
- **UW School of Medicine Service Learning**
- **UW Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG)**
- **Eastern Washington AHEC**
- Seattle Data for Good
- Institute for Translational Health Sciences





360.383.3170 ahecww.org Bellingham, WA info@ahecww.org