Wisconsin Express

2014 SUMMARY REPORT

Spring Break: March 16-22 — 18 students, 2 sites
Summer: May 18-23 — 88 students, 11 sites

PROGRAM SITES: Ashland • Beloit / Janesville • Green Bay • La Crosse • Menominee County • Milwaukee • Minocqua/Lac du Flambeau • Rusk / Barron -Somali Focus • Sheboygan – Hmong focus and Hispanic Focus • Stevens Point • Wausau
Overview

Wisconsin Express is a one-week cultural immersion experience designed to give health professions students the opportunity to study the diverse local and regional healthcare resources and challenges in Wisconsin. The spring 2014 program offered placements at 2 sites, and the summer 2014 program offered placements at 11 rural or urban community sites.

Wisconsin AHEC covers most of the cost of student participation, including workshop fees; instructional materials; shared accommodations in hotel rooms, bed and breakfasts, or lodging maintained by a community organization; and transportation during the week. Participants paid a $200 program fee and the cost of some meals.

SITES
Each site group was multicultural and interprofessional in composition. Every AHEC region hosts at least one Wisconsin Express site (11 total).

- Ashland
- Beloit / Janesville
- Green Bay
- La Crosse
- Menominee
- Milwaukee
- Minocqua / Lac du Flambeau
- Rusk / Barron
- Sheboygan – Hmong focus
- Stevens Point
- Wausau – Amish focus

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS
During 2014, 106 students were selected from applicants enrolled in an interprofessional range of academic programs at 15 colleges across Wisconsin.

The Spring Break program date was piloted in 2014. That session was advertised primarily to students attending UW-Madison interested in the Global Health certificate, which requires a field experience. Strong interest was evident; the new Spring Break opportunity attracted 49 applications for the 18 available spaces. Overall, the program received 173 applications.

SCHOOLS REPRESENTED BY PARTICIPANTS

Summer (May 2014)
- Beloit College 1
- Concordia University 6
- Lakeshore Tech. College 1
- Marquette University 3
- Northeast Wisconsin Technical College 1
- UW-Eau Claire 3
- UW-Green Bay 7
- UW-La Crosse 2
- UW-Madison 49
- UW-Milwaukee 4
- UW-Stevens Point 6
- UW-Stout 1
- UW-Whitewater 1
- Viterbo 2
- Wisconsin Lutheran College 1

Spring Break (March 2014)
- Concordia University 4
- UW-Madison 14
Program Activities

Our intention is to acquaint students with a variety of regional health care issues and provide opportunities to interact with local practitioners and recipients of health care services.

IMMERSION EXPERIENCES

The health care challenges and innovations within each site are unique, and student activities vary according to the character of the region. Spring and summer 2014 highlights included:

- Conversations with Somali students attending Barron High School
- Meeting with a Mennonite physician
- Tour of La Clinica, a multicultural multi-service free clinic in Wautoma
- Tours of grocery stores serving Hmong and Amish communities
- Domestic violence shelter tour
- Tour of Amish school, homes, and shops; discuss Amish health care
- Tour of Oneida Community/Reservation
- Cooking a meal at an emergency shelter and eating with residents
- Shadowing at Memorial Medical Center, a critical access hospital
- Focus Group with Latino Immigrants
- Focus group on individuals experiencing homelessness at Salvation Army

REFLECTION

Reflection occurs daily through guided conversations facilitated by the local site coordinators and in independent study. At the end of the week, students are encouraged to reflect on their experience in journal entries. Participants write responses to these questions:

1. What was your most significant or remarkable experience this week?

2. How might your experiences this week affect your future practice as a health professional?
Site Descriptions

ASHLAND
Lori Cannon, RN
8 student participants

The Ashland site gives students the opportunity to see a wide variety of rural health care settings, including women’s health, acute care, public health, tribal clinics, and others in the Chequamegon Bay region. Students hear from a diverse group of practitioners who discuss the challenges and rewards of working in rural health and providing culturally appropriate care for Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) populations. Students explore the unique scenic area.

BELOIT / JANESVILLE
Angela Flickinger, MPH, RD, CPT
6 student participants

The Beloit/Janesville site offers students an opportunity to study and explore rural and urban issues related to health care and diversity in the region. Various organizations and health care disciplines offer students experiences focusing on the Hispanic, African American, uninsured/underinsured, homeless, and rural populations.

GREEN BAY
Chris Vandenhouten, PhD, RN
6 student participants

The Green Bay site offers students an opportunity to explore the diverse cultures in this area of the state, which include the Native American culture of the Oneida Nation and the Hispanic communities. Students also get firsthand experience with uninsured, underinsured, and homeless populations and spend time with health and social service providers.

LA CROSSE
Robert A. Milisch, MEd, RRT
6 student participants

The La Crosse site gives students an overview of the background and health care needs of the Hmong and Amish populations in the area. Students meet with a physician who treats Amish patients, an Amish carpenter, and visit Amish homes, shops, and a school. Students participate in a community free clinic serving those with chronic illnesses who cannot afford traditional care. Students visit and participate in the activities of a homeless shelter.

MENOMINEE COUNTY
Gail Nelson, MA
8 student participants

Menominee County offers a complete immersion into the Menominee Native American tribe. A historical perspective about termination and restoration is provided, along with an overview of health disparities affecting the community. Students learn how residents have been engaged and empowered to create change for their people.

MILWAUKEE
Suzanne Letellier, MEd
12 student participants

At the Milwaukee site, students explore issues related to culture and health care access while interacting with a variety of health disciplines. Several community-based organizations host the team. Students interact with Milwaukee’s Hispanic, African American, and Hmong communities and those who are homeless or participating in AODA programs. Students also interact with health professionals who work with underserved populations.
The Rhinelander/Lac du Flambeau site offers students opportunities to consider health care issues facing rural and Native American communities in the Northern Highland region of Wisconsin. Students explore key health concerns such as chronic illness, obesity, substance abuse, and domestic/sexual violence. Participants interact with professionals who experience the challenge as well as the satisfaction of serving these populations.

The Rusk/Barron sites offer students an immersion opportunity to explore health care issues facing rural communities with an emphasis on Somalian culture. Students visit free clinics, hospice programs, hospitals, long term care facilities, the domestic abuse shelter, public health, the Health Care Academy, the International High School and others. In addition, program participants have an opportunity to do a service project to improve the medical supply needs of the county’s poor and underinsured.

Approximately 6,000 Hmong live in Sheboygan. A health needs assessment (2000) documented serious problems in health care access and health literacy in this population. The Hmong Community Center has implemented a number of unique programs addressing these needs. Along with learning about the programs, students enjoy a rich cultural experience gaining first-hand knowledge of Hmong history, culture and traditional health beliefs.

The Stevens Point site offers students a variety of experiences designed to illustrate the health care needs of low income, Hmong, Native American, and Hispanic residents of Stevens Point and surrounding rural communities. Students explore services that are available in Central Wisconsin including a free health clinic serving low income, uninsured and migrant populations, and a shelter where students learn about aspects of shelter operation.

The Wausau–Amish site offers students opportunities to learn about Amish culture and rural health care practice. Central Wisconsin has a significant Amish and Mennonite population in four counties. Students visit families, businesses, public agencies, and health care providers in Amish/Mennonite communities to explore how respect for culture can interact with state-of-the-art health care. They learn about the balance between cost of medical care and reduction of risk.

“This experience was eye-opening for me. While it is common sense that to treat someone effectively you need to understand their background, this goes much deeper than their ethnic heritage. For this reason, it is imperative that future healthcare providers take the time to learn as much as they can about various ethnic and social cultures and gain a general appreciation for the differences among people”

- Milwaukee site past participant

“I would recommend this program to anyone interested in turning their education into reality. I learned an astonishing amount of information in a short span of time, and I’m excited at how I can apply it as a volunteer and in my career.”

- Menominee site past participant

“This is an incredibly worthwhile experience that offers a great opportunity to see the cultural diversity that is within Wisconsin.”

- Sheboygan site past participant

“The Wisconsin Express program provides a very unique opportunity to future young professionals to gain insights into the culture, healthcare, and the unique integration of the two. Most curriculum does not officially include training in cultural sensitivity and inter-professional skills, hence Wisconsin Express provides the opportunity for a hands-on learning experience.”

- Menominee site past participant
Wisconsin Express is a Wisconsin AHEC program.

Join us next year!

2015
WISCONSIN EXPRESS

March 29-April 3, 2015
May 17-22, 2015

Applications available online beginning in mid-December 2014:
www.ahec.wisc.edu

Spring Break Applications due:
Monday, January 5, 2015

Summer Applications due:
Friday, February 13, 2015

Early applications encouraged!

For more information, contact:
Keri Robbins, MS Ed.
Wisconsin Express
Program Manager

(608) 265-2442
KROBBINS@WISC.EDU

About Wisconsin AHEC

The Wisconsin Area Health Education Center (AHEC) program is a health professions education and outreach program supported by the State of Wisconsin, federal grants, the state’s health professions training programs, and local communities. It is part of a nationwide network of programs for improving accessibility and quality of primary health care. The national program was designed to encourage universities and educators to look beyond their institutions to form partnerships that meet community health needs, working toward the goal of decentralizing health professions training and linking communities with academic health centers in partnerships to promote cooperative solutions to local health problems.

The Wisconsin AHEC System consists of seven regional centers located in Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Beloit, Cashton, Wausau, Superior, and Marinette. Each center operates under the direction of its own governing board. A statewide program, located in the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, administers state and federal contracts to the centers and maintains several statewide programs. Representatives from the seven centers, health professions programs and community at-large members all come together in a 22 member statewide board that meets quarterly to set overall program objectives and review progress.

Wisconsin AHEC programs serve all the health professions programs in the state. Over the last 20 years, project partnerships have included (in addition to the two medical schools) over 20 BSN nursing programs, eight advanced degree nursing programs, three physician assistant programs, three social work programs, the UW School of Pharmacy, the MPH programs, and a range of allied health and preprofessional programs at the 13 UW System campuses, 21 private colleges, two tribal colleges and 13 UW System two-year campuses. Wisconsin AHEC Centers collaborate regionally with the Wisconsin Technical College System (16 colleges with 47 campuses and numerous outreach centers) particularly the campuses offering associate degree nursing programs and a variety of other health professions technical training programs. Wisconsin AHEC has also worked with family practice residencies sponsored by the UW SMPH, Medical College of Wisconsin and La Crosse-Mayo programs, with a particular focus on the rural training track programs.

Regional centers provide a range of programs and services in their regions. Program areas include the following:
- Enhancing the learning experience for all health professions students at community-based sites, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary programs, developing cultural effectiveness, and technology support;
- Supporting health careers recruitment program in underserved rural and urban areas, to assist high school and college students from under-represented populations prepare for entry into health professions schools;
- Supporting faculty mentors and preceptors at community-based training sites with continuing education, technology support and other services to enhance the practice environment and maximize the ability of health professionals in underserved communities to provide high quality health care; and
- Partnering with local organizations in a variety of outreach activities to improve the health of the community.