



VERMONT AHEC SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Program Overview: Larner College of Medicine CLASS OF 2027 and 2028

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.

National AHEC Scholars Priorities	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

The AHEC Scholars Program and its 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.

National AHEC Scholars requirements:

To achieve the distinction of being recognized as an AHEC Scholar, students must complete a minimum of 80 hours of AHEC eligible activities per year in two separate years (160 hours total). The 80 hours are comprised of 40 Clinical/Field hours and 40 Didactic hours.

Interested students are required to “enroll” in the AHEC Scholars Program. If you have not already enrolled, the enrollment form is available on the www.vtahec.org website.

Vermont AHEC Scholars Program at LCOM

The **VT AHEC Scholars** program offers extra-curricular activities that allow for exploration of identified topics that may not be deeply covered in the LCOM curriculum. The overarching goal of the AHEC Scholars Program is for students to gain an understanding of the social and cultural factors that influence an individual's overall health and 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. Program activities are designed to be relevant for all medical specialties and our flexible pathways approach offers students the option to focus on the topics of most interest to them.

Students pursuing the designation of **VT AHEC Scholar** must meet the minimum requirements – 160 hours of AHEC eligible activities completed over the course of 2 years. Each eligible 80-hour pathway includes 40 didactic hours and 40 clinical/field hours. Additionally, all VT AHEC Scholars are required to complete the *Smiles for Life* oral health education modules, described below. Only those students completing all requirements will be designated as "Vermont AHEC Scholar" at time of graduation.

80-HOUR PATHWAYS OFFERED DURING M1 AND M2

AHEC sponsored Education and Mentoring SIG

- Didactic curriculum offered August – January (M1 or M2)
- Field hours include mentoring/medical education activities associated with the HERO and/or Med Mentors SIG groups. The 40 field and 40 didactic hours are completed in the same M1 or M2 year
- Interested students apply following an orientation session in August

AHEC Summer Projects in the Research/Quality Improvement or Education/Mentoring Tracks

- Projects completed June-August (summer between M1 and M2)
- Approximately 100 hours: 40 hours didactic/60 hours of field activity
- Factoring the compressed timeframe and commitment required to participate in this AHEC workforce research activity, a \$1,500 participation stipend may be available
- Competitive application process in February/students are selected and notified in early March

AHEC Sponsored Public Health Projects (PHP)

- Projects completed Fall (M2)
- Students select and are assigned to an AHEC- sponsored project

80-HOUR PATHWAYS OFFERED DURING M4

AHEC-sponsored Advanced Integration elective courses (4th Year elective courses)

- Courses are offered during several 2-week elective blocks, currently Sep, Oct, Feb, or Mar (M4)
- Current topics include Addiction Medicine, Community Engagement and Social Medicine, and LGBT Health. Course topics and dates subject to change
- Courses are announced in November prior to LCOM's Advanced Integration lottery

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- Students may complete the requirements with activities in M1 and M2 by completing two 80-hour pathway options that do not overlap. The three combinations are:

Summer Project and Public Health Project

Summer Project and Education/Mentoring SIG (M1 or M2)

Public Health Project and Education/Mentoring SIG (M2)

If you have not completed all requirements in M1 and M2, you can enroll in an AHEC Sponsored elective course to complete the program in your fourth year.

M1/M2 activity and AHEC 4th year elective course



It is important to note that students must earn at least one year of requirements in M1 or M2 to complete the AHEC Scholars program.

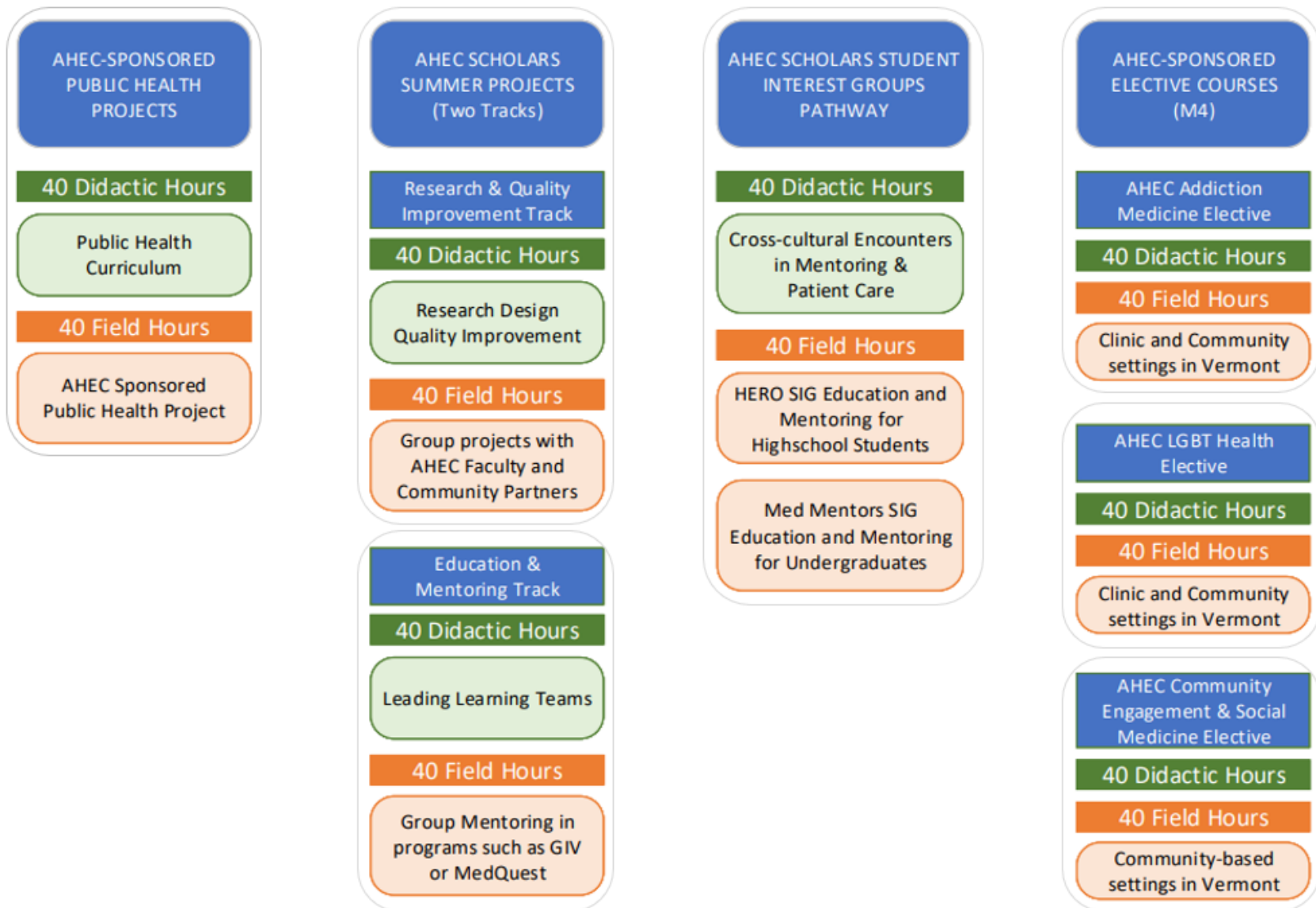
- The program requires completion of the *Smiles For Life* ([Continuing Education | Smiles for Life Oral Health](#)) national oral health curriculum (8 modules, up to one hour each). Oral health as a part of overall health is a HRSA-approved priority area for the Vermont AHEC Scholars program. Some *Smiles For Life* modules may be included in the LCOM curriculum; AHEC Scholars complete all eight modules and submit completion certificates to AHEC no later than March of their fourth year. Students have flexibility as to when the modules are completed, all at once or spread over time. Module content may be most relevant during the third-year clerkship.
- Once minimum requirements are met, students are encouraged to continue working with the AHEC Program. Many students who have completed the requirements choose to enroll in a 4th year elective.
- AHEC maintains a record of eligible activities for students enrolled in the AHEC Scholars program. AHEC transcripts are provided to students at regular intervals, and we are always happy to answer questions about progress toward meeting requirements.

Please reach out to Patti Smith Urie to check in on your status or discuss pathway options.

Patti.smith-urie@med.uvm.edu

National AHEC Scholars requirements: Program duration must cover at least two years, with each of the years including 40 hours of didactic education and 40 hours of eligible experiential or clinical training, for a total of 160 hours of eligible activities. Vermont AHEC offers four opportunities for LCOM students to complete a year of AHEC Scholars eligible activity. **To meet VT AHEC Scholars requirements, students complete *Smiles for Life Modules* and a minimum of two 80-hour pathway activities in two separate years.** The two years of Pathway activities can be completed in consecutive or non-consecutive years.

VERMONT AHEC SCHOLARS PROGRAM 80-HOUR PATHWAY OPPORTUNITIES



Questions about the AHEC Scholars Program and requirements can be directed to Patti S. Urie patti.smith-urie@uvm.edu