




Annual report

a salute to the many heroes among us



2020-21



Southern Regional
AHEC | Area Health
Education Center

In affiliation with the Duke AHEC Program
Part of the NC AHEC Program

The challenges created by COVID-19 were no match for the forces of ingenuity that kept its disruption from negatively impacting our operations. Despite a stressful year of closures, lock downs and remote learning, the health care heroes of Southern Regional AHEC adapted quickly. From transitioning to telehealth options for patient appointments, to a wide range of web/ZOOM conferences, to assisting in the development of contract tracing modules used by public health departments throughout the state, we continue to make a difference in the communities we serve and beyond.

We salute our entire Southern Regional AHEC team as heroes for beating overwhelming odds with winning results. We thank them for their dedication to serving others.

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MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT/CEO SUSHMA KAPOOR, MD

There has been an overwhelming effect of the pandemic on our professional lives which created complex personal circumstances in some shape or form. Even with that much unrest and uncertainty, as an organization, we did well. Together, we faced a myriad of challenges, including upgrading our electronic medical records, and still met many of our key performance indicators.

We adapted to virtual learning and, with great success, adopted telehealth to clinically assess our patients. In addition to our regular education programs, our continuing professional development offerings included a variety of mindful and self-care opportunities in support of selfless front line health care professionals.

It's been over 18 months of constant change and adaptation, but we've demonstrated that we are up to the task. I am pleased that you have taken the time to examine our work over our past year by reviewing this report. *You will be amazed.*

Sincerely,



Sushma Kapoor, MD
President/ CEO
Southern Regional AHEC



Sushma Kapoor, MD, President/CEO
teaches during Chief Residents' Workshop in May 2019



Southern Regional AHEC Mission

The mission of SR-AHEC is to deliver quality healthcare education.

SR-AHEC meets its mission of addressing the region's health workforce needs by:

- Promoting state of the art healthcare education
- Continually seeking innovation in the education experience
 - Providing timely information resources
- Improving access to care through high quality clinical services
- Increasing the number and diversity of practicing healthcare professionals

CORE VALUES

The core values of SR-AHEC are:

- Service to others
- Accountability
 - Integrity
 - Diversity

RECRUIT • TRAIN • RETAIN

NC AHEC Mission and VISION

The mission of the NC AHEC Program is to provide and support and services with a focus on primary care in rural communities and those with less access to resources to recruit, train, and retain the workforce needed to create a healthy North Carolina

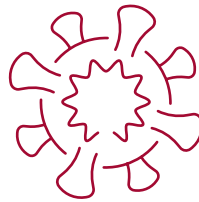
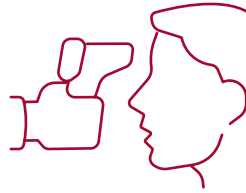
The vision of the NC AHEC Program is a state where every North Carolinian is healthy and supported by a well-trained health workforce that reflects the communities it serves.



COVID-19 forced us to do things differently in 2020-21. Our leaders determined that employee and patient safety were priorities and implemented protocols to overcome the challenges. See how Southern Regional AHEC provided solutions to the many difficulties caused by the pandemic:

COVID CHALLENGE

Employee and Patient Safety

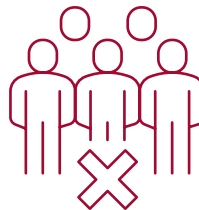


SOLUTIONS

- Daily temperature checks for all visitors/ employees.
- Mandatory masks in Clinic areas, shared spaces and hallways. Providing masks to all patients.
- Implemented COVID triage line for the sick employees
- Training staff on proper usage of PPE.
- Work from home when possible.
- Revising our meetings and travel policy.
- No outside food vendors.
- Arranged for onsite food trucks four days a week for employees. (see page 4)
- Education regarding symptoms and the 3 Ws

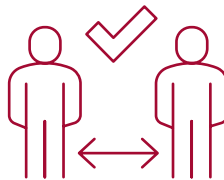
Economic Impact

Challenge included: Not all speakers are comfortable with the technology and not all agree to present using virtual platforms



- Financial assistance from the Federal and the State government
- Expand Telehealth services
- All CPD staff quickly learned how to use the various virtual platforms available to them.
- Selected staff had experience with Webex prior to COVID

Disruption in the learning of our residents



- Maintain staggered schedules for residents and also developed backup schedule in case of sickness among the residents



- Developed a quarantine elective for the residents

Food Trucks and Southern Regional AHEC: A Yummy Combo That Offers Lunch for Employees and the Community

The teal and white truck's rubber wheels inch carefully over graveled dirt that sits between The Family Medicine Center parking lot and the ranch-style house on Terry Circle, which operates as a temporary home for medical students on rotation. Rob Russell exits the truck's door to prop up the stainless steel shelf underneath the serving window. It's noon. And hungry medical professionals are just being released for lunch.

On Wednesdays, when the *RBurger* food truck arrives at SR-AHEC, the waiting line already snakes around the west side of the parking lot. The popular eatery serves up sizzling burgers or hot dogs, with a side of homemade skin-on fries. "We are happy that we are able to serve the employees at Southern Regional AHEC because they are helping our community, especially at this time," says Mary Russell, the other half of the team who takes food orders from customers.

At the height of the pandemic, up to four days a week, a different food truck arrived at Southern Regional AHEC with the intention of loading up plates with comfort food for all. Some regulars included:

- *Chrison's*
- *Gianna's Fried Pizza*
- *Big T's*
- *Street Eat*
- *Scotty's All American*

In early 2020, the pandemic's social distancing restraints halted regular food delivery for residents and/or education program participants. SR-AHEC administration made the conscious decision to offer convenient meals where health care heroes could stay safe by implementing the three Ws, enjoy something special for lunch during an often challenging workday, while helping keep local businesses afloat. The idea came from SR-AHEC's Executive Team who felt it would be something meaningful to provide employees.

"More than 50 percent of our employees were unable to work from home because they have to be onsite to provide patient care," said CEO **Sushma Kapoor, MD**. "With the pandemic, we also felt that the food truck industry could operate under social distancing rules, as there are no indoor seating options." The Executive Team agreed that the food truck idea would be a great resource for employees. At the same time, it gives the trucks a place to operate, helping us give back to the community.

Dr. Kapoor believes that communities who help preserve their local businesses and distinctive character have an economic advantage. "Locally owned businesses recycle a much larger share of their revenue back into the local economy," she said. "It enriches the whole community."

Facilities Manager **Gary McMillian** coordinated with various food trucks, inviting them to visit SR-AHEC during lunch hours. In addition to recruiting the food trucks, he ensured that they were licensed, had a clean sanitation grade from the city, and offered quality food. "Many folks from the hospital and from the community came over the visit the trucks," Gary said with a smile, pleased that the food trucks accommodated SR-AHEC employees and the community.

As an additional bonus to help the businesses, employees at Southern Regional AHEC who could not work from home during the pandemic, received a \$10 voucher each week for the food truck of their choice. "We have paid out more than 2276 vouchers which means \$22,760 has gone directly back into the community," the facility manager noted. He reports that the variety of selections from the food trucks have included: seafood, hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken, pork, Philly cheesesteaks, salads, desserts, hibachi, southern cooking, and chicken wings.

Sounds yummy!

STATS:

- 2276 employee \$10 vouchers distributed
- \$22,760 in funds went directly into local economy



Facilities Manager, Gary McMillan checks out what's available for lunch from the RBurger food truck that visited SR-AHEC each Wednesday in 2020

Quality Improvement and Health Informatics Involved in Incentive Programs and Learning Projects Centered Around Patient Care



PGY-1 Michael Colfax and his patient offers tips to parents in *Keeping Kids Well* video project to address overdue well child checks and catch up on overdue vaccines

Quality and Patient Safety

Quality Incentive Programs

- Managed organizational transition to a new EMR system, Athena.
- Attested 5 physicians for MIPS at the exceptional provider level for the maximum 9% increase in Medicare incentive payment in 2023.
- Submitted application and received recognition as PCMH again 02/2021 – 02/2022.
- Continued to support improvement work with Aledade, our ACO partner.
- Collaborated with Duke AHEC on the pediatric Gun Safety project by distributing gun locks in to those meeting criteria during well child checks.
- Received small grant for the *Keeping Kids Well* Project to address overdue well child checks and catch up on overdue vaccines. (see photo above)
- Held Patient Advisory Council September 2020.

Areas of Improvement

- Unsatisfactory PAP's: eliminated growing number of unsatisfactory PAP specimens by using RCA to identify the lubricant being used as the issue.
- OB patients: education project to help patients learn the appropriate technique for a clean catch specimen.



QUALITY IMPROVEMENT STATS:

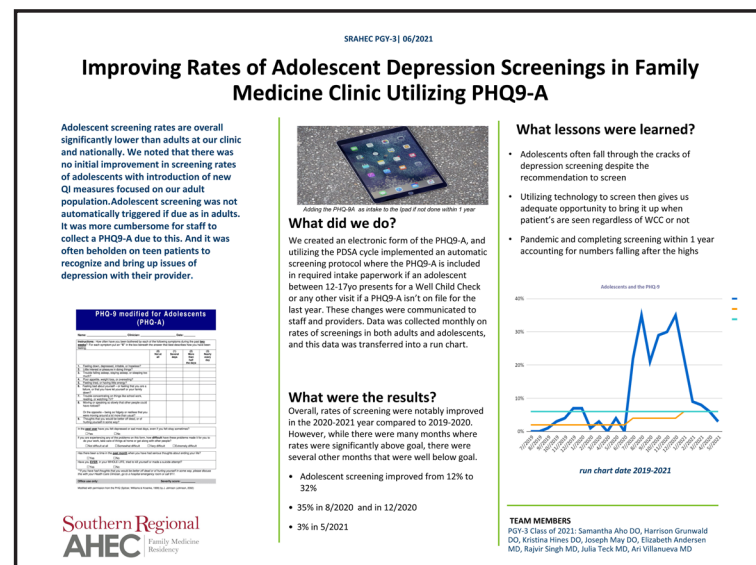
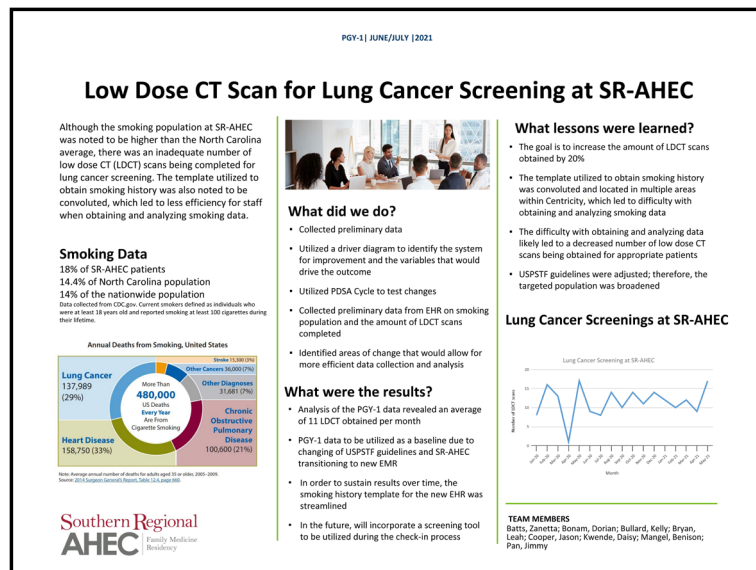
- 167% increase in adolescent depression screening
- 75% increase in patients with portal access
- 30% improvement in completed annual wellness visits

Resident Involvement

- Received approval for the **Residency Performance Improvement Program (ResPIP)** pathway - a means for residency programs to demonstrate their ability to develop and oversee the successful completion of Performance Improvement (PI) projects for residents and faculty that meet the ABFM Family Medicine Certification requirements.

Administrators from this department served as mentors for residents on rotation during ICC on quality improvement and patient safety. They also assisted residents with completion of QI Projects. Held QI Day on June 18, 2021 with residents presenting on final QI projects:

- PGY-1 Improve lung cancer screening with low dose CT
- PGY-2 improve HPV vaccine rates in adolescents 13-15; improve depression screening rates in adolescents 12-17.



PATIENT SAFETY STATS: •

Adverse Events Reports: 237

Six areas process improvement:

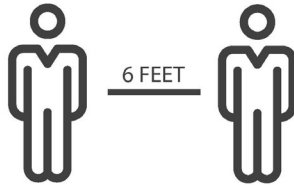
1. Screening/triage of visitors/employees;
2. Needle safety;
3. Vaccine administration;
4. Medical emergencies;
5. Code cart,
6. Communicable disease reporting

HELP US KEEP EACH OTHER SAFE



WEAR

A cloth mask over your face and nose.



WAIT

6 feet apart.
Avoid close contact.



WASH

Your hands or use hand sanitizer

Southern Regional
AHEC | Area Health
Education Center

This timely message was reserved as the default on all Southern Regional AHEC desktops as a reminder of the importance of the 3 W's



2021 Graduates: J. Harrison Grunwald, DO; Samantha Aho, DO; Joseph A. May, DO, Rajvir Singh, MD
Left to Right front row: Kristina Hines, DO; Julia Teck MD; Arielle Villanueva, MD; Elizabeth Anderson (Chief Resident)



Eight new residents joined the Southern Regional AHEC Family Medicine Residency Program in June.

Following are interns for 2021: Nneka Phillips, MD; Angel Jiang, MD; Ellie Rumi, MD; April Smith, DO; Alli Suliman, MD; Justin De la Guerra, MD; Deepa Ramaswamy, DO; Netsanet Woldergerima, MD

RESIDENCY STATS:

- Over 250 residents have graduated
- Approximately 50 percent stay to practice in NC



KEEP CALM AND ATHENA ON

In 2020/21 Southern Regional AHEC's electronic health records platform was updated from *Centricity* to *AthenaHealth*. This decision was made for a number of reasons, primarily because our needs began to outpace existing capabilities, according to Vice President for Quality Improvement/Health Informatics, **Jennifer Bigger**. She noted that while other options were explored, the conclusion was that *AthenaHealth* provided the system needed to achieve our clinical and financial outcomes/goals, while maintaining our autonomy by providing our own IT support.

"Because *AthenaHealth* acquired the company that owned *Centricity*, we felt that their product had much more functionally," Jennifer said, referring to the switch that took place in mid-June.

"The update offered an improvement in quality of care, patient outcomes, and safety through improved management, reduction in medication errors, reduction in unnecessary investigations, and improved communication and interactions among primary care providers, patients, and other providers involved in care."

The benefits of the upgrade were also evident for Southern Regional AHEC staff and faculty, including:

- Easier access to clinical data.

- Improved patient safety and stronger support for clinical decision-making.
- Easier participation in quality programs, with electronic prompts ensuring that required data is recorded at the point of care.
- The ability to gather and analyze patient data that enables outreach to discreet populations.
- The opportunity to interact seamlessly with affiliated hospitals, clinics, labs and pharmacies.
- Cloud-based technology and *AthenaHealth* team that helped us reach patients at scale, resulting in 69 percent higher *Medicare Annual Wellness Visits* than the industry average.
- *AthenaHealth* back-office experts take on administrative tasks at scale, saving you 10 hours of work per provider per week.
- *AthenaHealth's* payment model is a shared model.
- *AthenaHealth* is an investment that drives returns.
- For medical billing a network-based service that gets you paid faster with less work.
- Billing and Staff Productivity Booster that drives better RCM outcomes by gamifying your revenue cycle processes.

ATHENA STATS:

- Medical Annual Wellness Visits increases by 69%
- 10 hours of work per week decreased
- Faster payments for medical billing



Lenny Salzberg, MD
FMC Faculty

Faculty physician **Lenny Salzberg** has worked through most of the EHR systems introduced at Southern Regional AHEC. He likes what he sees in *AthenaHealth*.

"Our new system has so many features that make it an improvement over *GE Centricity*," Dr. Salzberg reports. He likes that *AthenaHealth* gives the option of preparing charts for

visits at any time prior to the patient's visit. This gives the provider an opportunity to gather all important information in one place so that it is easily available during a visit.

"Unlike in *Centricity*, if the patient does not keep the appointment, the information you prepared is ready for you for the next time the patient does show up!" Dr. Salzberg also likes that *AthenaHealth* is web-based, so more than one user can be in the chart at one time without the system crashing. "This makes the transfer of care from the MA (medical assistant) to the provider much smoother," he said. "Unlike *Centricity*, there is no limit to how much text you can put into a field. This makes clinical reasoning much more clear."



Jennifer Bigger, VP
Quality Improvement
Health Informatics

According to Jennifer, *AthenaHealth* also benefits patients. "Today's patient expects convenient, digital interactions in most areas of their life, and *AthenaHealth's* patient engagement tools and services help us bring that experience to our patients by using automated messaging services, appointment reminders, and more," she said.

- Call support
- Engagement at scale with tailored outreach campaigns seeking out patients who need certain services.

Jennifer says that because the system is relatively new, we are continuing to learn something new every day. She is confident that *AthenaHealth* will provide the services that we need for our providers and our patients. "Our team is a solution-focused, problem-solving group of professionals that want to learn everything we can about this new system and how to deliver full functionality to the physicians/APPs/residents and staff," she said.

"It will take time to really understand all of the features and workflows that can be implemented, and we will continue to make improvements in efficiencies."

The *AthenaHealth* system pushes new learning out constantly and there are new releases with improvements distributed three times a year.

The next steps to implementation of the system offers:

- 1) Optimization - continue to work on efficiencies in workflow and implementation of features.
- 2) Data and reporting - focus on running reports and providing data so that we can improve the quality of care and the patient experience.
- 3) Patient engagement - engage patients and families in their health through the use of technology.
- 4) Training - find effective ways to update and train staff/providers as we implement new features, or *AthenaHealth* makes upgrades. Look for us to use new and creative ways to roll out communication.

Here are a few of features available:

- Automated messaging
- Telehealth
- Patient portal

ATHENA BENEFITS:

- Offers web-based platform
- Text fields have no limit on number of characters
- Provides patient engagement tools

COVID-19 Creates New Challenges and Accomplishments in Clinical Education and Services

While COVID-19 dominated the clinical landscape in 2020/21, our medical personnel working in The Family Medicine Center and The Specialty Medicine Center continued to offer the best in patient-centered care.

In March, clinical and regional health education services staff and faculty set up a vaccine clinic located on the third floor. The clinic offered the *Moderna* and later, *Pfizer* vaccines to patients and interested members of our community. The total number of COVID-19 vaccines administered between March - June 2021 was 1,563.

New Purchases Provide Comprehensive Patient Services

In 2020, a new retinal scanner was purchased to screen diabetic patients for vision issues or complications. Staff performed 154 retinal scans during the year.

A new ultrasound machine offered the the ability to perform OB ultrasounds for expecting our patients.

As the clinic prepared for the new EHR (*AthenaHealth*), CEAS Program Assistant **Jenny McKoy** built approximately 200 templates to get ready for *Athena Go-Live* in early June.



Karen Winford,
Practice Manager

Karen Winford become our new practice administrator in 2021, replacing Carl Keiper who retired after 20 years. She implemented a new daily huddle format.



Kelly LeDoux, PA-C
The Family Medicine
Center

Physician Assistant **Kelly LeDoux** assisted with Fayetteville State University staffing due to COVID-19.

Southern Regional AHEC supported FSU student health with 1.5 staff members offering students/staff physical exams, sick visits and COVID-19 testing.

In February 2021, Population Health,

with a focus on prevention, became a new department under the Clinical Education and Services division with two full time team members. These patient care coordinators assist with scheduling medical wellness exams, well child check ups. This area worked to increase medical wellness exams by 30 percent and well child check ups by 60 percent between January and May.

The referral department stayed busy throughout the year with a total of 11,564 referrals.

For Chronic Care Management services, monthly calls were equal to or greater than 122.



Patient Representative Lanna Campbell shows off new onsies for babies who are delivered by SR-AHEC doctors

CLINICAL STATS:

- Retinal Scans: 154
- Patients reassigned before graduation: 4,000
- Referrals: 11,564



A safe place for COVID testing was set up outside. The total number of COVID tests collected in 2020/21 was 1,832



Emily Ghassemi, PharmD. participates in COVID vaccine clinic and provides vaccine to patients

COVID STATS:

- COVID-19 tests: 1,832
- Vaccines administered: 1,563

Onsite Lab Adds Rapid COVID Testing To Give Patients and Staff Reliable Results

In August 2020, the laboratory underwent a successful COLA inspection. These inspections review all aspects of laboratory testing to include all phases of actual testing, quality control, quality improvement. The laboratory passed the inspection with a final score of 98.

In February 2021, the lab began molecular COVID-19 testing in order to offer rapid, reliable testing for patients. "The laboratory staff have really stepped up to ensure that the extra testing, to include the additional required paperwork that comes with it, is performed in an efficient manner and does not affect the workflow of the remaining laboratory tests performed," said Lab Director, Ashley Posey.

Despite experiencing short staffing at three different times for extended periods during the year, all lab employees maintained the high standards required of their work.

Ashley noted that all staff, including contracted phlebotomists through LabCorp, showed significant extra effort to ensure lab testing and X-rays were performed timely and accurately.

"They were always willing to work overtime, when necessary, to accomplish this goal."



Lab Performance for 2020/21

27,530	Lab panels
206,308	Individual lab tests
1,838	X-rays

LAB STATS:

- Passed COLA inspection with score of 98
- Vaccines administered: 1,563

Practice Support Delivers Services and Resources During Pandemic Assisting Financial Stability to Regional Practices



Donna Bowen , Director
Practice Support



Paula Locklear, Coach
Practice Support



Soni Melvin, Coach
Practice Support

Grants

- DHB – Transition to Managed Medicaid
- DMA – Division of Medical Assistance – assistance with MIPS and Meaningful Use
- AHRQ – STUN Grant – decrease risky drinking behaviors
- Department of Public Health – HDQI Grant – improve patient outcomes in diabetes and hypertension
- Office of Rural Health

Outcomes

S704 Study – recruited 11 potential participants and conducted interviews for completion of the s704 legislatively mandated survey on the state's COVID response. Assisted one practice (Richmond County Health Department) participating in the Office of Rural Health (ORH) Grant in their implementation plan.

Participated with the project development team to curate the virtual *Practice Management Academy* proposal for funding requests.

Paula Locklear served as the SR-AHEC lead for the *NCCARE360 Initiative* which began in FY20 with planning for the implementation of a series of webinars for practices highlighting the resources offered by *NCCARE360* and how to access them.

Multiple coaches assisted practices in the *Keeping Kids Well* initiative to close care gaps on well child checks and behind vaccines.

Facilitated virtual presentation of *AHEC Scholar* modules – Quality Improvement and Health Science Systems.

Supported practices in reading for go-live *Managed Medicaid* on July 1 including support with the AMH gap analysis, assisting practices with moving to Tier 3 level.

Participation

SalesForce implementation (continuing activity).
KDIS workgroup to revise the current scale/rating system.

Recruited 3 new practices to our program.

Recruited 5 practices from Robeson Health Care Corporation and 1 community practice to participate in the HDQI (Hypertension and Diabetics) QI Grant

New Programs and Initiatives

HDQI recruitment of 6 practices in two counties:
Robeson and Hoke started July 2021

Developed curriculum for potential funding - *Virtual Practice Management Academy Program*; tentative start date: January 2022

Fetal Maternal Grant with ARQC tentative start date: January 2022

STATS:

- 803 in person and virtual visits
- 453 KDIS for a full count of 2,679
- 16 MIPS/MU Attestations
- 102 practices supported in region

Information Technology Essential To Virtual Learning While Information Access Center Keeps Resources Available During COVID

With most of the continuing professional development programs going virtual this past year, the Information Technology Department provided much of the support to keep the programs online. IT Director **Michael Spexarth** led the team of **Stephen Porter** and **Matthew Moon** to ensure that all systems were working. In addition to this extra workload, the IT department:

- Appointed as technical support to assist with the implementation associated with the strategic element of the health careers database with the IT Savvy.
- Participated in activities to provide initial configuration, ongoing support, and renewal (replacement) of client systems (desktops, laptops, tablet systems).
- Participated in activities to provide server administration, database administration, and/ or network management support (local area network or interconnection to the system network supporting your site and access to the internet) via an internet upgrade; changed network configuration to include VLAN's to separate wireless traffic from internal network; configured firewall changes to allow access to only those items needed.
- Completed infrastructure to meet PCI Compliance security standards.
- Improved network security by installing Netrix security application.

- Provided application integration and technical support for Health IT systems for the clinic through a 6 month implementation/migration of the EMR to *AthenaHealth*.
- Provided support for information reporting and visualization using database and data analytics tools.
- Provided logistical, scheduling and technical support for cloud-based videoconferencing and other communications technology needed for support of cross-site collaboration, training, and meetings by supporting 430 virtual meetings and CPD events.
- Provided application development, testing, and requirements definition in support of statewide IT projects for CPD.
- Provided support for LMS and other technology applications associated with AHEC Learning Management environments.
- Provided technical support for COVID related activities to include setting up the testing site building, changing events to *ZOOM*, *Webex*, *Microsoft Teams*.

OPERATIONAL STATS FY21	Total
Total IT work orders completed	1,105
Supported virtual trainings	430
Residents and students training	102

Information Access Center – Library Services OPERATIONAL STATS

FY21	Total
Service Interactions	7,305
Reference Transactions	2,382
Document delivery	1,375
Proactive alerts	4,923
AHEC Digital Library Logins	3,944
Contact hours of resident medicine rounds support	718.5



Lisa Kilburn, Director
Information Access
Center



Chelsea Tasio
Library Assistant

HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OPERATIONAL STATS

- Releases of Information: 2,141
- Items scanned/indexed: 50,897

Admin/Finance Procures Funding Related to COVID-19 Business Office Issues Charges and Collections for All Clinical Services



Lynn Greene, VP
Admin/Finance

Vice President for Administration/ Finance **Lynn Greene**, worked with Corporate Controller **Jennifer Powell** to ensure that government funding, related to COVID-19, was awarded. This included the *Paycheck Protection Program*, *Medicare Advanced Payments*, and *Medicare Physician Support* funds. Both of them worked with Human Resources to secure that special COVID-19 leave programs were administered properly for payroll and tax reporting purposes.



Jennifer Powell
Controller/Compliance
Officer

As a member of the SR-AHEC COVID-19 Taskforce, Lynn also ensured that proper operational changes and precautions were identified and implemented regarding the pandemic. She

worked with clinical managers to improve various processes and workflows to meet COVID challenges.

The implementation of the new EHR and managing *NC Medicaid Transformation* was developed for the front desk, message center, new patient registration and billing.

Lynn was also responsible for:

- Managing all business insurance policies to ensure proper coverage
- Working with investment provider, Merrill Lynch, reviewing and making necessary changes to corporate investment portfolio to ensure optimal performance and reviewed 401k/403b investments quarterly, processing fund changes.

Business Office for Family Medicine and Specialty Medicine Centers

The business office staff, including **Betty Hunt**, **Jessica Robinson**, **Chassity McMillan**, **Pamala Martin**, **Lisa Ragin**, **Nicole Holloway**, **Janet Lockwood**, **Tiffany Locklear**, **Tonya Russ**, **Tameika James**, **Anna Madriaga**, **Ashely Bethea**, **Helen Bohan** and **Daphne Haithcock**, collected gross charges of \$8,884,212 - just shy of a new record by only 1 percent. Their work resulted in a new total record for collections of \$4,773,590, breaking the prior record by 2.25 percent. Message Center staff processed 25,850 messages to providers.



LEAD PATIENT REPRESENTATIVE

As lead patient representative, Betty takes extra care to ensure a smooth work flow and educate patients on our practice structure. You will find her in a variety of roles from scheduling patient appointments, check-in/check-out, and cross-training other business office staff.

We thank Betty for her dedication to excellent service.

~Great work Betty~



PATIENT REPRESENTATIVE

Nicole improves the quality of health care in our community by taking care of patients in The Family Medicine Center.

As a Patient Representative and member of the patient care team, she guides them at check-in, assists in filling out forms, and sets up follow up appointments, as needed.

~Thanks Nicole~



BUSINESS OFFICE STATS

- Net Collections Rate: 101 percent
- Claims processed: 41,000
- New Patient Registrations: 2,024
- Check in/Check out Transactions: 30,000+ (not including Nurse Visits)

Facility Maintenance Keeps Operations Running Smoothly Accounting Provides Clean Audits in 2020/21

Mail Operations/Receiving

Even in a pandemic, mail operations/receiving keeps everything moving. In 2020/21, this area was responsible for much of the incoming and outgoing functions that impacted Southern Regional AHEC's daily operations.

Purchasing/Facilities



Gary McMillan

Facilities Director **Gary McMillan** worked with **Beverly King** and contracted providers to ensure SR-AHEC's building maintenance was taken care of throughout the year. There were 1,476 work orders completed in 20/21 for facilities, custodial and vehicle issues, resulting in a 13 percent decrease from the previous year



Lisa Moncrief

This department also processed requests for purchasing throughout the organization, completing 1,287 purchase orders, including \$45,170 for office supply orders and \$18,171 for custodial supplies.



Faith McGee

Accounting/Grants Management

The accounting team of **Jennifer Powell**, **Lisa Moncrief**, **Faith McGee** and **Nicky Huey** provided a clean annual financial audit for 2021 and for the organization's retirement plans audit for 2020. *See other accounting milestones on the right.*



Nicky Huey

There were over 14 individual grants from federal, state and private funding sources, totaling \$2.3 million in funding. Three external audits received a clean review. These included:

- Single audit of *Federal Ryan White Grant*

- Two NCDHHS/AIDS Care Unit also for HIV program

Mail Operations/Receiving

Incoming mail/packages processed
20,413 pieces

Outgoing mail/packages processed
125,934 pieces

Request for vehicles
274 requests for vehicles

Issued corporate credit cards
693 times

Accounting

Transactions in General Ledger
150,662

Invoices for CPD Programmig/Clinical Services/ Grants
472

Deposits Processed
1,825

Payroll Checks Processed
3,620

W-2s Processed
178

Checks Processed
3,010 totaling almost \$10.1M for non-wage expenditures

IRS 1099 Forms Processed
109

Master Contracts Managed
200 active business contracts/MOU/MOA, service maintenance agreements

FACILITIES/PURCHASING/ACCOUNTING OPERATIONAL STATS

- Miles driven on SR-AHEC vehicles: 15,420
- COVID Funding Reporting/Management: Over \$6M

Regional Health Education Services Drives Diverse Virtual Learning Formats



Regional Health Education Services/CPD

The Continuing Professional Development Department of the Regional Health Education Services division reformatted health care and behavioral health programs to livestream webinars via *Webex*, *Microsoft Teams*, and *ZOOM* early in the year. While COVID protocols kept professionals from gathering in groups, the adaption to virtual continuing professional development kept them up to date on the information they needed during a socially-distanced year.

In addition to COVID specific-programs that gave instructions on patient care, several self-care and mindfulness programs were developed with the provider in mind. Additionally, Southern Regional AHEC CPD professionals were involved in developing the COVID-19 contact tracing modules that were offered to public health workers across the state.

Participation numbers for CPD programs increased in

20/21 by 3,082 over the previous year with an average of 33 individuals per program. Personnel continued to provide cutting edge COVID-19 programming and best practices education. (See page 23)

Health Careers

The *Health Careers Workforce and Diversity Program* engaged students through a variety of pathway programs. Director **Tonya Burney** coordinated virtual events with administrators at regional universities, colleges, and high schools to help these students develop the skills needed to pursue careers in health care. Her work resulted in higher student recruitment for pathway programs and *NC AHEC Scholars*.

REGIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION SERVICES

- Trained 7,966 health care professionals
- 431 programs offered in 20/21
- Averaged 33 participants per program



Student services Support Specialist Will Shepard and RHES VP La-Lisa Hewett-Robinson assist with the summer distanced hotdog lunch for employees, hosted by the AHEC (A Happy Event Committee)

ORPCE (Office of Regional Primary Care Education)

- Student Housing Requests: 231
- Student Rotations: 766.83
- Student weeks preceptor payments: 636.11 processed

Coronavirus Lockdowns and Legislation Increase Work Detail for Human Resources



Linda Baez
Vice President
Human Resources

The coronavirus impacted more than just hospital emergency rooms. The toll of the disease was felt throughout business sectors, as well. Human Resources departments worked hard to keep up with ever-changing federal, state and local requirements of providing a safe space for workers, in addition to routine duties.



Robin Thompson
Human Resources
Coordinator

Our own Human Resources Department received and processed over 2,500 resumes from July 2020 through June 2021. These resumes were in response to job openings that were posted internally and externally. Around May 2021, the number of applicants we began to obviously drop, which is consistent with what employers in various industries are asking: "We have job openings, but where are the job applicants?" Some experts attribute

this unprecedented drop in the number of persons applying for jobs to effects of the pandemic. Many people who left work during the pandemic can't or won't go back to work for numerous reasons (child care and family obligations, fear of getting COVID, not wanting to go back in the office after having worked remotely for so long, enhanced/extended unemployment benefits, etc.)

Through the SR-AHEC Pat on the Back employee recognition program, Human Resources processed and distributed 131 gift cards. Many of these gift cards were given to employees who stepped up with extra effort during staff shortages and increased workloads, resulting from COVID-related reasons.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) went into effect on April 2, 2020, and became a gigantic part of life in the Human Resources Department for an extended period. Through this FFCRA federal legislation, Human Resources reviewed, tracked, processed, explained provisions to employees, and provided required legislative follow-through for 80 instances of SR-AHEC employees who were provided with Emergency Paid Sick

Leave (EPSL) and/or Expanded Family and Medical Leave (EFMLA) for specified reasons related to COVID-19. EPSL and EFMLA were made available to employees from April 2, 2020 through March 31, 2021. Originally designated by the government to end on December 31, 2020, these paid leave provisions were extended to March 31, 2021. An additional 4 weeks of leave, beyond the March 31, 2021 end date, was also made available to employees who had exhausted their EFMLA and COVID-19 continued to create difficulties with the operation of their daycares and schools.

A Happy Event Committee (AHEC Committee) Although COVID forced the AHEC Committee to curtail many of the numerous employee social events that they normally coordinate during the year, the Committee was still able to coordinate a few activities while still adhering to the necessary safety measures.

These events included:

October 30th

Halloween caramel apples & cupcakes

December 16th

Donuts, Coffee & Hot Chocolate and culminating with a very popular SR-AHEC Holiday Door Decorating Contest whereby employees, patients and visitors were able to see some of the most creative, fun and beautiful doors. (See page 22)



Lisa Moncrief, Linda Baez, Carl Keiper and Sushma Kapoor get into the Halloween spirit



APPLAUSE



Sheree Hayes,
Administrator
CPD/RHES



Karen Goble
CPD Director
CME Programs



Tonja Teter,
CPD Director
Nursing/Refresher



Bebe Smith
NCEBP Center
Coordinator



La-Lisa
Hewett-Robinson
VP, RHES



Melanie Wheeler,
Manager
Exp/Enr Team

Sheree Hayes, Administrator for Continuing Professional Development, became a certified RBA trainer and managed the Golden Leaf Nursing Grant to increase nurse retention in our region.

CME Director **Karen Goble** and Nursing CPD Director, **Tonja Teter** work together to offering the annual *End of Life* conference

NC EBP Director **Bebe Smith** and RHES Vice-President, **La-Lisa Hewett-Robinson** successfully completed the *Crisis Navigation Grant* with the Duke Endowment.

Experience/Enrollment Team Manager **Melanie Wheeler**, provided oversight on the NC DHHS state Involuntary Commitment Project.



Bertina Parkins
CPD Director
Mental Health



Courtney Masters
CPD Director
CME



Caroline Price
CPD Director
Dent/Pharm/AH



Michelle
England
Registrar



Althea Bell
Program
Assistant



Christi Boahn
Program
Assistant

CPD Director for Mental Health **Bertina Parkins** worked with the CPD Director for CME, **Courtney Masters** and CPD Director for Allied Health/Dentistry/Pharmacy **Caroline Price** to lead statewide education through the AHEC Learning Academy.

CPD Program Assistants **Althea Bell**, and **Christi Boahn** provided the ultimate customer service and experience along with Registrar/Education Assistant **Michelle England**.

Southern Regional AHEC Area Health Education Center

TRAINING CENTER SPECIALIST

Say 'Hello' to Justin who recently joined Southern Regional AHEC as our *Training Center Specialist*. In this role, he serves as the operations officer for the *American Heart Association Training Center* located at SR-AHEC.

He improves the health of our community by teaching and coordinating Heartsaver and ACLS, BLS and PALS courses, as well as serving as a mentor for instructors.

~Welcome Justin~

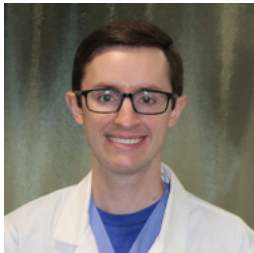
The RHES Department's American Heart Training Center (AHA) processed 14,794 cards, maintaining this service during staffing shortage due to a multi-team effort.

APPLAUSE



Michael Colfax, MD
PGY2

PGY1 **Michael Colfax's** poster, "Improving HPV Immunizations in Adolescents in a Family Medicine Residency won first place in the NCAFP Winter Meeting.



Gunnar Magnuson, DO
PGY2

PGY 2 **Gunner Magnuson** was named Cape Fear Valley Medical Center's *Resident of the Quarter* for the second quarter of fiscal year 2021. Dr. Magnuson was nominated for his innovation with developing evidence-based standardization of care for COVID-19 positive patients.



Jennifer Bigger, VP
QIHI

Taiwona Elliott became the new Residency Program Director and the Vice President of Clinical Education and Services (CEAS).

Vice President **Jennifer Bigger** presented on time management at the *Chief Residents Workshop* on May 10-11 and May 31 - June 1, 2021.

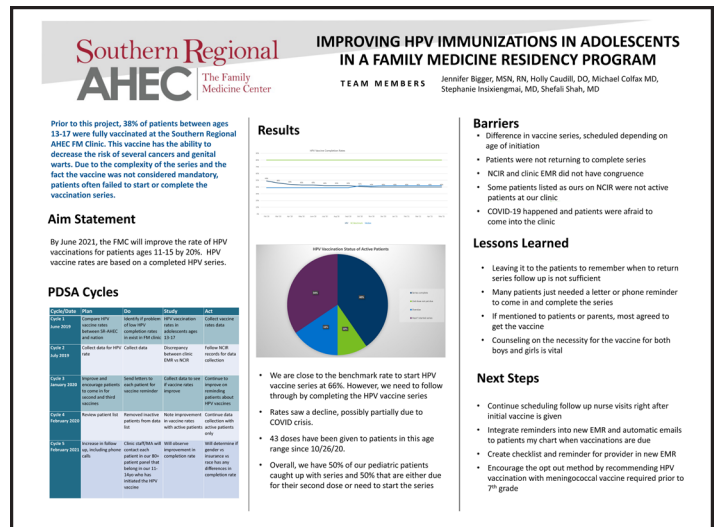
CEAS Program Assistant **Dana Blumenshien** was instrumental in scheduling hundreds of virtual meetings and interviews for the Residency and CEAS departments.



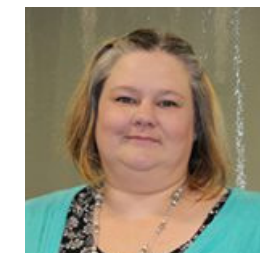
Cassandra Hopkins
Lab/Xray Tech

Lab and xray technician **Cassandra Hopkins**, has furthered her education by becoming a Certified Medical Laboratory Assistant. She completed this coursework and passed her certification exam while continuing to work full-time. We celebrate her accomplishment and recognize her hard work and determination to complete this goal.

Amanda Williams, Marketing and Design Specialist and Webmaster, upgraded our SouthernRegionalAHEC.org website to include ADA/WACAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) requirements.



Tai Elliott, MD
VP Clinical Education
and Services



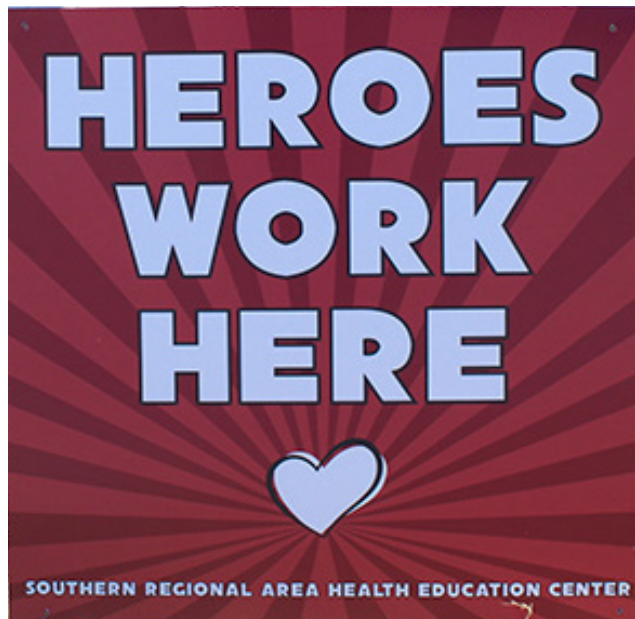
Dana Blumenshien
CEAS Program
Assistant

Partnerships for 2020-21*

Alliance Behavioral Healthcare
Bladen County Health Department
Bladen County School System
Bladen County Hospital (Cape Fear Valley)
Campbell University School of Pharmacy
Campbell University School of Osteopathic Medicine
Cape Fear Valley Health System
The CARE Clinic - Fayetteville
Cumberland Community Collaborative Care
Cumberland Community Foundation, Inc.
Cumberland County Child Advocacy Center
Cumberland County Health Department
Cumberland County Medical Alliance
Cumberland County School System
Duke AHEC Program
The Duke Endowment
Duke School of Medicine
Eastpoint (Behavioral Healthcare)
Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine
Fayetteville State University
Fayetteville Technical Community College
FirstHealth of the Carolinas
(see Moore Regional and Hoke Campus, Richmond Memorial)
Harnett County Health Department
Harnett County School System
Harnett Health
Hoke County Health Department
Hoke County School System
Hoke Hospital (FirstHealth)
Hoke Hospital (Cape Fear Valley)
Methodist University
Moore County Health Department
Moore County School System
Moore Regional Hospital (FirstHealth)
NC AHEC Program - Area L AHEC, Charlotte AHEC,
South Eastern AHEC (SEAHEC), Eastern AHEC, Greensboro
AHEC, Mountain AHEC, NorthWest AHEC, and Wake AHEC

NC Board of Nursing
NC Department of Health and Human Services
NC Division of Public Health NC Division of State Operated
Healthcare Facilities
NC Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/
Substance Abuse Services
NC Hospital Association
North Carolina Medical Society
NC Osteopathic Medical Association
NC School Psychology Association
Office of Healthy Carolinians
NC Evidence Based Practices Center
Richmond Community College
Richmond County Health Department
Richmond County School System
Richmond Memorial Hospital - (a Division of FirstHealth Moore
Regional Hospital)
Robeson County Health Department
Robeson County School System
Robeson Technical Community College
Sampson County Health Department
Sampson County Technical Community College
Sampson Regional Medical Center
Sampson County School System
Sandhills Center
Sandhills Community College
Sandhills Regional Medical Center
Sandhills Physicians, Inc.
Scotland County Health Department
Scotland County School System
Scotland Regional Hospital
Southeastern Health (formerly Southeastern
Regional Medical Center)
Southeastern Regional Mental Health/DD/SAS
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
University of North Carolina- Pembroke
VA Medical Center (Fayetteville)
Womack Army Medical Center (Ft. Bragg)

***We have made every attempt to recognize and acknowledge our partnerships of the past fiscal year.
We apologize in advance for any omission or error on our part.**



www.sr-ahec.org
1601 Owen Drive • Fayetteville, NC 28304

Southern Regional
AHEC | Area Health
Education Center