



AHEC Scholars Summer Projects: 2023

The Office of Primary Care and AHEC Program offers a variety of opportunities for medical students enrolled in the VT AHEC Scholars Program during the summer between first and second year. The AHEC Scholars Program is a national program guided by AHEC’s Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant requirements. The overarching goal of the AHEC Scholars Program is for students to gain a valuable understanding about the social and cultural factors that influence an individual’s overall health and their ability to access care. We aim to prepare tomorrow’s health professionals to be leaders in interprofessional, transformative practice, especially for those with the greatest needs. Additional goals of the summer projects are to increase students’ knowledge and skills in research and quality improvement and to foster a lifelong interest in scholarly activity. The program is designed to be relevant to students interested in any medical specialty.

The AHEC Scholars Program is a voluntary, nationally recognized program for health professions students. It provides opportunities for students to increase knowledge, strengthen leadership skills, and gain competencies within eight broad topic areas.

The AHEC Scholars Program and these projects are part of AHEC’s longitudinal workforce research about influences on specialty selection and future practice—location, type of practice, and the patient population served.

Eight AHEC Scholars Priorities

Topic	Emphasis or examples
Interprofessional Education	-team-based care and patient-centered care
Behavioral Health Integration	-services that better address the needs of individuals with behavioral, mental health and substance use conditions, including training for health professionals to address burnout and resiliency
Connecting Communities and Supporting Health Professionals/ Community Health Workers (CHWs)	-increase training and development of paraprofessionals who serve as connectors between health professionals and the community
Virtual Learning and Telehealth	-leverage technology to improve curricula and community-based experiential training
Social Determinants of Health	-addressing food insecurity, economic inequality, access to education, social and community context, access to health care, neighborhood and built environment, etc.
Cultural Competency	-care that address the unique culture, language and health literacy of diverse communities
Medical Practice Transformation	-quality improvement, care coordination, cost containment, rural health care, primary care, care for underserved or disadvantaged populations
Current and Emerging Health Issues	-current HRSA-approved topics: Opioids and Substance Use Disorders, Oral Health as part of Overall Health, COVID-19

Summer project format and learning objectives

The commitment for these activities is approximately 100 hours: 40 hours of didactic (reading, online modules, discussions, and self-guided learning) and 60 hours of field work (i.e., the specific project). Summer projects meet the requirements for one year of eligible activities toward the AHEC Scholars Program.

AHEC Scholars Summer Projects are hosted by three organizations: UVM AHEC Program, Northern Vermont AHEC and Southern Vermont AHEC.

The AHEC Scholars Summer Projects have two tracks:

1. Research and Quality Improvement Track

Didactic hours

Core curriculum is led by UVM Office of Primary Care and AHEC Program. Students complete basic instruction in research methods conducted via asynchronous discussion of weekly assignments on Microsoft Teams. Materials include the textbook *Designing Clinical Research* by Hulley and colleagues, and online modules from the *Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)*. Students earn an IHI Certificate of Quality Improvement and Patient Safety.

Field hours

Students typically work on projects in teams of 2-5. The faculty and staff develop several topic areas each year, but there is flexibility for the team to shape the direction of the project. The individual projects may include literature reviews, development or pilot testing of surveys or patient assessment instruments, primary data collection, provider or patient interviews, data analysis, writing up results, and editing. Project choices are described on pages 4-9.

Learning objectives

Upon completion of this training, AHEC Scholars will:

- i. Understand the basic concepts of research project design
- ii. Be prepared to apply concepts of quality improvement in healthcare
- iii. Experience and practice Microsoft Teams as an effective collaboration tool
- iv. Be able to articulate the importance of the national AHEC Scholar Priorities as they relate to quality and equity in healthcare

Meeting dates

Summer Projects Orientation Meeting - **Thursday, May 18, 5:30-7:00 PM, In-Person**

Mid-Summer Check-in Meeting - **Thursday, July 13, 5:30-7:00 PM, Zoom**

End of Summer Debrief - **Thursday, August 10, 5:30-7:00, Format TBD**

Didactic instruction and field projects will run from **Monday, June 19 - Thursday, August 10**. Individual project teams determine the schedule of project-specific meetings.

Deliverables

Due by Wednesday, August 9

1. One-to-two-page (individual) reflection on what you have learned, the skills you have acquired, and how your participation in the summer curriculum **relates to the AHEC Scholar priorities**.
2. Documentation of required learning module completion (e.g., IHI Certificate in Quality and Patient Safety).
3. Project Abstract--Brief (200 words or less) summary of the project (one report for the team).
4. Other deliverables (e.g., poster, data analysis) are project dependent and will be determined by the project team.
5. Brief evaluation form completed at the final meeting on Thursday, August 10.

2. Education and Mentoring Track

Didactic hours

Core curriculum is led by Northern Vermont AHEC). Students complete readings from the book *The Fearless Organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth* by Amy Edmondson and other materials. Students participate in synchronous and asynchronous discussions via zoom and slack.

Field hours

Students work in teams as teachers and mentors for high school students enrolled in the MedQuest program, the Governor's Institute on Health & Medicine, or other early pipeline-related projects. Project choices are described on pages 10-13.

Learning objectives

Upon completion of this training, AHEC Scholars will:

- i. Understand the role of a mentor in goal-focused groups
- ii. Apply strategies for effective group development in learning teams
- iii. Describe the Learning Zones framework and Tuckman's model of group development as they apply to teaching and learning
- iv. Ask purposeful questions and apply related STEM teaching methods

Meeting Dates

Education and Mentoring Projects Orientation - **Wednesday, May 17, 2023, Zoom**

End-of-Project meeting: **Wednesday, August 9, 2023, Zoom**

Project-specific dates listed in the project description.

Deliverables

Due by Wednesday, August 9

1. One-to-two-page (individual) reflection on what you have learned, the skills you have acquired, and how your participation in the summer curriculum **relates to the AHEC Scholar priorities**.
2. Documentation of required learning module completion.
3. Brief evaluation form completed at the final meeting on Wednesday, August 9.

Stipends may be available to participants for certain AHEC projects. If a stipend is offered, it is a taxable transaction for income tax purposes and a 1099 Form will be issued.

Summer 2023 Research/QI Projects

1. Food Systems Projects

Faculty: Mark Pasanen, MD, Patti Smith Urie, AHEC Scholars program

Collaborators: Julia MacGibney, Access Center Manager, Feeding Chittenden (CVOEO), Alex Franz and Emmet Moseley, Food Access Coordinators for Franklin and Addison counties (CVOEO)

Background

- Access to healthy food is a critical social determinant of health (SDOH). Healthy eating is influenced by many factors, such as transportation, availability, nutrition and food preparation knowledge, cost, cultural background, eating habits, health conditions and specific dietary needs.
- Charitable food programs have a long history of addressing hunger. In recent years many have incorporated additional aims related to overcoming stigma, providing culturally appropriate foods, reducing food waste, incorporating nutrition education, increasing healthier options, and supporting local farmers and food systems.
- Nationally and in Vermont, healthcare providers are implementing SDOH screening and developing referral procedures and programs to support healthy eating.
- Collaborative efforts have resulted in the development of innovative strategies to address problems of food insecurity in Vermont communities. One such effort, the Food Access Network, launched an online ordering system called PantrySoft to tailor weekly food boxes that are delivered to homes or picked up by recipients. See [Online ordering system created for Vermonters facing food insecurity - VTDigger](#).

Overall project focus: How can healthcare providers and community organizations partner to make progress in the areas of food security and access to healthy food? This project will collect information about the current collaborations between healthcare providers and community agencies in the Food Access Network. Activities may include interviews with local stakeholders, literature review and exploration of national models, and preparation of materials to guide the development of future partnerships. This project may be a good fit for students who will be in the Burlington area and have an interest in visiting programs in Addison, Chittenden, and Franklin Counties, including opportunities to shadow the CVOEO Food Access Coordinators and assist with filling and distributing food boxes.

Additional activities could include assisting CVOEO staff in reviewing Food Access Network data to analyze trends, present data to stakeholders, and identify potential methods for collection of new data. This may be a good fit for students who want to participate remotely.

- Beyond # receiving a service, how can the Food Access Network collect data to describe the outcomes for recipients?
- What impact does use of the PantrySoft app have on consumption of healthier foods and other impacts to health?

Project specific objectives, questions, or goals for 2023

- Examine the CVOEO Food Access Program Champlain Valley as an example of community agency and healthcare program collaboration to address food security/healthy eating.
- How do regional differences in the Champlain Valley (Addison, Chittenden and Franklin County) communities impact the program design? What lessons can be shared with other Vermont locations interested in implementing similar programs?
- What do healthcare providers know about the Food Access Network program? What is the experience of healthcare providers? What are barriers/opportunities for improvement?
- How can CVOEO collect and use data for program improvement and to describe program impact?

2. Electronic Medical Record projects

Faculty: Rachel McEntee, MD (Hospitalist and Informaticist), Alicia Jacobs, MD (Family Medicine), Patricia King, MD (General Internal Medicine), Jim Li, MD (Hospital Medicine) Marie Sandoval, MD (General Internal Medicine), and others.

Background

There are several project areas that may appeal to students who are interested in informatics, health literacy, physician-patient communication, or patient education/activation.

- Open Notes
 - UVMHC in the Epic EMR participates in the concept of *Open Notes*, in which patients have access to their medical records, including notes generated by the health care team.
 - While *Open Notes* has been in place at UVMHC for several years, it is not clear how well patients can navigate the Epic patient portal to access their notes, and, once they find the notes, how understandable or helpful they are. Prior summer projects have explored the patient experience with the patient portal and Open Notes, in both the inpatient and outpatient settings.
- Standardization of documentation
 - There are myriad ways in which physicians and advanced practice professionals (Physician Assistants and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses) document in the medical record. There are ongoing efforts in the Medical Informatics group to make medical documentation as efficient, accurate, and understandable as it can be, but there is still considerable variability.
- e-consultation
 - Given the limited availability and long wait times for specialty consultation, our health system has established an e-consult system in which a specialist, in response to a request from primary care, reviews a patient's clinical record and provides a very prompt consultation. The system reduces wait times for expert advice and helps clear the backlog of consultation requests.
 - An ongoing student project started in 2022 assessed the patient perspective on e-consultation. Results are still pending. A summer project for 2023 can build on the findings from this project by getting broader input from patients, assessing clinician perspective, or assessing the effect on consultation volume and wait times.
- Patient portal messaging
 - The Epic patient portal, MyChart, is increasingly used for communication between patients and clinical practices. MyChart is continuously evolving based on needs and capabilities.
 - Collecting patient and clinician perspectives on what aspects MyChart communications are working well and which need improvement is needed.
- Modern Approach to Prostate Cancer Screening (MAPS) Tool
 - Clinical decision support tools offer information or guidance to clinicians and/or patients at the “point of care”, where the information can be most useful. A multidisciplinary group of clinicians developed and deployed the MAPS tool to help a patient decide if he wanted to pursue prostate cancer screening, and what the appropriate interval for screening would be, based on risk factors. The MAPS tool has been operational for 5 years, but its impact has not been assessed.
 - The goal of a 2023 summer project would be design and implement an assessment strategy.

Project specific objectives, questions, or goals for 2023

- A high level goal of the EMR projects is to expose students to the complexity of the EMR and the roles of the people who help support it, including an understanding of how a career that includes medical informatics is open to physicians from every specialty.
- The project specific goals are listed above. Which projects move forward during the summer of 2023 will depend on the interests and experience of the students involved.

3. Communication disabilities in healthcare

Faculty: Charles MacLean, MD (General Internal Medicine), Jennifer Oshita (Clinical and Translational Research Program), and Gordon Powers (Family Medicine, Milton).

Background

- Patient-provider communication is a foundational element of healthcare delivery, but may be influenced by communication disabilities (e.g. cognition, hearing, or speech), information overload (e.g. new cancer diagnosis with a complex treatment plan), setting, provider communication style, patient-provider relationship, and other factors.
- Approaches to improve clinical communication include bringing a “communication companion” along to visits, use of a written after-visit summary, communication via an electronic patient portal, and others. Our systems for inclusion of communication companions is not well developed.
- We have developed and pilot-tested the *Patient-Companion-Provider Communication Tool* that is designed to elicit patient preferences for overcoming communication barriers. The next step in this project is to deploy the survey and summarize results to inform how best to improve our clinical systems.

Project specific objectives, questions, or goals for 2023

- What are patient preferences for improving communication with their health team?
- How can we encourage the use of communication companions where appropriate?

4. Office of the Healthcare Advocate: Medical Debt

Faculty: Mark Pasanen, MD, Charles MacLean, MD (General Internal Medicine, Patti S. Urie
Collaborators: Mike Fisher, VT Chief Health Care Advocate, Vermont Legal Aid, Sam Peisch, Health Policy Analyst at Vermont Legal Aid

Background

- The Office of the Healthcare Advocate works to address access to care and health equity across Vermont. A consumer assistance phone line staffed by 8 advocates handles about 300 cases a month. Analyzing the content of the calls provides a window into what is or is not working and the kinds of problems people are facing.
- The Office of the Healthcare Advocate also has a Public Policy and Advocacy team. This team works to identify key healthcare topics, provide recommendations, and advocate within statewide forums including the Vermont Statehouse.
- Medical debt is a current priority for the Office of the Healthcare Advocate.
 - People with Medicare and no secondary coverage are a vulnerable group. Very low-income adults have coverage from Medicaid; when they turn 65 their coverage may be reduced as they transition to Medicare as their primary insurer.
 - Many prescriptions that are written go unfilled. A number of these are for valid reasons and would be expected. Is there also a group of people not filling them because of existing medical debt or financial concerns?
 - Healthcare providers may have limited understanding of the impact of medical debt on patient care, and attention to this issue may increase awareness.

This project may appeal to students interested in advocacy and legislation, healthcare funding, and social determinants of health such as health insurance status and ability to pay for healthcare. This

project may include interviews to collect perspectives/experiences of older patients and a survey of medical provider awareness. Some parts of the project could be completed remotely.

Project specific objectives, questions, or goals for 2023

- How do existing medical debt, insurance coverage, and other financial considerations affect patients' decisions about accessing care?
- Do healthcare providers understand how finances/medical debt may be impacting patient choices? How often do they inquire about or recognize this as a barrier?
- Healthcare advocates have identified ways that current insurance programs fall short in meeting the health care needs of low-income older Vermonters. The goal of this student project is to collect data and information to inform and support recommended solutions.

5. Health Equity and Patient-Centered Care in the Medical Home: Review and Update to Wellness and Screening Forms

Faculty: Kathy Mariani, MD MPH (Family Medicine) and others

Background

- Primary care settings have made changes over past few years to be more inclusive and affirming to patients at risk for health disparities among different LGBTQ, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. Signage and communication in the patient visit can enhance or hinder quality of care depending on language use
- Transformation of primary care settings to be more welcoming to gender diverse patients and other vulnerable groups are not clearly defined and analysis and recommendations for clinics would improve care.
- Forms and screening tools are one of the tools that can both create an inclusive welcoming environment or further alienate populations. Project will evaluate these forms to assess for wording and questioning that is inclusive.
- Community stake holders such as Outright Vermont and Pride Center are potential collaborators in a survey of gender diverse community members for their recommendations for changes in primary care forms and signs

Project specific objectives, questions, goals for 2023

- Goal is to evaluate and update signage, communications, screening and health intake forms with a lens of health disparities and vulnerable populations in order to improve patient experience and care in the medical home
- What are identified shortcomings of forms, screenings, signage and processes within the medical home? What are the questions or controversies?
- What are best practices identified in the literature for screening, questionnaires and signage in medical home?
- Which sector is leading the way, providing examples to learn from?
- What is happening in VT? What is happening nationally?
- Project will result in a Guide for transforming Primary Care Settings based on findings

6. Patient Health Education to Advance Health Equity in Rural Communities QI project

Faculty: Susan White, SVTAHEC, and Andrea Wicher, MSW, Community Health Rutland

Background

- *Community Health* (formerly Community Health Centers of the Rutland Region) is the largest of the 12 federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) in Vermont. *Community Health* includes six medical facilities comprising a primary care network that provides nationally recognized programs, a focus on wellness, dental, behavioral health and pediatric specialties, and walk-in Urgent Care.
- In 2022, a student intern identified key health topics that are prevalent in the patient population, including diabetes awareness, signs of depression and anxiety, nutrition and exercise, alcohol and substance use disorders, oral health, sleep, and heart health.
- Providers are requesting information to share with their patients. Using a health equity lens, this project will identify one to three health education/promotion topics, research best practices, and develop handouts and /or other tools that can be easily shared by providers to patients to achieve consistent messaging across the service area. The information will be distributed to primary care practices.
- There is also a possibility for some follow-up to last year's AHEC Scholars' project on racial, gender and ethnicity data collection in the practices.

This project focuses on best practices in patient education to produce culturally appropriate patient education materials on priority health topics previously identified for the Community Health service region in Rutland County. Students will prepare patient education materials – written and/or electronic -- appropriate for each practice site's patient population. Community Health Marketing department can assist with producing and distributing these materials, including adding a possible dot phrase in the electronic health record. Although the project can be completed remotely, we encourage in-person visits to the FQHC sites and one or more community/ state partners.

Project specific objectives, questions, or goals for 2023

- Research best practices on the identified priority topics.
- Identify ways health equity approaches and interventions can be applied in a predominately white, rural population.
- Assess factors necessary to make patient information appropriate and accessible to all (e.g. differently abled, culturally and linguistically diverse, etc.)

8. AHEC Interprofessional Education (IPE) Challenge Project: Prevention of Firearm Injury: A Public Health Concern

Faculty: Mary Val Palumbo, DNP, APRN

Background:

- Each day more than 100 Americans die by firearms and nearly 200 are shot and injured. These deaths are preventable.
- A comprehensive public health approach is needed to address the gun violence epidemic. Public health is the science of reducing and preventing injury, disease, and death and promoting the health and well-being of populations through the use of data, research, and effective policies and practices.

- A public health approach to prevent gun violence is a population level approach that addresses both firearm access and the factors that contribute to and protect from gun violence. This approach brings together institutions and experts across disciplines in a common effort to: 1) define and monitor the problem, 2) identify risk and protective factors, 3) develop and test prevention strategies, and 4) ensure widespread adoption of effective strategies.
Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. (2020). The Public Health Approach to Gun Violence Prevention. [PublicHealthApproachToGVP-EFSGV.pdf](#)

The broad goal of this project is to research firearm injury in the state of Vermont and propose targeted interventions for at risk populations. The focus of the summer project will be to collect Vermont specific data on the following 1. Firearm suicide 2. Firearm homicide 3. Domestic violence 4. Police- involved shooting 5. Unintentional shootings 6. Nonfatal firearm injuries. Project activities include compiling a list of current policies and interventions and completing a gap analysis to inform suggestions for population specific interventions for health care providers. A variety of health professions students will be recruited.

Project specific objectives, questions, or goals for 2023

- What are the elements that comprise a culture of gun violence, including the political, social and environmental factors that contribute to violence in a Vermont community?
- What age groups are most at risk for firearm injury or death in Vermont?
- What areas of Vermont are most at risk?
- What policies or interventions are in place in Vermont and is there data to show effectiveness?
- What gaps in policy and interventions exist in Vermont?
- How should health care professionals become involved to reduce firearm injury in Vermont?

Summer 2023 Education/Mentoring Track

1. MedQuest Program Mentors

Faculty, Staff and Community Collaborators: Southern Vermont AHEC, led by Amanda Richardson, Director of Health Careers Exploration, Rutland Regional Medical Center, Springfield Hospital and North Star Health

Project dates and locations

Session #1 **July 24-26, 2023** (Mon & Tues 8am-4pm, Wed 8am-6pm)
Springfield Hospital & North Star Health

Session #2 **August 2-4, 2023** (Wed & Thurs 8am-4pm, Friday 8am-6pm)
Rutland Regional Medical Center

Virtual planning sessions being in early June (dates/time set by mutual agreement).

Expectations for in-person/virtual field work

MedQuest is a 6-day in-person commitment (consisting of TWO 3-day sessions), plus weekly virtual planning sessions beginning in early June. The planning dates/time will be set by mutual agreement.

Sessions are held in-person in Rutland and Springfield, VT. Mentors commit to attending both sessions in full on-site. Lodging will be provided, along with reimbursement for approved travel expenses.

Background

- MedQuest is a 3-day health careers exploration program for high school students hosted at a local Southern Vermont healthcare facility. The program is a day camp format for up to 20 high school students per session. Students will hear from health professionals from a variety of healthcare careers, participate in at least one job shadow experience at the host site, and will have the opportunity to consider possibilities for a future healthcare career. The students will participate in small groups to have in-depth discussions on current issues in health including ethics, health equity, teamwork, and professionalism. [MedQuest | Southern Vermont Area Health Education Center \(svtahec.com\)](https://svtahec.com)
- AHEC Mentors will assist in preparing and presenting materials to students as well as facilitate small group discussions and activities. Mentors will have the flexibility to create their own active and hands-on learning modules for students. Mentors will also have the opportunity to learn about the host sites for their own professional development.
- Mentors will be working with minors. A criminal background check and completion of a no-cost online mandated reporter training through the Vermont Agency of Human Services, Department for Children and Families are required.

Project specific objectives, questions or goals for 2023

Aligned with national health science standards and state education quality standards, the goals of MedQuest are to increase participants' knowledge, skills, and abilities in the following areas: health careers, teamwork, patient care, health equity & inclusion, and self-awareness.

Number of students requested: at least 4

2. Advanced MedQuest Program Mentors

Faculty, Staff and Community Collaborators: Southern Vermont AHEC, led by Amanda Richardson, Director of Health Careers Exploration, Rutland Regional Medical Center, and Vermont State University at Castleton

Project dates and location

June 26-30, 2023 8am-4pm, Rutland Regional Medical Center and VT State University Castleton
Virtual planning sessions begin in May (dates/time set by mutual agreement).

Expectations for in-person/virtual field work

Advanced MedQuest is a 5-day in-person commitment, plus weekly virtual planning sessions beginning in May. The planning dates/time will be set by mutual agreement.

The Advance MedQuest Program session will be held in Rutland, VT. Mentors commit to attending the session in full and on-site. Lodging will be provided, along with reimbursement for approved travel expenses.

Background

- Advanced MedQuest is a 5-day health careers exploration program for up to 15 high school students who have previously participated in MedQuest and are seeking a more in-depth health careers exploration experience.
- Advanced MedQuest is hosted at Rutland Regional Medical Center with one day at Vermont State University, Castleton Campus. The program is a day camp format. Students will participate in at least one intensive job shadow experience at the host site and will have the opportunity to learn via simulation or other similar hands-on experience.
- Mentors will assist in preparing and presenting materials to students as well as facilitate small group discussions and activities. Mentors will have the flexibility to create their own active and hands-on learning modules for students.
- This project may employ additional health professions students, such as Nursing, as needed.
- Mentors will be working with minors. A criminal background check and completion of a no-cost online mandated reporter training through the Vermont Agency of Human Services, Department for Children and Families are required.

Project specific goals

Aligned with national health science standards and state education quality standards, the goals of MedQuest are to increase participants' knowledge, skills, and abilities in the following areas: health careers, teamwork, patient care, health equity & inclusion, and self-awareness.

Number of students requested: at least 3

3. The Governors Institute on Health and Medicine

Faculty, Staff and Community Collaborators: Northern Vermont AHEC, led by Nicole LaPointe

Project Dates

Residential Institute: **Sun, July 9 to Sat, July 15, 2023** (Northern Vermont University Lyndon Campus). On-site staff training **Sat, July 8**.

Virtual orientation and pre-clinical learning component: **Monday, June 26 to Thursday June 29** from 11 AM to 3 PM (Monday required)

Expectations for in-person/virtual field work

The Governors Institute on Health and Medicine is a 7-day in-person commitment, plus 4 days of virtual orientation and pre-clinical learning in June. Mentors commit to attending the session in full and on-site (location TBD). Lodging will be provided, along with reimbursement for approved travel expenses.

Background:

- **GIV** is a 7-day, 6-night residential science enrichment and career exploration program for high school youth. [Summer 2023 Programs for High School Students | GIV](#)
- Mentors will lead and assist in teaching clinical skills including history-taking, physical examination, clinical investigations, using diagnostic reasoning, procedural practice, effective communication, teamwork, and professionalism in healthcare settings. Content is primarily delivered through hands-on activities, scenario-based learning, and case discussion.
- Mentors will earn first aid certifications and qualify for certification as a **Vermont EMS First Responder (VEFR)**. If you are interested in exploring VEFR certification, AHEC staff will assist you with meeting the additional requirements.

Project specific goals

Aligned with national health science standards and state education quality standards, the goals of MedQuest are to increase participants' knowledge, skills, and abilities in the following areas: health careers, teamwork, patient care, health equity & inclusion, and self-awareness.

Number of students requested: 10

4. Pre-Medical/Pre-Health Enrichment Program for Vermont State University

Faculty, Staff and Community Collaborators: Southern Vermont AHEC, led by Susan White, and Andrea Corcoran, Ph.D, Castleton University, Assistant Professor Health Sciences

Project Dates June – August (exact dates flexible)

Expectations for in-person/virtual field work Project can be completed remotely.

Background

- UVM AHEC offers a Pre-Health Enrichment Program (PEP) for selected UVM undergraduate students interested in health professions.
- Modeled after UVM AHEC's PEP program, PEP-VTSU is an extracurricular enrichment program being developed and coordinated by SVTAHEC for Vermont State University students interested in learning about, and potentially pursuing, a career in medicine or other health professions.
- The PEP-VTSU Program will be geared toward professions in high demand in Vermont, with emphasis on meeting the needs of the Vermont health care workforce.
 - *Behavioral/Mental Health
 - *Long Term Care/Home Health
 - *Substance Abuse and Prevention
 - *Community and Public Health
 - *Emergency Medicine and Preparedness
 - *Primary Care in Rural areas
- Summer project students will support the development of the PEP-VTSU Program by identifying resources for Vermont State University students interested in pursuing a health profession.

Project specific goals and questions for 2023

The overall goal of the project is to assist in the development of the PEP-VTSU program by providing suggestions for extracurricular supports and opportunities that are tailored to the specific needs of VTSU students.

Activities to help reach this goal could include:

- *Conducting focus groups or qualitative interviews with identified VTSU students and/or faculty/staff about VTSU student needs. What are their questions and concerns? What do they need in the area of information or supports to be strong graduate school candidates or employee applicants?
- *Research medical school/PA/other health professions admissions requirements. What is their ideal candidate, what do admissions offices look for in (Vermont) students?
- *Review VTSU course offerings for which classes could meet graduate/medical school requirements.
- *Identify other existing resources available for students to supplement their applications.
- *Explore potential mentoring matches between LCOM Med Mentors Student Interest Group and VTSU students

Number of students requested: 2