

## University of Vermont's Area Health Education Centers and Office of Nursing Workforce Merge

BURLINGTON, VT— The University of Vermont Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Program announces that effective July 1, 2010 the Office of Nursing Workforce Research, Planning, and Development activities have become a part of AHEC.

“We are pleased to make official this interdisciplinary approach to Vermont’s healthcare workforce development needs. Primary care and nursing are intricately linked and adding these nursing workforce activities helps strengthen our program,” said Elizabeth Cote, Director of the UVM AHEC Program. “This merger formalizes and streamlines the team approach to health education and healthcare workforce research that AHEC and the Office of Nursing Workforce have collaborated on for the past nine years,” she added.

The Office of Nursing Workforce Research, Planning, and Development was established in December 2001 to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Nursing Commission to respond to Vermont’s nursing shortage. Funding for the Office was made possible by grants from the Vermont Agency of Human Services and other state and federal grants. Mary Val Palumbo, DNP, APRN, Director of the Office, said “becoming a part of AHEC will provide a sustainable and efficient framework to continue to build on the education, research and development programs for Vermont’s nursing students and nurses.” Dr. Palumbo’s office will still have the same address and phone number, while now operating under the AHEC umbrella. “The biggest change for our stakeholders will be higher efficiency and greater synergy since we can leverage the grant writing opportunities, resources, reach, and programs available through AHEC,” said Palumbo. In addition to nursing workforce research, Dr. Palumbo will continue to teach UVM nursing students, and serve as AHEC’s liaison to the UVM College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and the Center on Aging at UVM. She will also represent the nursing perspective as a member of the core planning team for AHEC’s annual Geriatrics Conference.

### **About AHEC**

The Vermont AHEC Program is a statewide network of community and academic partners working together and consists of a program office at UVM and three regional centers, each a separate 501(c)(3), non-profit organization capable of providing support for community healthcare systems. AHEC provides a link between the University of Vermont and Vermont’s communities.

AHEC efforts focus on achieving a well-trained healthcare workforce so that all Vermonters have access to quality care, including those who live in Vermont’s most rural areas and Vermont’s underserved populations. In addition to workforce development, AHEC brings educational and quality improvement programming to Vermont’s primary care practices and supports community-based health education across the state.

AHEC believes that success in healthcare innovation, transformation, and reform depends on an adequate supply and distribution of well-trained healthcare professionals.

*For more information, contact UVM AHEC:*

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