



Building a Rural Healthcare Workforce in Illinois

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University of Illinois College of Medicine

- In 1971 – Created regional campuses in Rockford and Peoria to
 - Address Healthcare Workforce Shortages
 - Improve Access to Medical Education
 - Enhance Regional Healthcare Systems
 - Foster Community-Oriented Education
 - Promote Collaboration Between Regions

National Center for Rural Health Professions (NCRHP)

University of Illinois
College of Medicine Rockford (UICOMR)

- Certified by the Illinois Board of Higher Education since 2003
- ***Mission: Improve the health and well-being of rural communities through education, workforce development, community partnerships, and policy***
- ***Vision: Leading Excellence in Healthcare for Rural Communities***



NCRHP Strategic Priorities

Attract

- Attract students from rural backgrounds to pursue careers in rural healthcare

Train

- Train the next generation of rural healthcare leaders

Design and implement

- Design and implement innovative educational approaches to prepare students for practice in rural settings

Engage

- Engage with rural communities in addressing their unique health needs and challenges

Collaborate

- Collaborate with international health organizations on primary care initiatives



NCRHP's Flagship Program – RMED



- Created in 1990 through the Illinois Downstate Health Act
- Statewide, nationally, and internationally recognized rural medical education program
- Based on a "Grow-your own" model
- RMED students participate in an add-on rural curriculum all 4-years of medical school
- RMED YouTube video link:
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=643883754020852>

How Are We Doing?

- 436 students have graduated from the RMED program (1997-2024).
- 65% of program graduates practice in towns of less than 50,000 people.
- RMED students matriculated from 97 of Illinois's 102 counties.
- 78% of RMED graduates matched into primary care residencies (family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, and internal medicine-pediatrics).
- Current practice data for 319 RMED graduates show that 56% of graduates are practicing in IL
- Over 70 RMED clinical sites throughout Illinois and beyond

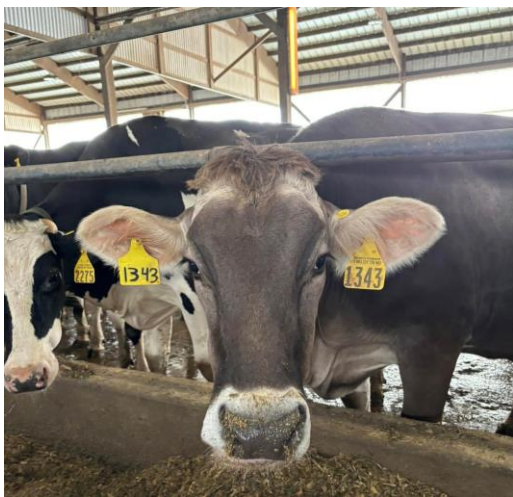




Goal - to build a new 3-story building on the UICOMR campus that will house the Illinois Rural Hub. The aim of the hub is to bring together additional health sciences professions under one roof with the goal of providing health professionals to rural communities.

Rural Health Professions (RHP) Academic Programs

- *The mission of RHP is to recruit, admit, educate and train health professions students who will practice in rural areas of Illinois following completion of their residencies or degree programs.*
- Current Programs include:
 - Rural Pharmacy Program (RPHARM) - RPHARM students participate in the same curriculum and alongside students in the RMED program
 - Rural Nursing Program (RNURSING) - Concentration in the Doctor of Nursing Program
 - Illinois Behavioral Health Workforce Education, Learning & Leadership (BHWELL) Program - a clinical training and certificate program for MSW students interested in serving rural and underserved areas in Illinois. (HRSA funded)



NCRHP Pathway Programs

- "Grow-your-own" Pathway Programs include:
 - Health Careers Presentations for rural high school students
 - Summer Camps for rural high school students
 - Rural Immersion Programs for college and graduate level students
 - Illinois Area Health Education Centers (IL AHEC)



Research shows that early, multi-year engagement boosts entry into baccalaureate and health professions programs.





IL-AHEC

Affiliations, Partners & Collaborations

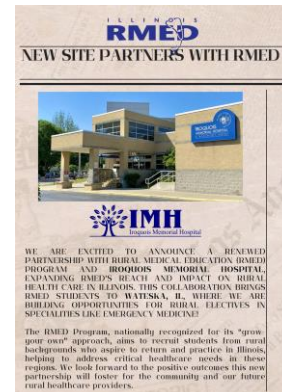
- IL AHEC Program Office - manages 9 regional program offices
- Manage 76 clinical affiliation sites - including collaborating hospitals and clinical preceptors
- Rural Medical Training Collaborative (RMTc) - a national non-profit that aims to support the development and sustainability of rural medical residency programs
- NCRHP serves as one of just three PAHO/WHO Collaborating Centers in North America focusing on medical education and primary health care
- The Network: TIFH is an international organization of academic health professions' institutions and organizations promoting equity in health through community-oriented education, research, and service



**World Health
Organization**



THE NETWORK
TOWARDS UNITY FOR HEALTH



**Pan American
Health
Organization**



Rural Health Policy

- Illinois Rural Health Association
 - President
- Illinois Public Health Association
 - President
 - Executive Council
- National Rural Health Association
 - Rural Health Fellows Leadership Program
 - Rural Health Policy Congress
- Senator Durbin's Roadmap to Grow Illinois' Rural Health Workforce
- Presidential Leadership Scholars Program

Rural Health Research

- Current focus:
 - Rural health workforce
 - NCRHP program outcomes
 - White papers addressing rural health issues
 - Variety of student research using the community-oriented primary care (COPC) approach



RESEARCH

Open Access

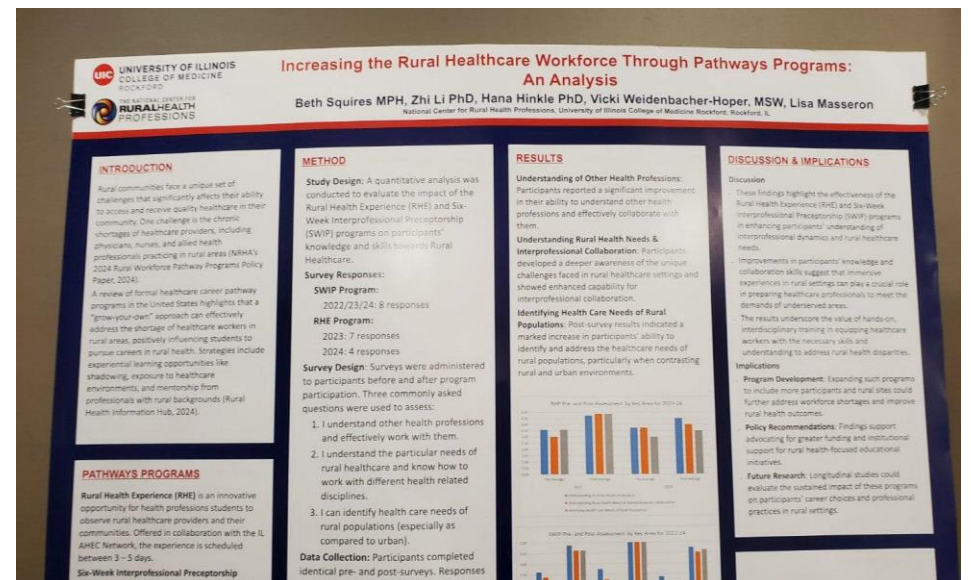
Key themes of community-oriented primary care projects from a longitudinal, rural interprofessional health professions curriculum (1997–2023)

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Abstract

Background The Community Oriented Primary Care Project Model (COPC) has been well studied globally as well as in the United States as a way to provide both community-oriented primary care and to engage in community-based research. Rural trainees through the University of Illinois College of Medicine's Rural Medical Education Program (RME) and Rural Pharmacy Education Program (RPHM) students through the University of Illinois Chicago College of Pharmacy have participated in a COPC project as a capstone to a four-month longitudinal, immersive community-based experience in a rural primary care setting. The purpose of this study was to assess the type of projects implemented through a rural health professions curriculum over a 30-year project period.

Methods A research team reviewed projects on 30 elements, including topic and demographics. Patterns in COPC topics and rurality of the location in which the COPC project were also examined by using 2021 U.S. Census Bureau population data and Rural Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) Code.



Resources

- National Rural Health Association - <https://www.ruralhealth.us/>
 - Rural Health Policy Institute: February 11 - February 13
- Rural Health Information Hub - <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/>
- Rural Health Research Centers - <https://www.ruralhealthresearch.org/centers>
- HRSA's Federal Office of Rural Health Policy - <https://www.hrsa.gov/about/organization/bureaus/forhp>
- Follow the National Center for Rural Health Professions
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