



The National Center for Rural Health Professions University of Illinois College of Medicine Rockford

WHO WE ARE

Certified by the Illinois Board of Higher Education since 2003, the National Center for Rural Health Professions (NCRHP), part of the University of Illinois College of Medicine Rockford, provides community-based rural healthcare education and training in preparation for rural practice, conducts research on rural health issues, engages with rural communities, and leads policy initiatives for the unique needs of rural communities.

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

- Train the next generation of rural healthcare leaders
- Attract students from rural backgrounds to pursue careers in rural healthcare
- Design and implement innovative interprofessional educational approaches to prepare healthcare professionals for practice in rural settings
- Engage with rural communities in addressing their unique health needs and challenges
- Collaborate with international health organizations on primary care initiatives



WHAT WE DO



RURAL MEDICAL EDUCATION (RMED) PROGRAM

The most successful and largest rural medical education program in the country, the Rural Medical Education (RMED) Program is NCRHP's flagship program. RMED is a statewide, nationally, and internationally recognized rural medical education program that seeks to recruit, admit and educate medical students, who will upon completion of residency training, practice medicine in a rural location. RMED is curricular track of the regular medical school curriculum.

PATHWAY PROGRAMS AND ILLINOIS AHEC NETWORK

A critical component of the Rural Health Professions strategy in NCRHP is the "grow-your-own" model through pathways programs, offering diverse programs to students in rural areas. These initiatives include health career presentations, summer camps for high school students, and rural immersion shadowing for college and graduate students. Research shows that early, multi-year engagement boosts historically underserved students' entry into baccalaureate and health professions programs.

Since 2010, the **Illinois Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Network**, funded by HRSA, has expanded to nine regional centers statewide, providing health professions education, career development, and community health promotion for underserved rural and urban residents. The main office is located within NCRHP on the UICOMR campus. NCRHP serves as the state-wide program office for this effort.

RURAL HEALTH POLICY

A leader in health policy, NCRHP's involved in a wide variety of local, state, national, and international policy work related to improving healthcare delivery in rural and underserved populations; interprofessional education and training; workforce development; and addressing rural health disparities.

RURAL RESEARCH

Conducting and disseminating quality translational research is a core function of NCRHP. Our faculty and staff publish and present on a variety of rural health topics. Current research interests focus on rural health workforce, program outcomes, and white papers addressing rural health issues.

AFFILIATIONS, PARTNERS, & COLLABORATIONS

NCRHP partners with state, national, and international educational institutions and organizations to pioneer new models of recruitment, education, and retention for the rural health workforce. NCRHP models, piloted in rural Illinois communities, have been exportable to communities across the nation and in other countries. Currently we manage 76 clinical affiliation sites with RMED and NCRHP to expand on training opportunities for health professions students.

Rural Medical Training Collaborative (formerly RTT Collaborative)

NCRHP, under the direction of Dr. Hinkle, provides executive leadership for this nationally scaled non-profit that aims to support the development and sustainability of rural medical residency programs across the country-with 72 participating programs and growing, **this is the largest organization of rural training in the country.**

For more information:

The NCRHP welcomes opportunities to partner with health professionals, researchers, educators, and communities. Please contact us to discuss partnership opportunities and approaches to promoting the health of rural communities.. Please contact Dr. Hana Hinkle, hhinkle1@uic.edu