Merrimack Valley AHEC

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Opening Doors to Health Careers

The Merrimack Valley Area Health Education Center (MVAHEC) is one of the six regional offices in a statewide network under the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester. The Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Inc. serves as the parent agency of MVAHEC.

The mission of the Massachusetts AHEC Network is to increase access to quality health care through the development of community academic educational partnerships. AHEC's goal is to improve the supply and distribution of health care professionals with an emphasis on providing primary health care services for underserved populations.

The MVAHEC shares this vision in creating programs that foster the development of an atmosphere conducive to the recruitment and rentention of health care workers throughout the Merrimack Valley.

Our Programs

Student Intern Program

The Merrimack Valley Area Health Care Education Center sponsors the High School Intern Program for bicultural/bilingual students interested in preparing for careers in health care professions and committed to a minimum of six hours a week.

The program offers paid after school work at many of the health center sites. Students benefit from exposure to a variety of work settings as they develop a clearer picture of their career path.

In addition, the program offers life skills workshops and academic counseling for three consecutive days a month. These seminars are intended to assist students in furthering their education in health care careers and gaining knowledge on health awareness.

After each seminar, students will receive certificates of achievement along wiht a feast celebration. Students will also receive a certificate on completion of the internship program.

Medical Interpreter Programs

Merrimack Valley Area Health Education Center offers every year a variety of Medical Interpreter programs as part of its initative of promoting cultural diversity within the region's health care workforce.

54 Hour Medical Interpreter Course: The goal of this program is to assist prospective medical interpreters in developing the skills necessary to facilitate effective, professional medical interpretation in a health care setting.

Program Components

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15 Hour Introductory Training - The training provides an introduction to the skills used during the triadic interviews. The curriculum also includes topics such as interpreting skills, code of ethics, cross-cultural communication skills, medical vocabulary and professional protocol.

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39 Hour Comprehensive Workshops - This component incorporates training in specific areas such as cultural competency, interpreting in the primary care setting and for pediatric patients, mental health, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, interpreting during emergency situations, and grief, death and dying. Role playing is also included in the program to sharpen interpreting skills.

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Advanced Medical Interpreter Training Series - MVAHEC also offers advanced training to medical interpreteres who already graduated the 54 hour Medical Interpreter program. The seminars offer participants new up-to-date information specific to effective interpreting.

Medical Terminology Courses

MVAHEC offers three 8-week, 24-hour Medical Terminology courses for Spanish, Portuguese and Khmer-speaking participants in the Greater Lawrence and Lowell areas. The course includes definitions and analysis of medical terms, as well as anatomic, diagnostic, operative and symptomatic terms.

Lawrence Latino Nursing Program

MVAHEC is committed to addressing the shotrage of bicultural/bilingual nurses in the Merrimack Valley area. To achieve

this goal, MVAHEC is offering educational opportunities to bicultural/bilingual individuals to prepare them to enter and successfully complete a nursing program. Through this program, participants will progress through a pre-entry preparation process that will prepare them to enroll in a nursing program at a community college or university.

Program Components:

- Educational program and seminars provided by the American Red Cross and the Merrimack Valley Area Health Education Center consultants.

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Classes bearing college credit offered each semester at Northern Essex Community College.

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Annual Summer Academy with stipend support for qualifying students.

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Eight $5,000 scholarships awarded annually.

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Private and small group tutoring available in Math and English,

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Mentoring and support of RN Staff at MVAHEC and GLFHC.