

## CCHS to Announce Partnership with Alabama Statewide Area Health Education Centers

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** The College of Community Health Sciences will host a media availability event on January 23, 2018, from 10:30am–11:30am in Classrooms 1–3 on the Lower Level of the School of Medicine. The event will announce the newly inaugurated partnership between CCHS and Alabama Statewide Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Program. Media representatives are invited to attend and speak with CCHS Dean Richard Streiffer and representatives of Alabama Statewide AHEC, West Central Alabama AHEC, and the UAB School of Medicine, which administers the statewide AHEC program.

In its role as a regional campus for the UAB School of Medicine, through which the College has historically overseen programming for the Rural Medical Scholars—a program which, since 1996, has served college seniors and graduate students that plan to attend medical school before practicing medicine in rural communities—the partnership will extend opportunities to high school students in rural areas of Alabama. As Dean Streiffer says, “It serves the mission of the College for CCHS to continue to support the region in terms of leadership in medical education and scholarship through its assistance to our area partners. AHEC has become established nationwide, in the majority of our states, and this is a historic role in which they have deep experience and success. We are pleased to help Alabama AHEC assume this role for the benefit of our state and its communities.”

For the past 25 years, the College’s Rural Programs have operated as a pipeline system that starts in high school, for junior and seniors, to prepare students for opportunities in health care following graduation and before they begin higher education and training. In recognition of the positive impact that AHEC has had throughout the state, the College has determined that the opportunities for advancement to provide for these students would be exponentially higher with the network that AHEC has in place statewide, beyond medical school and including other health care professions. It is through this proactive realization of how education outreach can be best accomplished that the partnership was born.

CCHS will continue to be an active partner as the high school programs transition to AHEC’s lead role with continued support and involvement from the College in the future. “We are so appreciative of the opportunity to assume responsibility for the CCHS rural high school programs. AHECs have a long history of working with high school students, to recruit them into health careers. It’s an area where AHEC really shines, and we thank CCHS for their confidence in us to continue to move these programs forward,” says Dr. Cynthia Selleck, Director of the Alabama Statewide AHEC Program.

To date, the College's rural scholastic year programs have already transferred to AHEC implementation and include the after-school Health Profession Academy and the in-school Health Careers 101. During the next year, we anticipate the summer programs for Rural Health Scholars and Rural Minority Health Scholars—11th and 12th grades, respectively—will transition to AHEC's lead, though they are currently being managed by the College with AHEC's invaluable insights and network in assistance. Following the final transition of all high school programs to AHEC's management, the College will continue in developing a future workforce of medical professionals through the Rural Medical Scholars, Rural Community Health Scholars, and Family Medicine Residency programs while providing oversight to the new AHEC high school programs as they do the same.

### ABOUT THE PARTNERS

The University of Alabama College of Community Health Sciences is dedicated to improving and promoting the health of individuals and communities in Alabama and the region through leadership in medical education and primary care; the provision of high quality, accessible health care services; and scholarship.

Alabama Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) are committed to expanding the health care workforce, maximizing diversity, and facilitating distribution, especially in underserved communities. AHECs were created by Congress in 1971 to increase the quantity, diversity, and distribution of health care professionals, especially in rural and underserved areas. Research has shown that positive changes to these three areas increase access to care and improve the overall health of communities.

Working together with

**ALABAMA AHEC**

Alabama Statewide AHEC Program