

November 19, 2012

Health Care Career Awareness Month in October: Creating Awareness

October was Health Care Career Awareness Month in Vermont by resolution of the Vermont legislature and activities conducted by the Vermont Area Health Education Center Network.

The goal of health careers month is to create awareness about health care careers in Vermont and educate, recruit and retain qualified health care workers. To learn more about health care careers in Vermont, visit: www.vthealthcareers.org.

The Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center sponsored two major activities:

- **The Health Career Focus Conference** was held October 27 at the College of Medicine. Over sixty students from all three regions of the state were in attendance to enjoy a very full day of workshops, presentations and exposure to many health careers. The conference was targeted to 9th and 10th grade high school students as a more intense introduction to health careers and a gateway to our other health career programs. The agenda included a keynote speech from Dr. Fred Holmes of Mousetrap Pediatrics, and a number of workshops including caring across cultures, infectious diseases, public health crises, cutting-edge technology and medicine, obesity prevention with healthy lifestyles and community and mental health.
- **Shadow Day at NMC and Porter** was held October 18 and 19. A total of 12 students from Franklin and Grand Isle Counties attended the day at Northwestern Medical Center where they received confidentiality and infection control training, heard about volunteer opportunities, shadowed a health professional, lunched with various healthcare professionals and ended the day with “Career as Physical Therapist” presentation. Porter Medical Center hosted 8 students. They received similar confidentiality and infection control training, shadowed a professional, received career and volunteer information, a tour of the hospital and the Middlebury Volunteer Ambulance Association as well as a VTC session regarding college planning and admissions questions.

The Northeastern Vermont AHEC also engaged in activities to expand and strengthen health careers exploration programs in their region by:

- **Health careers exploration programming** with students in kindergarten through 5th grade and presenting on health careers pathways in middle and high schools.
- **Developed a new health curriculum** with a coordinating committee in St. Johnsbury.
- **Presenting at statewide conferences**, including Women Can Do and the Vermont Educational Opportunities Program.
- **Matching high school students with community mentors** in health care settings throughout the region.
- **Providing information** to adult learners about career opportunities in health care.
- **Participating in a college and career fair** at Lakes Region High School.

The Southern Vermont AHEC Program offered:

- **Rutland County “Sophomore Summit”** at Castleton State College with fifty seven sophomores who attended health careers workshops facilitated by AHEC staff. Presenters included emergency medical technicians from Rutland Regional Ambulance, physician assistants and radiology technicians.
- **Presentations for the Women Can Do Conference** at VT Technical College concerning VT health careers and assisting the Stafford Health Careers Advisory Committee.