



# Wisconsin AHEC On Location

## FALL 2011

"Wisconsin AHEC: On Location" presents highlights of programs and people who bring teaching and learning to life in communities across the state. Suggestions for future articles are welcome; send your ideas to Keri Robbins, AHEC Communications Coordinator (krobbins@wisc.edu).

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## TEACHING: Profile of David Deci, MD

### Belleville Family Medicine; UW Primary Care Clerkship Faculty Director

BELLEVILLE -- "I'm a product of AHEC," begins Dr. David Deci, MD, who works as a Family Medicine physician in rural Belleville and also directs the Primary Care Clerkship curriculum for third-year medical students at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health. "From the very start, I have had an appreciation of AHEC. My professional values were established there."

Following his residency at North Carolina's Mountain AHEC, Dr. Deci embarked on a career in rural medicine that has included 15 years in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia; 9 years in West Virginia; and the past 2.5 years in Wisconsin. All along, his work has been related to rural and small communities; a focus, he says, that has reinforced the value that community brings to education: "the essential need for our learners to be in the community, beyond the four walls of the classroom."

Dr. Deci explains that his passion for rural settings was typically not shared by incoming students assigned to month-long rural rotations during his tenure at West Virginia University: "*Students would go kicking and screaming into the rural areas, then come back and tell us it was the best thing they did in medical school.*"

He hopes for a similarly enthusiastic outcome here in Wisconsin. To help medical students develop interdisciplinary vision and understanding of public health concepts, Dr. Deci encourages students to make broad connections while



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embedded within local community agencies and health departments. Each student is required to complete 24 hours of service work on a community-based project during the Primary Care Clerkship, typically a half-day on site per week. Some of the projects occur in small towns and outlying communities, through placements arranged by Wisconsin's regional AHEC centers and local partners across the state.

Dr. Deci points out that prior to sending students out into the community, the UW prepares students with two years of classroom work that is, for the most part, theoretical: "making sure you lay the foundation, and establish the relevance to the learner." The transition to working on site in local communities becomes an entirely different way to learn – taking their education to the next level of solving population health challenges. ***"The AHEC projects are their first opportunity to apply these concepts, and understand what it means, out in the community,"*** he says. ***"All students need public health knowledge, and the only way to do that is to take the classroom into the community."***

The projects also expand students' teamwork skills beyond working with other students. "Bringing students into teams with others in the community, developing value for what everyone brings to the plate – that's where empathy begins. Wonderful innovative ideas come from community members; our power comes by facilitating the energy in the community. One of the themes I'd like our students to learn is community engagement and community empowerment."

Getting a wide array of community projects launched and establishing academic criteria for evaluating the quality of the work have been highlights of the first part of Dr. Deci's term as Faculty Director. Initial reports from students who have completed projects during Summer and Fall 2011 have been very encouraging. ***"Learners find meaning through these projects because they realize they contribute to the community,"*** he says. ***"Learner engagement in projects through AHEC have a longer life and allow them to see the power to make change on a larger level."***

The multi-week projects are also helpful because students typically see a patient only briefly during the primary care clerkship. Dr. Deci explains: "Over the course of an 8-week rotation, relationships with individual patients are fleeting; the 24-hours of the community project offers the opportunity of deeper connection in the community."

Deeper connections in the community are something Dr. Deci knows from personal experience. He unreservedly models the principles of community engagement in his daily practice. When speaking of Belleville, he is quick to mention with affection several of the local events there, including "UFO Day" - an alien-themed festival at Halloween. Staff members of the Belleville Family Medicine practice appear in the UFO Day parade, including their families.



"It's a perfect match," he says, referring again to Belleville's rural setting - not an alter-ego as an extraterrestrial. The practice in Belleville was founded on the principles of community service, and its reasonable proximity to the UW campus adds appeal. "The best of two worlds: a forward-thinking, resourced, medical school with phenomenal people and being part of a small community where I can really get to know the patients."

***"There are advantages of being a Family Medicine doctor on the front line,"*** Dr. Deci concludes. ***"I can give credible stories from my own practice, and that speaks powerfully to students. It's exciting to be at the cutting edge of molding medical education and using my small-town lens to guide."***

Read more about the UW Primary Care Clerkship: <http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/med-student/pcc>

Read more about the Belleville Family Medicine Clinic: <http://www.uwhealth.org/locations/detail.jsp?locationId=25>

*UFO Day parade image used with permission, courtesy Belleville Chamber of Commerce (2011).*

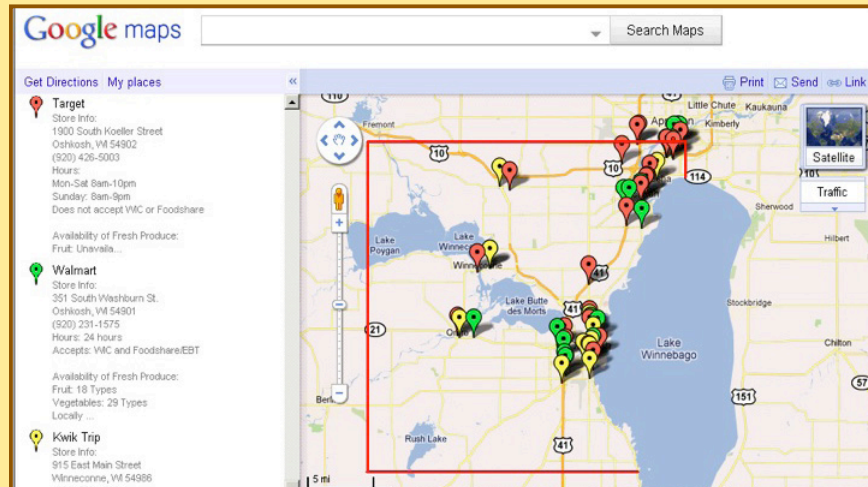
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# LEARNING: Winnebago County Intern Creates County-Wide Food Map

By Josue Flores, Summer 2011 CHIP Intern

OSHKOSH - Working as an AHEC intern in the Winnebago County Health Department proved to be a great experience from which I have learned so much.

The project I worked on this summer was conceived within Re:ThInk, a large coalition of community members whose mission it is to promote healthy living in Winnebago County. Under the supervision of my mentor Matthew Madsen who is an AmeriCorps Member, I worked on a project that addressed the issue of food accessibility, or the degree to which food is accessible in Winnebago County. Specifically, the purpose of my project was to identify areas where the residents of the county have limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. This kind of work is relevant to public health because studies suggest that food accessibility is correlated with health outcomes. For example, people who have limited accessibility to nutritious food have a higher risk of becoming obese.



To address the issue of food accessibility, my project consisted of creating a food map of Winnebago County. A food map shows the locations where people can obtain food; however, for our purposes the map focused specifically on fresh produce. My responsibility was to conduct surveys at grocery stores, convenience stores, food pantries and pharmacies using the Fruit and Veggie Audit Tool from Wisconsin Department of Health Services. I collected information regarding their selection of fresh produce, their participation in low-income assistance programs, and general store information. Based on the data from the surveys, I created a food map using Google, which the health department intends on embedding on [www.rethinkwinnebago.org](http://www.rethinkwinnebago.org) for public access.

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## Two noteworthy trends emerged from the map.

- First, **fresh produce was most accessible in the Fox Cities along Lake Winnebago.** The majority of the retail establishments as well as food pantries were clustered in this area.
- Second, **fresh produce was least accessible in the southern and western regions of Winnebago County.** These areas are food deserts because the people in these rural areas have limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Although this work is preliminary, this map can be used to inform the public about the locations of healthier foods. In the future, these findings can be used to perhaps promote policy changes such as offering tax credits to entrepreneurs for establishing stores in the food deserts of the county. Enacting such policy changes would create an environment in which the entire community can practice healthier eating behaviors. These changes have the potential to resolve the disparities in access to healthier food and improve the health of the community.

In addition to the food mapping project, [during the CHIP internship] I also had the opportunity to shadow several people in the health department. This aspect of my internship gave me a good understanding of how a health department functions. One experience I found especially rewarding. I shadowed a public health nurse who runs an immunization clinic once a month on the day WIC clients pick up their checks. The language barrier makes it challenging for this nurse to recruit Latino WIC clients. Since I speak Spanish, I was able to help her recruit some people from this segment of the population. From this and other shadowing experiences, I learned first-hand what prevention means.

I am grateful for having had the opportunity to participate in the Community Health Internship Program. I will definitely take these experiences into my career as a physician in the future.

## MEMORIAL: Judi Quirt

### South Central Wisconsin AHEC: Program Manager and Education Coordinator (May 2001 – July 2011)



For 10 years, Judi Quirt was the South Central (formerly Southwest) Wisconsin AHEC Program Manager and Education Coordinator. During this time, she was the cheery face and skillful, dedicated coordinator of the Summer Health Careers Camps in the region.

Judi's courageous 15-month battle with pancreatic cancer led to her resignation from AHEC following her 10th year of running the summer camp. Sadly, she passed away on August 23, 2011.

Her work impacted the careers of more than 200 hundred high school students interested in health professions, who in turn will care for countless future patients and clients. Judi's accomplishments include numerous events and activities focused on improving education and health. She launched the Youth Health Service Corps program in East High School and McFarland High School, working with the local Health Occupations teachers to plan and implement the YHSC curriculum and community service projects. She conducted health careers presentations to high schools throughout the 13-county region, and developed and implemented Teacher Training seminars to provide high school teachers with current information about health careers, put them in touch with college admissions counselors, and give them 'hands-on' experiences in local health care facilities.

"Judi's most important accomplishment from my perspective was that of inspiring so many of the high school students that she came in contact with, particularly at the Health Careers camps over the years," says Joel Davidson, Center Director of the South Central AHEC. "She was part 'on-site mom' to them, guidance counselor, confidante, and someone they could check back with on a regular basis. She would frequently hear from them after the camps and was always so excited when they said they were pursuing a health career and that she helped them so much in making that choice."

Judi is also fondly remembered by her colleagues. She worked closely with her counterparts in other regional AHEC centers, especially Milwaukee AHEC and Northeastern WI AHEC, to develop health careers curriculum and other materials. Judi forged collaborative relationships with staff at Edgewood College, Dean/St. Mary's, UW Hospital and Clinics, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, McFarland and East High Schools, and Stoughton Hospital. We miss her greatly.

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*Many participants in the summer health careers camps contacted AHEC after their camp experience to express thanks and enthusiasm for the program and Judi's expertise. Here are two samples among many similar letters that Judi received from students as well as their families:*

**Judi,**  
***I just wanted to thank you again for the opportunity that my daughter Rachel had last week at your camp. She talks about it all the time and tells everyone she talks to about it. Rachel thought all the counselors were awesome. She really, really enjoyed her job shadow experience, as well as all the other opportunities that she had. Your hard work of putting this camp all together is extremely appreciated! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!***

**Beth Miller**

**Hi Judi,**  
***It was really wonderful seeing you again. I didn't think you would have remembered me. Numerous times since that camp I have thought about contacting you and thanking you for the absolutely fabulous opportunity you gave me by letting me attend your camp. I still keep in touch with Kari and Beth from the camp. We are all still very close friends. As I told you today, I am now going to Edgewood College to pursue a degree in nursing. Your camp opened my eyes to so many different areas of health care that when I finally decided on nursing, I knew I was certain. Not only did this camp make me feel confident in a career choice, it also helped me decide where to go to college. Staying at Edgewood for a week, experiencing different areas of the health care field, was an amazing experience I will never forget. I hope to make it back to be a counselor for your camp soon. Thanks again for everything and the wonderful experience.***

**Meghan Orr**

## FEATURED PROGRAM: WiCPHET Weeklong Immersion Experience Scenic Rivers AHEC

CASHTON - Students from across Wisconsin traveled to the Cashton and Hillsboro area August 21-26, 2011 for an immersion experience to explore the differences and opportunities found in rural health. The experience was coordinated by Scenic Rivers Area Health Education Center (AHEC) based in Cashton at Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center.

In conjunction with putting a critical eye on rural health systems, the students were introduced to some of the populations in the region that experience barriers to health care access, including Amish, rural farm families and Hispanic communities. These students are participating in a semester long course that includes the immersion week, future technology consultations, as well as four more visits to the area. The purpose this experience is to facilitate a needs assessment of the rural population and in turn develop collaborative projects with the participating organizations.

The six visiting students, currently working toward a Master in Public Health degree included: Timothy Connolly, Alexandra Ostromecki, Katie Lohse, Lauren Gibbs, Jennifer Whitty, and Cari Cuffney. Their visits included the Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers in Cashton and Norwalk, local Amish farms and apothecary, Vernon Memorial Healthcare and the Gundersen Lutheran clinic, Couleecap in Westby, Lugar de Reunion in Sparta, Dr. James Deline of the La Farge Clinic, St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hillsboro, CROPP Organic Valley Cooperative, Ocooch Dairy, the Kickapoo Valley Reserve and multiple local attractions that helped illustrate the Coulee Region. The vast experience and personal direction of these individuals created a refreshing conversation on the strengths and opportunities of rural healthcare.



*In conjunction with their respective educational institutions, steering committee members for the week were Dr. Gary Gilmore, MPH, PhD, Professor and Director of Graduate Community Health/Public Health Programs, UW- La Crosse; Mark Edgar, PhD, MPH, Program Coordinator of the newly created and funded Wisconsin Center for Public Health Education and Training; Martha McCabe, Executive Director, Scenic Rivers AHEC; Mari Freiberg, Executive Director, Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center; and Mary Brueggeman, RN, MSN, Executive Director of Clinical Services, St. Joseph's Healthcare.*

## NEW Video Resource: “Is a Career in Public Health Right for Me?” Scenic Rivers AHEC

LA CROSSE - Students considering health careers can find inspiration and possibly discover a match in the field of public health, in a snappy new video aimed at providing an overview of health professions careers and related job responsibilities. The video is about 11 minutes, with multiple brief interviews of real people who are working in the La Crosse area in the fields of epidemiology, nursing, health promotion, employee wellness programs, medical outreach to underserved communities, biostatistic research, special events, tobacco control, and other fields. The Department of Health Education and Health Promotion - University of Wisconsin La Crosse, produced the video with funding from the Scenic Rivers AHEC center in southwestern Wisconsin.

<http://www.uwlax.edu/sah/hehp/>

## FEATURED PROGRAM: Hmong Leadership Dance Group

### Summary by Hlee X. Lee

I want to thank North Central AHEC for funding our group to give youth the opportunities to improve their lifestyle and health.

The purpose of the Hmong Leadership Dance Group is to encourage Hmong youth to be more independent, safe, and healthy at a young age. Youth learn to start planning for the future, whether it is going to college, getting a job, or just staying active and healthy for later life.

The youth learn many skills, including:

- Courage to speak up for self
- Education about careers, goals, colleges, jobs
- Accomplish a goal
- Healthy living
- Respect for self, others, and relationships
- Coping mechanisms for emotions, stress and anxiety
- Leadership to take part in community and understand culture differences

The Leadership Dance Group started back in 2009 when 7 girls wanted to do something other than sit around at home. We came up with activities and ended up making a traditional dance routine. We saw that it started making us healthy, so we decided to use dance as an exercising routine. A year later in 2010, we had more youth joining the team. There were 15 boys and 10 girls. We added hip-hop dance, break dance, and traditional dance in the group. That's when we heard about AHEC and thought about this opportunity for AHEC to see what this group is all about. North Central AHEC saw something positive in this group and funded the Leadership Dance Group beginning in 2010.

We currently have 40-50 youth participating. The Leadership Dance Group is held after school at the Wausau YMCA every Friday, at 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. The program is free of charge to youth who wish to participate.



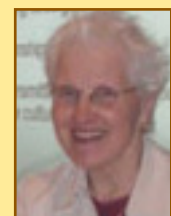
## AHEC Announcements

**Welcome to new staff - South Central AHEC.** Two talented individuals joined South Central AHEC in November:

- **Karen Ball, Program Manager.** Karen was previously employed at Operation Fresh Start, and also worked closely with the South Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board.
- **Wendy Hinz, Health Careers Education Consultant.** Wendy brings 29 years of teaching experience promoting health science occupations, and retired from Middleton High School.

**Mary Bumann retires from Wisconsin AHEC.**

Congratulations to Mary Bumann, who retired this fall from the Wisconsin AHEC program office in Madison. Mary is now available as an independent consultant for workshops about Self Efficacy, Inter-professional Education, and Teamwork, and can be reached at [mbumann@wisc.edu](mailto:mbumann@wisc.edu)



**Community Health Internship Program (CHIP)**

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