



February 2021

## MAHEC Legislative Day Goes Virtual

Adaptability is a skill that the Missouri AHEC (MAHEC) Network has refined over the past 30 years, and that skill was put to the test when we organized the MAHEC’s 2021 Legislative Day.

MAHEC Legislative Day is an annual advocacy event held in-person at the State Capitol. However, due to Covid-19, this year’s Legislative Day held on February 17 was transitioned to a virtual format. The event provides MAHEC the opportunity to better understand the needs in their regions but also ensures that AHEC Scholars and AHEC students in the pipeline learn valuable advocacy skills. Students were given an excellent opportunity to understand the importance of pivoting to conditions around them. So even when some aspects of preparation remained the same, such as regional AHEC Centers scheduling meetings with legislators, none of the meetings were conducted in person. The virtual/phone meeting-format also provided an opportunity to meet with legislators throughout the week, instead of just one day.

Two general sessions, facilitated by the A. T. Still University AHEC Program Office, were hosted on February 17 and included a brief overview of MAHEC; shared testimonials from MAHEC board members, preceptors, and students; and a question and answer session.

One of the students who shared about their AHEC experience was Missouri AHEC Scholar, Abbigale Apeldoorn, “My eyes have been opened while going through [the] AHEC Scholars Program - to the different social determinants of health. After finishing my bachelor's degree, I plan to continue my education and study Nuclear Medicine, and then work in a rural/ underserved area. I want to give back to society in any way that I can." Apeldoorn is now a senior at Avila University, studying radiologic technology.

According to Tracy Bobo, director of East Central Missouri (ECMO) AHEC, “The meetings that we did have, they were very positive, very good feedback, very supportive. For the first time virtual - I think it went very well.”

Missouri regional AHEC Centers and Program Offices welcome the opportunity to speak with stakeholders in their region and across the state. These conversations help to build the innovative pipeline program that AHEC is known for. To get in touch with your Missouri regional AHEC Centers, go to <http://www.mahec.org>



*Missouri AHEC Scholar Abbigale Apeldoorn shares about her AHEC experiences during the afternoon MAHEC general session.*

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

*The MAHEC partners include:*

- A.T. Still University – Kirksville
- University of Missouri – Columbia
- Saint Louis University
- Northeast Missouri AHEC – Kirksville
- Northwest Missouri AHEC – St. Joseph
- West Central Missouri AHEC – Lexington
- Mid-Missouri AHEC – Rolla
- East Central Missouri AHEC – St. Louis
- Southeastern Missouri AHEC – Poplar Bluff
- Southwest Missouri AHEC – Springfield

