



July 2020

*Sedalia – the virtual site for  
Clinical Rural Immersion*

### **Clinical Rural Immersion**

The first annual Clinical Rural Immersion Program gave 24 health care students real-world experience in rural Missouri. This year, students spent two weeks studying rural medicine in Sedalia. To protect students and the Sedalia community against the potential spread of COVID-19, the program was held virtually with modified in-person visits. The project was made possible by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funding the MU School of Medicine's rural medicine programs received last September. This program is one of many ways that the MU School of Medicine's Area Health Education Center is exposing future health care leaders learn about rural medicine in the hope of combatting Missouri's ongoing rural doctor shortage. Two MU School of Medicine students, 16 Sinclair School of Nursing students and six UMKC School of Pharmacy students participated in the program, of the six pharmacy students four are also Mid-MO AHEC Scholars.

"There are several programs in our pipeline that give students an opportunity to experience rural communities and potentially practice in these areas in the future," said Victoria McGhee, program and project coordinator for MU's Rural Track Pipeline Program. "The research shows that the more exposure medical students have with a rural practice, the more likely they are to return to a rural practice."

From June 1-12, 2020 the students learned through live online sessions, assigned readings, pre- and post-work activities, reflection assignments and other group work. Pharmacy students were able to complete their clinical rotations on-site in Sedalia. The curriculum was adjusted for the other students with limited on-site interaction through an online learning platform. To meet their clinical requirements, students participated in telehealth visits with health care professionals based in Sedalia to expand their understanding of the community.

"The community benefits through sharing the unique aspects of their region to recruit professionals," said Kathleen Quinn, PhD, associate dean for rural health. "This program is an academic and community partnership at its best. The students also benefit from experiencing interprofessional team care through an understanding of each discipline's unique role contributing to patient centered care."

Students got to know Sedalia by doing virtual farm tours via guided drone footage and completing a windshield survey by driving through the area and taking notes about population demographics and the availability of public services and health care.

The Clinical Rural Immersion Project is being planned to take place in person in Sedalia in 2021.

***MAHEC is a partnership of seven locally governed organizations and three university-based health professions education programs working statewide to increase the numbers of Missouri youth entering stable, high-paying jobs as healthcare professionals and the numbers of professionals caring for underserved populations.***

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***MAHEC: Connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health.***