

Health Professions Students Community-Based Student Education & Service-Learning

Texas AHEC East advocates **community-based student education (CBSE)** for health professions students, with an emphasis on providing primary care services for underserved populations. By facilitating health profession students' clinical training and encouraging them to provide service to the community (**service-learning**), AHEC hopes to instill in the student a desire to return to a community setting to practice after graduation. AHECs place students in learning experiences with interprofessional healthcare teams in underserved communities.

Ongoing Site Recruitment and Maintenance

We recruit and maintain training sites by making site visits, assessing practices, assisting health professionals in their introduction and commitment to teaching and evaluating students. We make every effort to identify new learning opportunities, working collaboratively with health science center faculty to identify options in primary care and specialty learning opportunities.

During the past year we

- recruited and/or maintained 217 community-based training sites and a pool of community faculty, primarily physicians, for student clinical training;
- placed 540 health professions students, from 42 campus partners, in 17 disciplines;
- worked closely with sites in underserved areas, enhancing their ability to provide health care while being sensitive to limited staff resources in vulnerable practices;
- included service-learning projects as part of the training in approximately 12% of the community sites.

Service-Learning

Students provide community service that responds to concerns identified by community members. Through this process, they learn about the connection between service, academic coursework, and their roles as citizens of that community.

- Service-learning strives to achieve a balance between service and learning objectives; partners must negotiate the differences in their needs and expectations.
- Service-learning places an emphasis on addressing community concerns and broad determinants of health.
- In service-learning, there is the integral involvement of community partners; a principle-centered partnership between communities and health professions schools.
- Service-learning emphasizes reciprocal learning; traditional definitions of "faculty," "teacher" and "learner" are intentionally blurred - each learns from the other.
- Service-learning emphasizes reflective practice - reflection facilitates the connection between practice and theory and fosters critical thinking.
- Service-learning places emphasis on developing citizenship skills and achieving social change; students place their roles as health professionals and citizens in a larger societal context.

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