

# South Central AHEC



Alaska Primary Care  
ASSOCIATION

## APCA Workforce Development

### Upcoming Events

See what's happening this month.

9/11 Deadline to apply for  
Apprenticeship Cohort 7

9/14 - 11/13 [PATH Academy](#) for  
English Language Learners

10/2 - 10/9 HPOG PATH

10/12 - 10-30 AAI PATH  
Academy



## AHEC Scholars

By current Scholar **Christina Afonin**

The AHEC Scholars program is a 2-year training program available to students who are in the final two years of their Alaska Healthcare program. The program challenges the scholar to complete 40 hours of didactic training as well as 40 hours of community-based learning in a rural area or with the under-served urban population. The program provides six topic areas pertinent to the goals of practicing in healthcare, these include:

- social determinants of health
- cultural competency
- behavioral health
- interpersonal transformation
- current and emerging issues.

The didactic hours can be completed as a self-paced instruction through viewing pre-recorded webinars from reputable resources such as The National Children's Advocacy Center and sometimes even a Youtube video on a pertinent topic! There are many resources that offer online courses that one can read through and complete for credit, such as the United

States Agency for International Development. AHEC also receives information about local conferences occurring in Alaska that one can attend!

The community-based hours provide the scholars networking opportunities as well as work experience all culminating in a stipend of \$500 for completion of the cumulative 40 hours. This stipend can also include travel support, if the scholar travels to rural areas, which includes the cost of flights, and aids in finding lodging during your stay in the area. Rural areas include places outside of Anchorage which can range anywhere from Wasilla, to the Kenai Peninsula or even Nome or Bethel! The under-served population is locally based and includes volunteer work done with the Brother Francis Shelter or Catholic Social Services. During completion of community based learning hours, one can expect to provide education in many capacities to youth or adults, prepare food or deliver prepared food to individuals seeking support from these community resources. It might even be general support to the facility in a simple capacity but is aiding in their overall mission. The AHEC Scholars program includes these benefits while also offering mentorship and an enlightening personal experience throughout the program.

### **What AHEC means to me...**

I am currently working towards my Bachelors of Science in Nursing and have three semesters left! Admittedly, I initially signed up for the stipend, but also the opportunity to learn a bit more about rural areas. Alaska is such a big and diverse population, and I really haven't ventured too far from the Kenai Peninsula or the Anchorage bowl but have always been interested in learning more about the rural state as well as how healthcare reaches those communities. One year into the program, I have experienced a form of comradery in giving back to my community.

My AHEC journey had a drastic change due to COVID19 and I have had to be innovative in completing my training hours. Because of the change in the current climate, I was also able to participate in a program that I felt passionate about, the Baby Box Program (having previously heard about its beginnings in Finland) but couldn't have volunteered for due to scheduling conflicts.

Participating in this program forced me to overcome personal insecurities and allowed me to gain more confidence in my own abilities and made me proud to work with the AHEC scholars program to offer

education through the Premera Baby Box initiative. The Premera Baby Box program in partnership with Providence Alaska Medical Center, to help combat infant mortality, offers a 2'x1' cardboard “safe-sleep” box in addition to some goodies for newborns and informative brochures about newborn care.

### **[AHEC's partnership with Premera Baby Box.](#)**

I was also able to give back to Alaskans in the healthcare industry, by sewing cloth face masks, to help combat the spread of COVID19. The didactic hours I have completed have opened my eyes more to the resources available as well as a general overall sense of purpose in giving back to our community and opened my eyes to the issues that surround healthcare today. I am grateful for all that I have learned and have been able to contribute and am excited to see what I will accomplish in my second and last year as an AHEC Scholar!

### **[AHEC Scholars Program](#)**

## **South Central AHEC News!**



### **Featured Employee: Meet Sydney Burns!**

Sydney Burns, a longtime Anchorage resident, received her BSN from UAA in December 2019 and is a registered nurse, currently working at Southcentral AHEC as a Health Educator Coordinator. As a nursing student, Sydney was also an AHEC Scholar! Participating in the AHEC Scholar program served to enhance her dream of giving back to her community through education and the healthcare industry. Regarding her experience as an AHEC Scholar, she says, *“Learning about health disparities and the influence of social determinants of health really led me to want to focus on community health. The power of public health is that you can improve the lives of those you've never even met, here and now, and in the future.”*

As an AHEC Scholar, Sydney was able to teach a behavioral health camp to high school students in Kodiak. She was able to lead art therapy and team builders with these students and found the experience to be impactful for the students as well as herself. Sydney was also involved with Catholic Social Services' Refugee

Assistance and Immigration Services program, where she created a curriculum to help navigate programs such as SNAP, WIC and how to utilize the Farmer's Markets in Anchorage. She found the AHEC Scholar program to be illuminating as she was able to expand her knowledge in a way that she wouldn't have otherwise had access to.

After finishing nursing school, she wanted to pursue a career in public health education and is currently enrolled in UAA's Master of Public Health Program. Sydney also works with Alaska Primary Care Association (APCA), working on the development and support of Community Health Centers with contact tracing on behalf of the State of Alaska.

Sydney started working with AHEC as a temporary hire to offer some teaching days but was quickly hired on full time as a Health Education Coordinator. Sydney loves learning and reports that, *"AHEC is constantly growing and evolving. I love that we are always working on new projects and coming up with new ways to serve our community. I am excited to see what the new year brings."* She teaches in AHEC's PATH Academies which offer adult education classes and high school camps, as well as working with AHEC Scholars in Southcentral by connecting and placing the Scholars into their desired CBEL. She has additionally taught classes like Mental Health First Aid and Adverse Childhood Experiences and says, *"The most rewarding part of my job is helping to make people's goals attainable and empower them to truly believe they can achieve anything they can dream of. I love working with the folks we work with."*

In her free-time, Sydney spends time with her family, friends and her pups, as well as volunteering. She volunteers with Chugiak Volunteer Fire Department and is additionally working on becoming an EMT1! When asked about how she stays motivated in all her endeavors, she eloquently stated, *"I love learning and I can't stop myself from jumping into a project when I am interested in it. I think that the reason for the variety of experiences in my life so far is just trying to find my place in the world and find different ways that I can serve others. I feel as though it is the least I can do to leave my little corner of the world in better shape than when I found it."*

-Christina Afonin, AHEC Scholar



## Apprenticeship Program

We have a new Cohort of Apprenticeship students opening up! Deadline to apply is **September 11, 2020**.

Our Apprenticeship program includes:

- Certified Coding and Billing Specialist
- Certified Electronic Health Records Specialist
- Certified Clinical Medical Assisting
- Certified Medical Administrative Assistant

We understand the health workforce shortage in Alaska can be challenging for Community Health Centers. One way we could make a difference is in the area of "grow your own"- knowing that people from small communities who can find a good job, with fulfilling career advancement, are more likely to stay in those jobs for a longer time. This is good for the individual, the CHC, and for the community. The Apprenticeship program requires that the apprentice be employed, have a dedicated mentor, and experience both didactic and on the job training. Exams at the end of the apprenticeship will be proctored both distantly and in the APCA office.

We welcome health care employers to enroll your employees into our upcoming Apprenticeship cohort. Deadline to apply is September 11, 2020. The program is funded by the State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) grant program and is free for employers and apprentices. This is the final round of SAE grant funds available.

[Learn more about our Apprenticeship Program](#)



## Credentialing Service

Did you know we offer Credentialing Services for our Alaskan Community Health Centers?

We provide fully comprehensive credentialing for providers including Primary & Secondary Verification.

- National Practitioner Data Bank
- Office of Inspector General
- Education Verification
- State of Alaska License Verification
- DEA Verification
- Employment History & Professional References
- Immunization Status
- & more!

Community Health Centers will receive Credentialing files for providers and have final review. Simply send documentation to Cassandra, our Credentialing

Coordinator, and we take care of the rest! Please visit our website or contact Cassandra to learn more.

[Learn more about our Credentialing Service](#)



### Upcoming AAI PATH Academies:

The American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) PATH Academy is healthcare Pre-Employment Training for adult participants to explore potential entry-level career pathways in the Healthcare field.

**09/14 - 11/13** We will be hosting a PATH Academy for English Language Learners that will last 9 weeks instead of the typical 3 week academy. This course is intended for those who are learning English or would like to take a slower paced class. This class will be a combination of online and in person and reliable internet connection is required.

**10/12 - 10/30** We will be hosting a DSP-focused PATH Academy. Direct Support Professionals work directly with those with intellectual and physical disabilities. Pending decision for virtual/in-person classes. Reliable internet is required for virtual classes.

Our PATH Academy graduates will become certified in:

- Mental Health First Aid
- Basic Life Support (BLS)
- First Aid
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Core Competencies

[Learn more about our AAI PATH Academy](#)