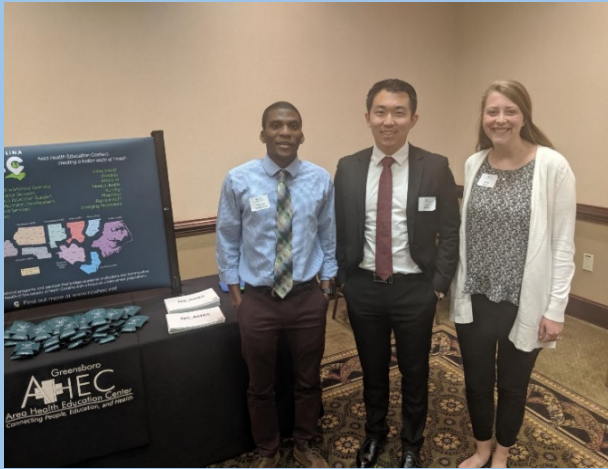


# Rural Interprofessional Summer Immersion

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**PROJECT:** The UNC School of Medicine Office of Rural Initiatives partnered with the NC Greensboro Area Health Education Center (AHEC) to create a 4 week Rural Interprofessional Summer Immersion experience with the goal of giving students an opportunity to fully engage in a rural community through social and clinical opportunities and encourage them to realistically picture future rural practice. This experience also gave the students an opportunity to learn with and about other professions and to look at healthcare beyond their own professional scope.



**IMMERSION:** The cohort included students from Pharmacy, Nursing, and Medicine who spent 4 weeks living together, getting clinical experience, engaging and interacting with the community, and identifying and implementing a group project based on community need through collaboration with community stakeholders and partners. Each student was provided with a stipend to support their participation.

**STUDENT REFLECTION:** *"I believe that this experience has been very beneficial and has increased the likelihood of me working in a rural setting as a future health professional."*

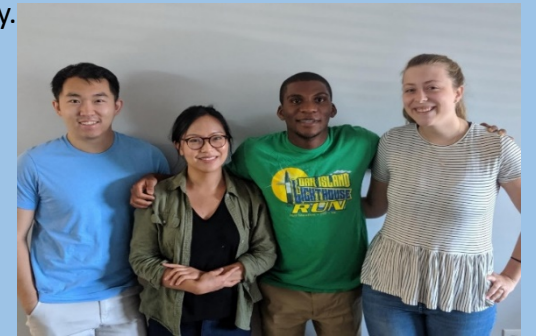
*"This experience definitely changed some of my misconceptions about rural health and opens up practicing in a rural hospital as a new possibility for me. I think experiences like this are the most effective at recruiting future physicians to a rural setting since many people have no experience in rural areas and have the wrong idea of what living and practicing there would be like."*

## Program Components

- 2 days a week direct clinical exposure
- 1 day of "white space" to explore the community
- 1 day of group didactic work
- Data collection, analysis, and interpretation for research, policy, or practice
- Engagement of the community to identify resources
- Community assessment and engagement of key stakeholders

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** The students worked with the Rockingham Health Department to design, development, and implement a diabetes management program which included community assessment, data analysis, creating training materials, and marketing materials with an interprofessional approach to identifying needs and resources to encourage patients to address their diabetes management from a more holistic scope.

The students used their time in clinic, church visits and several community activities such as free Zumba classes to interact with the community.



**CONCLUSION:** All participants reported professional and personal growth during the experience and stated they would recommend the immersion to fellow students and were more likely to serve in rural community based on the experience. Half of the cohort independently decided to continue to work with stakeholders on the community project and also plan to return to participate in future health related programming. They also reported a greater appreciation, understanding and respect for their fellow healthcare providers and recognize the need to practice using a more holistic team based care model.