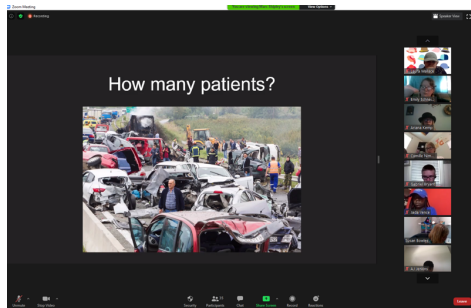


December 2020

Health Professional Students in Southwest Missouri Adjust to New Learning Tools During Covid-19

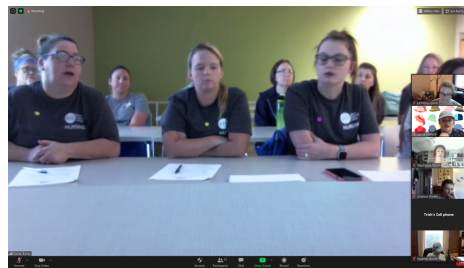
For students training to become healthcare professionals, the format for learning has changed amid the recent pandemic. At Missouri Area Health Education Center (MAHEC), teaching formats have also changed. Prior to the pandemic, recruitment of high school students into the pipeline included MAHEC staff going to schools and providing students with hands-on workshops to show students potential health care career options. Now, these workshops are mostly virtual.



Providing students and teachers with virtual interactive sessions during the pandemic has been very well received. According to Trish Lavish, SWMO AHEC Health Career Coordinator, "Several successful workshops have even been held and coordinated statewide, which has increased participation among high school students." This has included a virtual cadaver lab demonstration which included over 170 students. If this session needed to be in-person, it would have been limited to 30 or less.

In Southwest Missouri, course offerings for summer health sciences and Health Foundations camps were offered virtually this past summer had good attendance each day. CPR certification in Basic Life Skills (BLS) and First Aid has been offered in two different formats- partially online and seated. The online portion included the coursework, and the seated portion included the skills testing. The changes that SWMO AHEC made to the skills testing to keep each student safe included sanitizing each mannequin before and after each use, requiring students to wear gloves and masks for the duration of the training, and practicing individually, instead of with a partner.

Although MAHEC staff and most participating rural schools have been able to adapt to the pandemic and necessary precautions, both are hopeful that the rate of Covid-19 infections reduce so that it is safe again to learn in an education setting. However, transportable workshops have been shown to be beneficial for MAHEC and participating schools for several reasons. One, taking the workshops directly to the schools ensures that students receive the curriculum during their regular school day, and they do not have to travel for an after-school event when they are busy with sports and other extracurricular activities. Two, MAHEC is also able to reach significantly more students, hopefully increasing their interest in sciences and health care career options available to them.



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.

The MAHEC partners include:

- A.T. Still University
Kirksville
- University of Missouri-
Columbia
- Saint Louis University
- East Central Missouri
ECMO AHEC – St. Louis
- Mid-Missouri AHEC –
Rolla
- Northeast Missouri
NEMO AHEC – Kirksville
- Northwest Missouri
NWMO AHEC – St.
Joseph
- Southeastern Missouri
SEMO AHEC – Poplar
Bluff
- West Central Missouri
WCMO AHEC – Kansas
City