

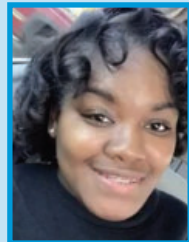
**2020 PROGRAM COMPLETER SPOTLIGHT**

We acknowledge two program completers for their accomplishments and reaching a pivotal milestone, during a year of unprecedented conditions. Despite the healthcare crisis, both remained on course to complete their undergraduate studies and gain employment in one of the most demanding workforces in the US. The paths that lead them to pursue careers in healthcare are different but equally significant. Growing up in the city of Butler, GA has its limitations, but in the face of the many disadvantages, they defied the odds. According to Census reports for Taylor County: households have a median annual income of \$25,250; 65% of students are economically disadvantaged; students are 24% proficient in reading and 25% proficient in math. With no health science academic options and 50 miles away from the nearest hospital, student exposure to healthcare education was not an option before the Partners in Education initiatives led by Three Rivers AHEC. Five years after the collaboration between Taylor County Schools and TRA, program completers are entering the healthcare workforce and caring for the people of Georgia.



**Laterrya Kelly, BSN**

Laterrya Kelly participated in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 Taylor County Vikings Health Career Academy and attended MedVac Health Careers Summer Camp during 2015 and again in 2016. Her Intensive Program involvement provided awareness of various careers in healthcare, career counseling, and support, as well as resume and network-building skills. With the financial and academic support of Three Rivers AHEC, in 2016, Ms. Kelly was able to complete her certification in Nurse Assisting, which later led her to attend Georgia Southwestern University. In 2020, Laterrya graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree is now employed at Piedmont Columbus Regional Hospital in Columbus, GA as a Medical-Surgical Registered Nurse.



**Asia Towns, BS**

Asia Towns participated in the 2014-15 Taylor County Vikings Health Careers Academy and the 2015 MedVac Health Careers Summer Camp. She volunteered at Niette Dental in Butler, GA, where she learned the duties performed by both administrative staff and providers. In 2017, Asia received her Associate of Science degree in Biology from Georgia Military College and graduated from Middle Georgia State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Service Administration in December of 2020. Ms. Towns is currently employed for Houston Medical Center as a Health Unit Coordinator and preparing to apply for Graduate School.

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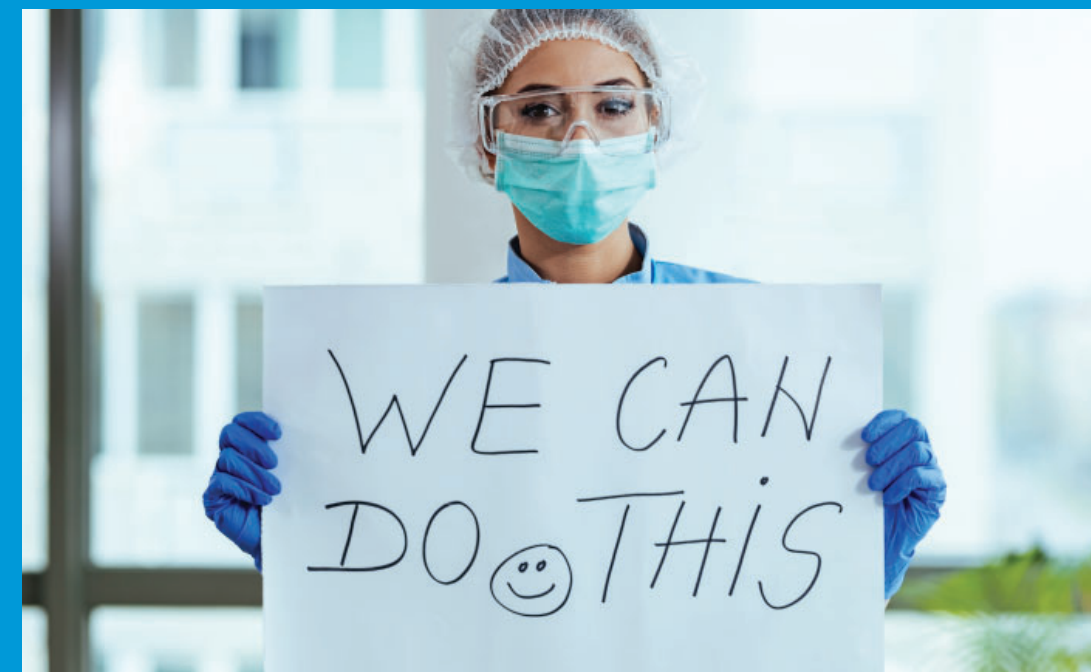
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Healthcare Recruiter  
Career Placement Center  
Navicent Health

2020



**Saluting Our Medical Heroes**



Three Rivers Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is a community-driven, non-profit organization and through our vision, mission, values, and guiding principles, we assist our communities in building and sustaining the healthcare workforce to meet their healthcare needs. Since 1994, we have served 28 counties in West Central Georgia from our headquarters in Columbus, and our efforts place special emphasis on rural and underserved areas. We accomplished our goals through the numerous partnerships and collaborations we have formed over the years which include healthcare providers, health professions students, academic institutions, state and federal agencies, and communities – without them, we would not be successful. Each partnership is as unique as each of our program areas: Recruit, Train, and Retain which comprises our Programmatic Model: The Health Professions Pipeline. We place a strong focus on educational activities that foster the “grow your own” approach to increase the supply, distribution, retention, and education of the healthcare workforce.





## MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

The past year (2020) was a time of uncertainty for the world, the economy, and the healthcare industry. The public health emergency surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic in many ways, increased the need for public health funding, awareness, and professionals. Over the year, we have encouraged healthcare student learners and professionals to increase their knowledge from a Public Health perspective. Our efforts in prevention and preparedness have increased the number of COVID-19 Contact Tracers and volunteer support for the Public Health Departments, Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers, and Community Health Centers of West Central Georgia. This health crisis has also inspired youth to learn more about various careers in Public Health. Many high school healthcare science students of our region have engaged in virtual experiential learning activities regarding this emerging health topic, to better prepare themselves for the road ahead. Although travel and face-to-face interactions were restricted, it did not impeded on our ability to interact with our program participants and community partners. Video conferencing quickly became our primary form of convening. The pandemic also has influenced hospitals, private practices, and other healthcare facilities to increase access to Telehealth services. Providers recognized the importance of protecting themselves, staff, patients, and at the same time meeting the healthcare needs of the community. As we all adjust to our new normal, the team of Three Rivers AHEC (TRA) will remain steadfast in the recruitment, education, and distribution of skilled healthcare professionals for the state of Georgia.

Crystal Hand  
– Center Director



<b>RECRUIT</b>	Preparing youth and adults for careers in healthcare by expanding their views of the world of health careers and inspiring them to pursue the path of becoming healthcare professionals
<b>TRAIN</b>	Facilitating community-based clinical training experiences for health professions students by connecting future physicians, physician assistants, advanced practice registered nurses and other healthcare providers with our communities
<b>RETAIN</b>	Sustaining the healthcare workforce through RN re-entry and continuing education programs in collaboration with our community partners

### RECRUIT Preparing Students for Careers in Healthcare

Health Career Academies and Summer Camp  
**Goal: 60 • Reached: 45**

Inspiring and connecting with students who have a strong desire to pursue health careers



Classroom Presentations and Career Fairs  
**Goal: 2,300 • Reached: 2,652**

Sparking each student's initial interest in the wide range of health careers and expanding their view of this field of opportunity



### TRAIN Facilitating community-based clinical training experiences for health professions students

Community-based Clinical Training Rotations  
**Goal: 469 • Reached: 577**

Training future healthcare professionals



Travel and Housing Supported Rotations  
**Goal: 287 • Reached: 415**

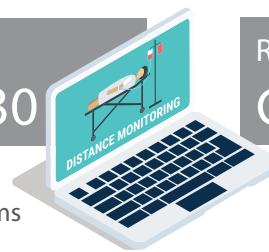
Supporting students during their training



### RETAIN Retaining Practitioners in the Community

Continuing Education Training  
**Goal: 501 • Reached: 830**

Providing continuing education through workshops/conferences and web-based programs



RN Re-entry Training Sites  
**Goal: 15 Sites Reached: 42 Sites**



RN Re-entry Programs Completers  
**Goal: 10 RNs Reached: 12 RNs**

Alleviating the nursing shortage one nurse at a time



#### THREE RIVERS AHEC STAFF

- Crystal Hand** - Center Director
- Yvette Payton** - Manager of Retention and Technology
- Theresa Williams** - Clinical Training Coordinator
- Anita Holt** - Health Careers and Special Projects Coordinator
- Jennifer Wallace** - Operations Coordinator

## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

### HEALTH CAREERS ACADEMIES

Health Career program activities were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the anticipated challenges facing high school seniors, Three Rivers AHEC offered an Economic Relief Scholarship to academy participants, after providing proof of enrollment in a health science program at a post-secondary institution in Georgia. (6) Chart the Course and (6) Pike Pirate Academy participants received scholarships, and are now one step closer to becoming a professional in the healthcare industry. Since 2010, total scholarships awarded are \$65,425.

### ANCHOR

The Anchor Program was created in 2009 in collaboration with the GA Campus-Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM), the hospitals, and health care providers in our region. In August 2020, we welcomed our 12th class of 3rd-year medical students into the Anchor Program- 15 students relocated to Columbus from their school campus for their 3rd-year rotations. Since our inaugural class, 166 students have been enrolled in the Anchor Program completing clinical training in Bibb, Carrollton, Chattahoochee, Coweta, Meriwether, Jones, LaGrange, Muscogee, Peach, Talbot, Troup, and Upson Counties.

### CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

We co-sponsored 20 CE/CME Activities with attendance from 832 healthcare professionals (100% needed the programming for licensure/certification renewal). The average evaluation score was 4.44 on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being excellent. During FY20, we received \$17,305.95 for services, through contracts with our partners; significantly decreased due to the coronavirus pandemic.

### GEORGIA STATEWIDE AHEC PRECEPTOR TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The GA PTIP allows community-based preceptors who are not compensated for teaching, to earn tax credits for providing community-based clinical training for students from the state's public or private medical, osteopathic, advanced practice nursing, or physician assistant educational programs. The conversion expands the eligibility of community-based faculty; physicians, advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants. Physicians will receive a \$500 tax credit for each of the first 3 rotations, and \$1000 each for rotations 4- 10. Physicians who provided 10 rotations can earn \$8500 in tax credits for the calendar year. APRN and PA preceptors can earn \$375 for each of the first 3 rotations, and \$750 each for rotations 4-10 totaling \$6375 in tax credits for the calendar year.

### GA AHEC SCHOLARS PROGRAM (ASP)

The AHEC Scholars Program is a 2-year nationwide interprofessional education (IPE) program designed to give health professions students a unique opportunity to practice hands-on training in a rural/underserved environment, work with other health professions students in their region, build resumes, and increase their professional contacts. Cohort I consists of students from Columbus State University's Pre-Medical/Health Science programs and Middle Georgia State University's Nursing program. Students received 80 hours of online coursework and 40 hours of hands-on experiential training, over the course of 2 years. Topics covered include IPE, Social Determinants of Health, Cultural Competency, Behavioral Health Integration, Practice Transformation, and Current and Emerging Health Issues. In 2020, 8 participants completed the 2-year requirements and graduated from the program. Concurrently, 14 health science students from various post-secondary Institutions of West Central Georgia, were accepted into the Second Cohort of the ASP.

### CLINICAL TRAINING OVERVIEW

726 student rotations have occurred with 252 preceptors in 22 counties (13 rural counties). Student disciplines include: 440 MD/DO; 74 APRN; 134 PA, and 78 others. We provide student housing in 6 locations for a total of 31 beds. We housed students for 251 rotations and provided travel stipends for 162 rotations- an investment of \$146,087.35.

### RN RE-ENTRY PROGRAM

Three Rivers AHEC has offered the RN Re-entry Program since 2010 in our region. Since 2015, we have also coordinated the program for SPCC Atlanta and Magnolia Coastlands AHECs. There are 42 training sites available for the clinical training portion of the program. (20 Three Rivers, 13 SPCC Atlanta, and 9 in Magnolia Coastlands.)

Since the program's inception, 84 RNs have been trained and transitioned back into the workforce (54 in our region, 15 in SPCC Atlanta AHEC's region, 10 Magnolia Coastlands AHEC's region, and 4 in other Georgia counties).

### THREE RIVERS AHEC

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