

# Western Arizona Area Health Education Center Regional Center for Border Health, Inc. San Luis Walk-In Clinic, Inc.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
**Arizona AHEC**  
Area Health Education Centers

**Developing a Diverse Rural Healthcare Workforce:  
Helping Graduates find the Perfect Rural Job**

**February 18, 2023**



**Amanda Aguirre  
President & CEO**



**Joena Ezroj  
WAHEC Director**

**“Committed to improving the quality of life of the residents along the U.S.-Mexico Border by increasing accessibility to quality training and affordable healthcare”**



**Regional Center For Border Health Inc.  
WAHEC Headquarters in Somerton AZ**





# San Luis Medical Mall, San Luis, AZ Opened its doors in June 2021



# Western Arizona Area Health Education Center Established in 1987



The principal mission of Arizona's Area Health Education Centers (AHEC's) is to improve the health status of Arizona's rural and medically underserved communities through the improvement of retention, distribution, supply, diversity, quality and efficiency of health professionals serving these populations.

6 The Valley-Foothills News, Thursday, Feb. 26, 1987

## WAHEC to provide medical-training info

By SUSAN MERCER  
Staff writer, The News

Rural areas frequently are underserved by medical services, health professionals agree.

WAHEC, Western Arizona Area Health Education Center Inc., hopes to change that.

A new program underway since July in Yuma, La Paz and Mohave counties, WAHEC provides information about the web of available health-care services and medical-professions training, Executive Director Nina Avina-Rhodes said during WAHEC's formal opening Feb. 21. Two WAHEC offices have been established — one in Yuma and one in Lake Havasu City.

The organization will recruit students into medical programs. Also, it will provide a chance for medical trainees from areas like Tucson to do a stint of clinical rotation work in a rural setting to better learn such areas' needs.

Part of WAHEC's mission also is to familiarize minorities with the health-career options and training available to them, too, Avina-Rhodes said. She added WAHEC will coordinate with the Project HOPE health-services-training program affiliated with Western Arizona College.

Currently, WAHEC is recruiting applicants for the six-week program introducing prospective medical students to the realities of the professions.

WAHEC received \$250,000 in federal Health and Human Services agency funding administered under the auspices of University Medical Center in Tucson. WAHEC is one of many similar programs operating in 35 states.

Locally, WAHEC can tap Dr. Robert Cannell for medical direction, as well as a host of area health-care professionals, including other doctors, nurses and health administrators. Avina-Rhodes said she expects to receive local citizens' input on health matters the organization should address, too.

One survey already has tapped doctors.

"The priority in Yuma, according to our survey, is that the physicians are looking for legal issues," Avina-Rhodes said. "They want training in how to (medically) chart to avoid medical malpractice suits."

The dedication ceremonies included speeches by state legislators and UMC doctors affiliated with the program.

State Sen. Jones Osborn pointed to the fact that rural residents often lack role models for health-care professions, and that the WAHEC program will fill a need in that area. State Rep. Bob McLendon said lawmakers need to be kept informed about rural-county health needs, and that he welcomes establishment of the center.

Former State Sen. Luis Gonzales of Tucson lauded the organization's efforts to reach out to the Hispanic community, which he said additionally encounters difficulties with the medical system due to linguistic barriers.

"I'm very optimistic about the program," Avina-Rhodes said.

WAHEC board president Randy Hinrichs said he looks forward to a flourishing center, too.

"The uniqueness and strength of the WAHEC program involves the amount of participation and

cooperation of the local health professionals in promoting and designing the program," Hinrichs said. "In this respect, it's also unique that the program can be

shaped to best meet the needs — the continuing education needs of the local professional and also the people in the service area."



Ribbon-cutting ceremonies Saturday for Western Arizona Health Education Center Inc. drew dignitaries.

# Addressing Healthcare Disparities



Access to  
Affordable Healthcare

Health Promotion and  
Disease Prevention  
Social Determinants of  
Health (SDoH)



Quality  
Assurance & Population  
Health Outcome

Health Professional  
Recruitment and Retention &  
Interprofessional Clinical  
Rotations



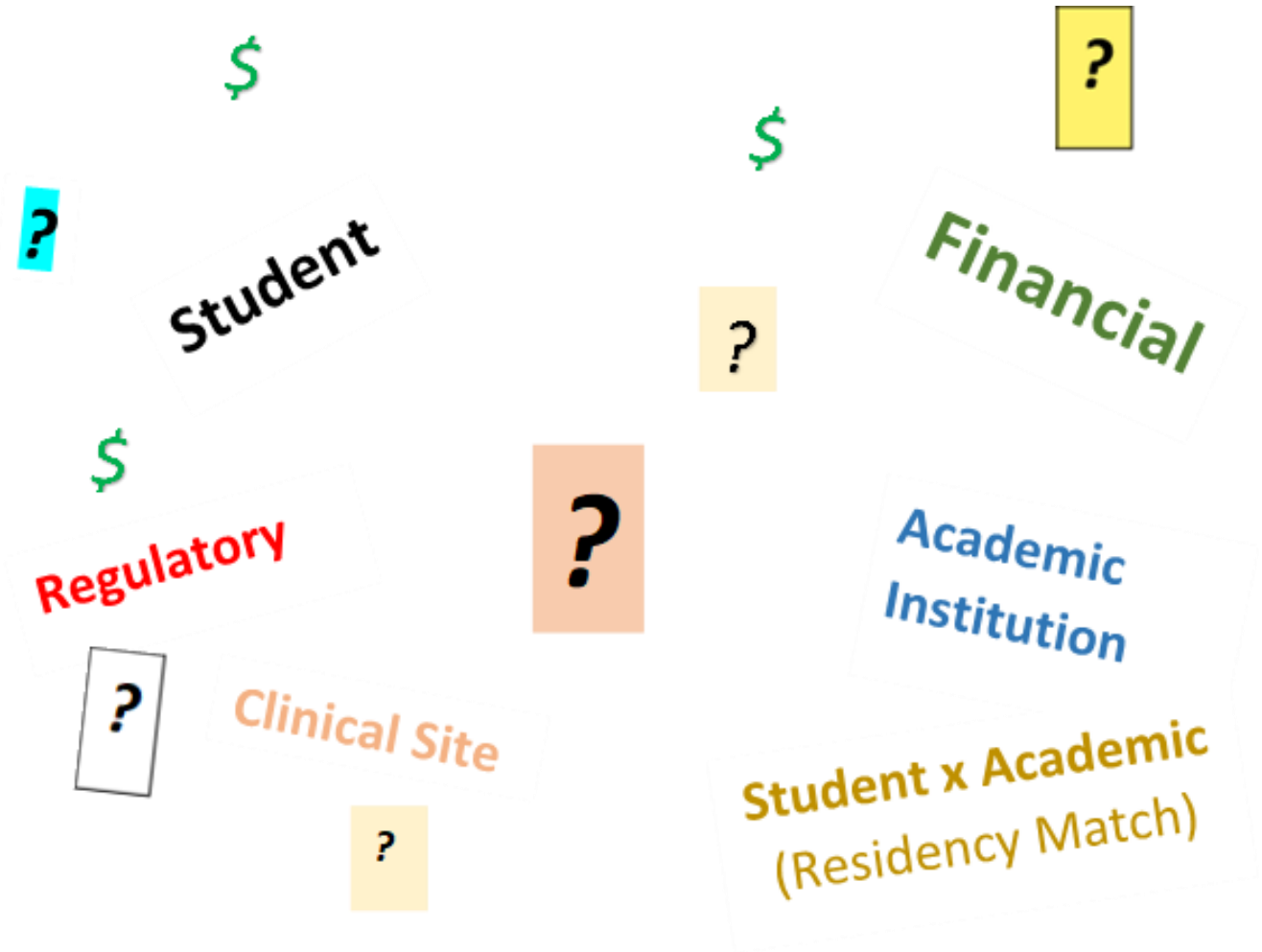




Health  
Professional  
Recruitment and  
Retention &  
Interprofessional  
Clinical Rotations



Rural job recruitment is a complex system...





# *Pipeline Programming: Commitment to Rural Practice*

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graph LR; A[Recruit Best Students] --> B[Academic Training]; B --> C[Rural Practice];
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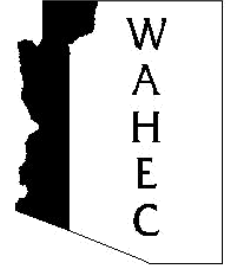
**Recruit  
Best  
Students**

**Academic  
Training**

**Rural  
Practice**



# "Growing Our Own" Health Professional Recruitment and Retention & Interprofessional Clinical Rotations



- Medical Student Rotation
- Border Health Career
- Health Career Clubs (HOSA)
- RHPP
- Pharmacy Camp
- Future Health Leaders



## Health Career Opportunities Program—

### Summer Opportunities:

- Med-Start Summer Enrichment (U of A)
- Minority Medical Education Program Opportunity (U of A)
- PREP Summer Enrichment Opportunity (NAU)



# OB/GYN Clinical Rotation Dr. Richards and PA Student, NAU



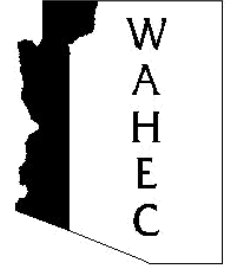




# Interprofessional Clinical Rotations



# Interprofessional Clinical Rotations



The **Program Mission Award** is awarded to the graduating student who best exemplifies the program's mission – which is to educate competent clinicians who provide high quality, ethical, culturally appropriate primary health care to individuals across the life span, within the context of the family and community, and to prepare graduates to practice in diverse settings throughout Arizona, with special emphasis on rural communities and other medically underserved communities. This year's recipient Of the program mission award is **Oscar Campuzano**. Oscar's selection for the award was based upon his abundant experience in rural and underserved settings, which included a significant amount of time at RCFBH. Additionally, his desire for seeking employment opportunities in these areas contributed to his selection. He will be a fantastic provider and PA.

--Jacob Gubler, NAU PA Program Coordinator and Professor



# MED-Start

## University of Arizona



**THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA HEALTH SCIENCES**  
**Med-Start**  
*Virtual Closing Ceremony*

In honor of our 2021 Med-Start Students complete their online six-week summer program.

FRIDAY, JULY 16, 2021  
1 PM

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
**Amanda Aguirre, MA, RD**  
President & CEO  
Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.  
San Luis Walk-In Clinic, Inc  
Former Arizona State Senator

Arizona AHEC



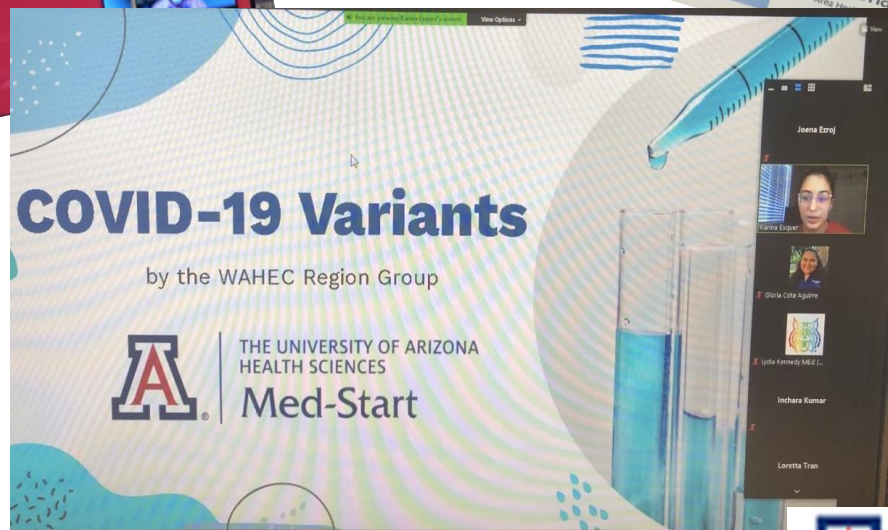
You did it!  
*Congratulations*

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA HEALTH SCIENCES**  
**Med-Start**  
June 7, 2021 - July 16, 2021

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA HEALTH SCIENCES  
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

ARIZONA TELEMEDICINE PROGRAM

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
**Arizona AHEC**  
Area Health Education Centers



**COVID-19 Variants**

by the WAHEC Region Group

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA HEALTH SCIENCES**  
**Med-Start**







# Center for Children with Special Needs and Autism



A multidisciplinary resource center for families and their children with special needs and autism spectrum disorder.

Multidisciplinary care management team:

- Pediatrician
- Psychiatrist
- Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner
- Psychologist
- Licensed Social Worker
- Registered Dietician
- Licensed Speech Pathologist/Feeding Clinic
- Family Care Coordinator



# HOSA

## Lake Havasu HOSA High School Students attending the Fall Leadership Conference





# AHEC Scholars Immersion



WAHEC

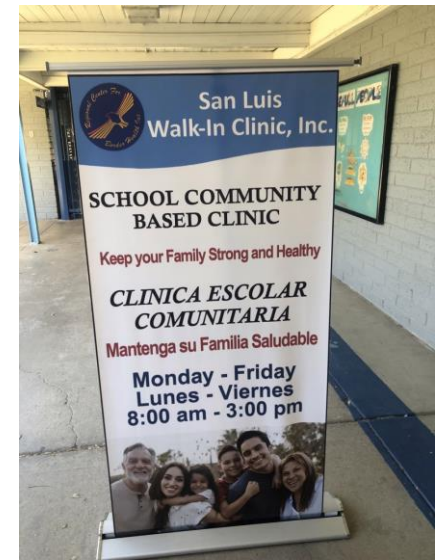






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AHEC Scholars  
Immersion:  
School Community  
Health Fair





**SLWIC Medical Staff**

**Longitudinal**

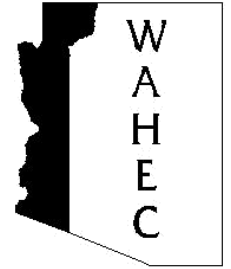
**Integrated**

**Curriculum**

**(LIC)**

**University of**

**Arizona**





# Q & A



## Thank you!

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