

## National AHEC Organization FY 2012 Budget Request

*The AHEC (Area Health Education Centers) program was created to inspire, recruit, train and retain a health professions workforce to practice in communities where the need is the greatest. The national network of local AHECs connect students to careers, professionals to communities and communities to better health.*

**The National AHEC Organization requests that the AHEC line under Title VII Health Professions Training in the FY-12 LHHS appropriations bill be funded at \$75 million.**

**1) Investment at this level at this time** is the most direct and comprehensive path to build up the nation's health care workforce and get that professional workforce working: Providing care, especially primary care. In communities, especially rural and under-served communities. In hospitals, especially rural access hospitals. In clinics, especially community health centers.

With an infrastructure of 240 community-based Area Health Education Centers across the country that are training nurses, doctors, technicians and therapists for primary care practice, AHECs are ready to go and ready to grow.

**Investment now** in the AHEC infrastructure will enable more health professions students to be trained, more current health professionals to stay practicing where they are most needed, and more middle and high school kids to be focused on a health career path.

**Investment now** will keep the AHEC education and training pipeline doing what it does better than any other program can propose to do: educate and train the health care workforce continuum. **AHECs are doing it now.**

**2) Investment at this level and at this time** maximizes the well-developed AHEC network that has been built to educate and train the workforce that responds to the call to serve and work in areas where there is the most need and the most needy.

**Investment now** in AHECs will back up the recent expansion investment in the National Health Service Corps and Community Health Centers. With AHECs in nearly every state, and located in the same communities as the NHSC and CHCs, **AHEC investment now will focus on the urgency of access by expansion of the workforce.**

**3) Investment at this level and at this time** will be the first step toward full investment at the authorized level of \$125 million. Because AHECs are doing it now, they can quickly, efficiently and effectively gear up and deliver results with appropriations of \$75 million in FY-12, \$100 million in FY-13, and \$125 million in FY-14.

**The Council on Graduate Medical Education (COGME) recommended increased AHEC funding in its December 2010 report. This budget request is supported by the National Rural Health Association.**