

Testimony presented to the North Dakota Senate Human Services Committee.

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<https://www.ndahec.org/>

House Bill 1142: Area Health Education Centers (AHEC)

Chairman Lee and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee.

House Bill 1142 bill will provide up to two-hundred fifty thousand dollars supplemental funding to The Department of Commerce to continue the operation of two Area Health Education Centers. The ND AHEC Program Office is located at the Center for Rural Health at the UND Medical School. Two regional offices are in Hettinger and Mayville and coordinate activities throughout the state to encourage the development and support of healthcare workforce needs in rural North Dakota.

The Eastern AHEC office is located at Mayville State University and serves 28 counties. The Western AHEC is in Hettinger and serves 25 counties. Over the past twelve years AHEC has impacted 23,256 people covering every county in the state.



This bill asks for \$250,000 of state funds which will be leveraged with other funds including a 1 to 1 match with Federal dollars. The AHEC federal grant also requires that 75% of the funding go to the regional offices in Hettinger and Mayville to facilitate their programs. State funding to AHEC has been provided since 2008 in the East and since 2010 in the West.

Since the last Legislative session, over 4000 students and future healthcare workers have come in contact with services and support provided by AHEC to acquaint them with and support them as they examine and prepare for a future career in healthcare.

What are some specific activities?

1. AHEC establishes education programs to acquaint rural students to opportunities in health occupations.
2. AHEC helps establish clinical rotations in rural settings to recruit health care professionals to areas of need.
3. AHEC works with rural health care organizations and communities to help them "grow their own".
4. AHEC coordinates with education facilities to facilitate training of healthcare professionals. Funds are made available to assist rural students with needed continuing education and clinical rotations.

Please support this bill to continue efforts to help rural communities maintain quality health care.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 1142.

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**Additional Notes:**

*Students: There are over 200 potential careers in healthcare. For middle or high school students interested in a career in the healthcare industry, AHEC can help them explore career areas, discover where their interest lies, and provide tools and opportunities to pursue those interests.*

*Clinical Rotations: AHEC can also assist college students with field experiences and clinical experiences with grant funding for completing a rotation in rural North Dakota underserved areas.*

*Scholars Program: AHEC Scholars is a nationally recognized certificate program for health professions students interested in supplementing their education by gaining additional knowledge and experience in rural and/or underserved settings.*