



**National AHEC
Organization**

Connecting students to careers,
professionals to communities,
and communities to better health.

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and Communities to Better Health

NAO is the national organization that supports and advances the Area Health Education Centers(AHEC) network in improving the health of individuals and communities by transforming health care through education.

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Connecting Students to Careers, Professionals to Communities, and Communities to Better Health

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In This Issue:

New York: Innovative Health Recruitment Program Receives Grant Funding

By Kathryn R. Reed, MHA, CMPE, Executive Director

New York State faces a physician shortage crisis. It's difficult to recruit new doctors, dentists or other health professionals for rural communities – the type of communities that are traditionally medically underserved and greatly in need of quality health care. If fewer primary care physicians and specialists locate to these areas, there are reduced employment opportunities for other healthcare professionals, such as nurses, physician assistants, physical therapists, etc., and less incentive for healthcare workers to move there.

Catskill Hudson AHEC recognized the vital need to recruit and retain quality healthcare professionals to areas throughout New York State. As a result, HealthMatch was established. HealthMatch is a collaborative effort that brings the commitment of healthcare, business and civic leaders together in order to provide increased local access to quality health care. The need to bring communities together to tackle healthcare access needs is essential. By attracting healthcare professionals to our communities, health care is improved, travel outside the community for care is reduced, local economy is stimulated and a healthier workforce is cultivated. There is a true return on investment when communities commit to HealthMatch because HealthMatch is committed to the communities it serves.

Catskill Hudson AHEC received a \$200,000 award from the Health Care Efficiency and Affordability Law for New Yorkers (HEAL NY) Grant Program on Feb. 10, 2008. This funding will enable Catskill Hudson AHEC to take important steps to increase the number of health professionals and connect them with the communities in need.

The \$200,000 grant is awarded under the Local Health Planning Initiative of the HEAL NY Program. This grant program is intended to stimulate and subsidize the development of multi-stakeholder, collaborative local health planning efforts aimed at promoting healthy communities by identifying community healthcare needs and aligning the healthcare delivery system with those needs.

Grant funds will be used to launch this innovative approach to health professional recruitment as a demonstration project, with the goal of replicating this service across the Catskill Hudson AHEC 11-county region and throughout New York State.

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Catskill Hudson AHEC is one of nine AHEC's statewide working to find solutions to the drastic shortages and serious lack of diversity within New York State's healthcare workforce. Strategies include introducing young people and adult career seekers to various healthcare career options, developing opportunities for future health professionals to receive their clinical training in underserved areas, providing continuing education and professional support to health practitioners, and recruiting health professionals to underserved communities. The counties Catskill Hudson AHEC serves are Columbia, Delaware, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Otsego, Putnam, Rockland, Schoharie, Sullivan, and Ulster. For information on Catskill Hudson AHEC, visit its website at www.chahec.org.