

# 2024 Forum on Rural Population Health & Health Equity



## Oregon AHEC: Impacting Oregon's Current and Future Health Care Workforce Needs

OREGON AHEC DIRECTOR, ERIC WISER, MD &  
PROGRAM MANAGER, MELISSENT ZUMWALT, MPA

# 2024 Forum on Rural Population Health & Health Equity

- Audio has been muted for all participants upon entry
- Moderators will assist with Q+A at the end of the presentation
- Presentation slides will be posted at [ohsu.edu/orhforum](https://ohsu.edu/orhforum)
- Sessions will be recorded and available to attendees
- Please take the session surveys!



# OREGON AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER

OREGON AHEC DIRECTOR ERIC WISER, M.D., & PROGRAM MANAGER MELISSENT ZUMWALT

# Agenda

1. AHEC Organization
2. Oregon's Health Care Workforce Needs Assessment 2023
3. Oregon AHEC Scholars
4. Partnering with Oregon AHEC

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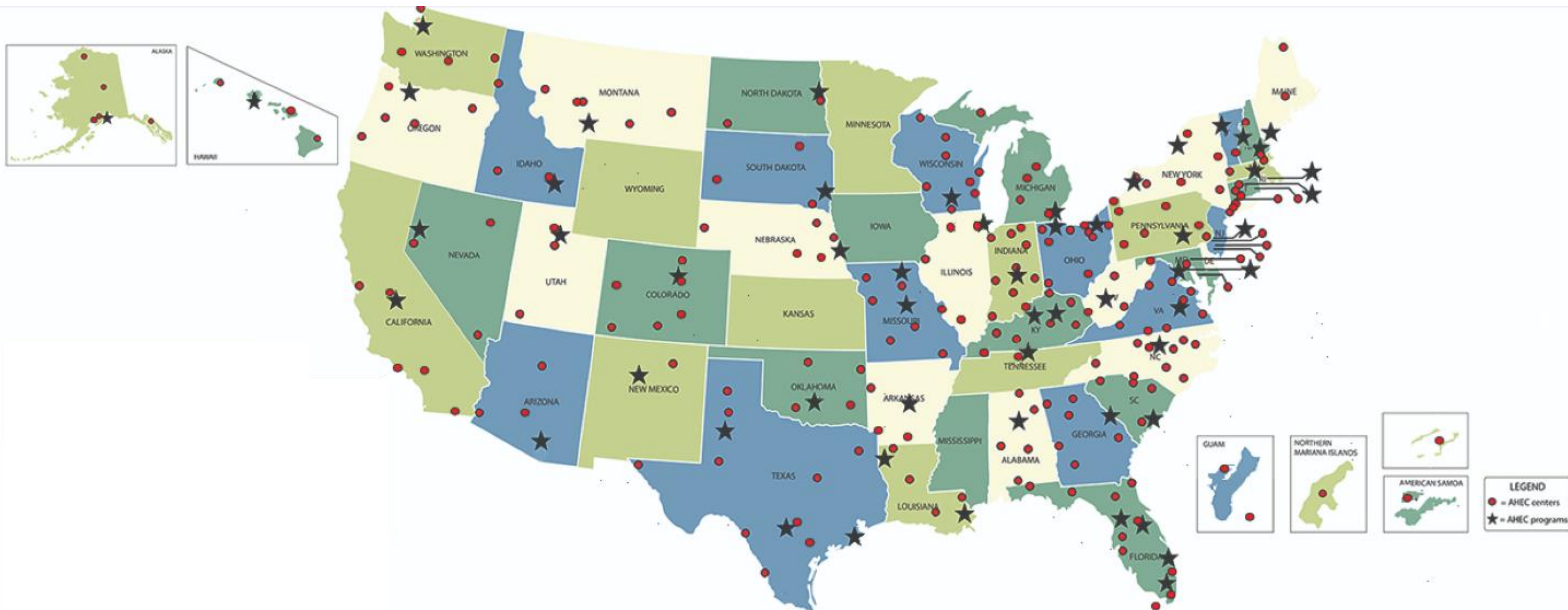
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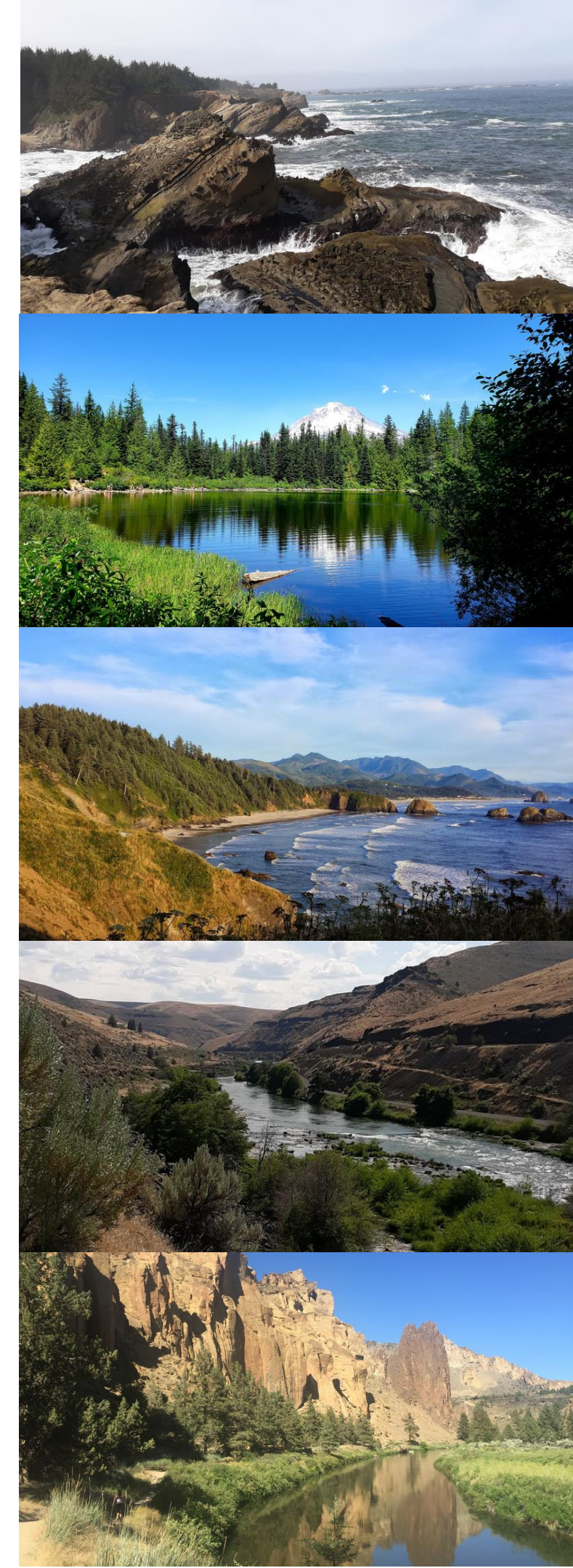
# National AHEC Organization





# Who we are

- Developed in 1990 to recruit, train and retain healthcare professionals committed to serving rural and under-resourced Oregonians.
- Oregon AHEC is a network made up of five regional centers that cover the entire state with a central program office housed at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland.
- We design educational programming to inspire Oregon's youth to pursue health care careers in rural and underserved settings, support them in becoming health care professionals and provide continuing education once they are established.
- Our regional centers provide hub and spoke extension services statewide.





# Goals

- **Diversity:** Preparing a diverse, culturally competent primary care workforce that can address the needs of the communities we serve;
- **Distribution:** Improving health care workforce distribution throughout the state, particularly among rural and underserved areas and populations; and
- **Practice Transformation:** Developing and maintaining a health care workforce prepared to deliver high quality care in a transforming delivery system, with an emphasis on rural and underserved communities.





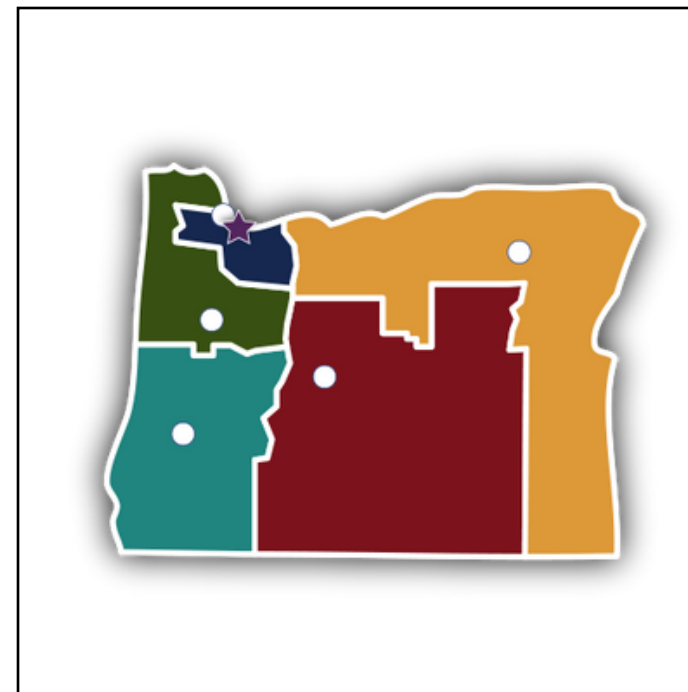
# Collaboration



Academic Institutions



AHECs



Communities



# Oregon Area Health Education Center

Connecting students to careers, professionals to communities and communities to better health

## Oregon AHEC Program Office

Hosted by OHSU in Portland.



## Oregon Pacific AHEC

Hosted by Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital. The Center serves communities along the Oregon Coast and I-5 Corridor including the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and the counties of Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Polk, Tillamook and Yamhill.



## Oregon Healthcare Workforce Institute

Hosted by Pacific University. The Center serves Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties.



## AHEC of Southwest Oregon

Hosted by Aviva Health in Roseburg. The Center provides services to Coos, Curry, Douglas, Lane, Jackson and Josephine counties.



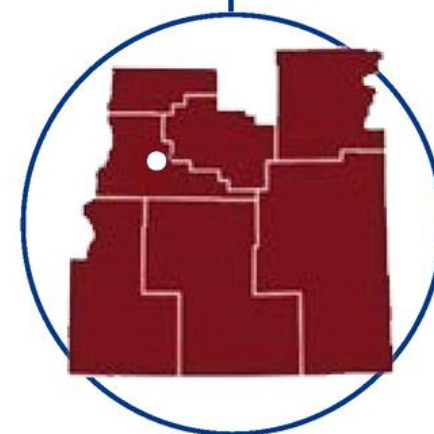
## Northeast Oregon AHEC

Located on the campus of Eastern Oregon University in La Grande. The Center serves Baker, Gilliam, Hood River, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco and Wheeler counties.



## Cascades East AHEC

Hosted by St. Charles Health System in Bend. The Center serves Central and Southeastern Oregon and includes the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Crook, Deschutes, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Klamath and Lake counties.



Scan each region to learn more!

# Center directors



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# Oregon's Health Care Workforce Needs Assessment 2023: Priority Recommendations

- Improve diversity of health care providers
- Improve supply & distribution of healthcare workforce
- Enhance resiliency & well-being of health care workforce
- Expand training/education & career pathways for many workforce segments
- Expand use of care delivery models that improve patient access & promote workforce retention
- Increase health care systems' use of community-based health care providers
- Improve data collection to promote evidence-informed strategies & diversify workforce

# Workforce Development and Retention Subcommittee Strategy Paper

The five domain areas include:

- Recruitment & awareness
- Education & training
- Health care worker support, advancement & retention
- Community integration & belonging
- Funding & resource allocation

Oregon Health Authority. (2024). Health Care Workforce Committee: Workforce Development and Retention Subcommittee Strategy Paper; Portland, OR: Oregon Health Authority.

[https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HPA/HP-HCW/Documents/Strategy-Paper-on-Workforce-Development-and-Retention-24\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HPA/HP-HCW/Documents/Strategy-Paper-on-Workforce-Development-and-Retention-24_FINAL.pdf).





# How Oregon AHEC already addresses these domain areas

## Recruitment & awareness

- Provide youth health care day camp opportunities at each regional center.
- Focus on recruiting people from diverse backgrounds in Pathway and Professional Programs.
- Provide application process support for underrepresented groups.



“I really enjoyed coming and am thankful for having the opportunity to be here. I think it's a really helpful program for people who are unsure about wanting a career in the medical field.”

- OHWI AHEC SYNAPSE SUMMER CAMP PARTICIPANT 2023



# How Oregon AHEC already addresses these domain areas (cont.)

## Education & training

- Providing financial support for clinical rotations in rural and underserved settings.
- AHEC Scholars, a two-year national program funded by HRSA, is designed to better prepare health profession students for future practice in rural and urban underserved communities.
- Students accepted into the program become eligible for the Oregon Primary Care Loan Forgiveness Program (PCLF).
- Our student enrichment fund supplements travel and housing costs during rural rotations and other educational needs.





## How Oregon AHEC already addresses these domain areas (cont.)

### Health care worker support, advancement & retention

- Provide a variety of continuing education to disseminate best practices and improve healthcare quality for medically underserved communities.
- Our continuing education programs encourage professionals to contribute to the health career pathway.



## Participation in Pathway Programs

**3,333**

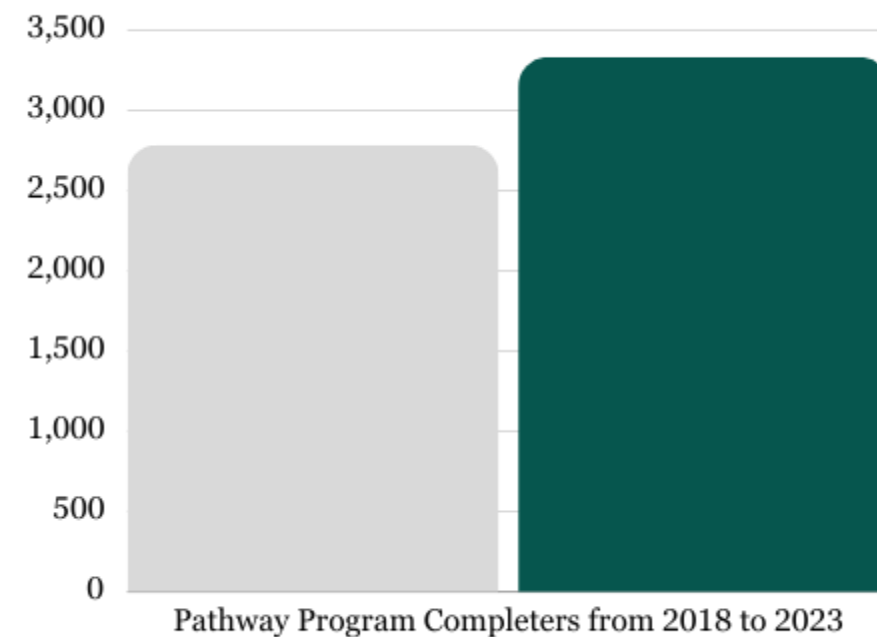
Program completers

**74%**

From  
disadvantaged  
backgrounds

**90%**

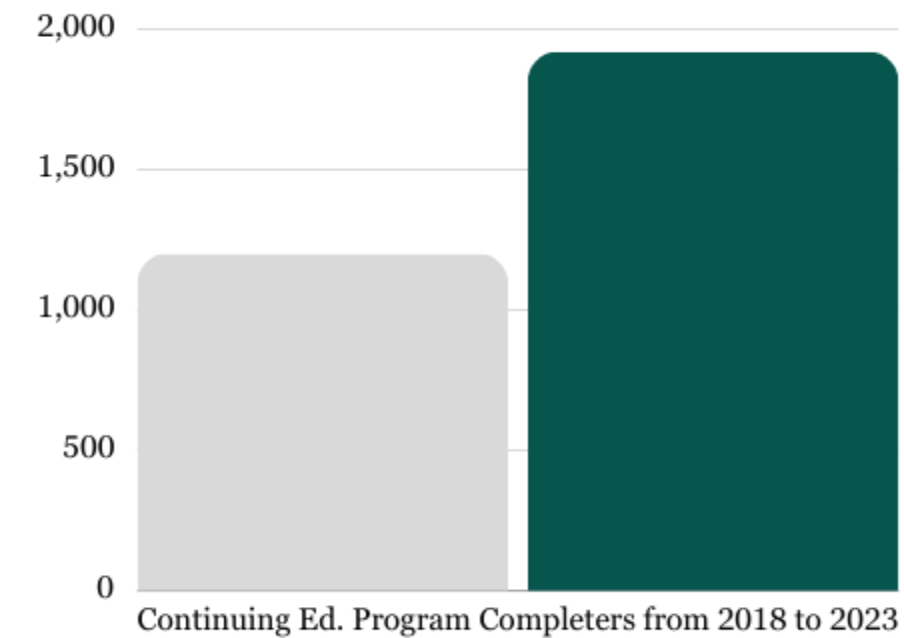
From rural  
background



## Participation in Continuing Education

**1,919**

Program completers





# How Oregon AHEC already addresses these domain areas (cont.)

## Community integration & belonging

- Oregon AHEC's regional centers are embedded in their local communities and customize programming to meet the unique needs of those communities. The centers strive to develop youth that want to stay and serve their community.
- Each year, Oregon AHEC partners with the National Council for Mental Wellbeing to offer Mental Health First Aid training to health care workers, first responders and others throughout the state.





## What participants in our ReConnect Gap-Year Fellowship say...

“It was very eye opening for me to see how far some patients will travel to see their PCP and even farther to see a specialist. This really solidified my desire to work in underserved communities.”

“Extremely valuable program, led me to value my hometown. Without this I would have never considered returning.”

“Participating in this program provided me with experiences with which to apply to medical school – without this program I would not have had a solid application to medical school and certainly would not have been invited to interviews at 11 medical schools.”

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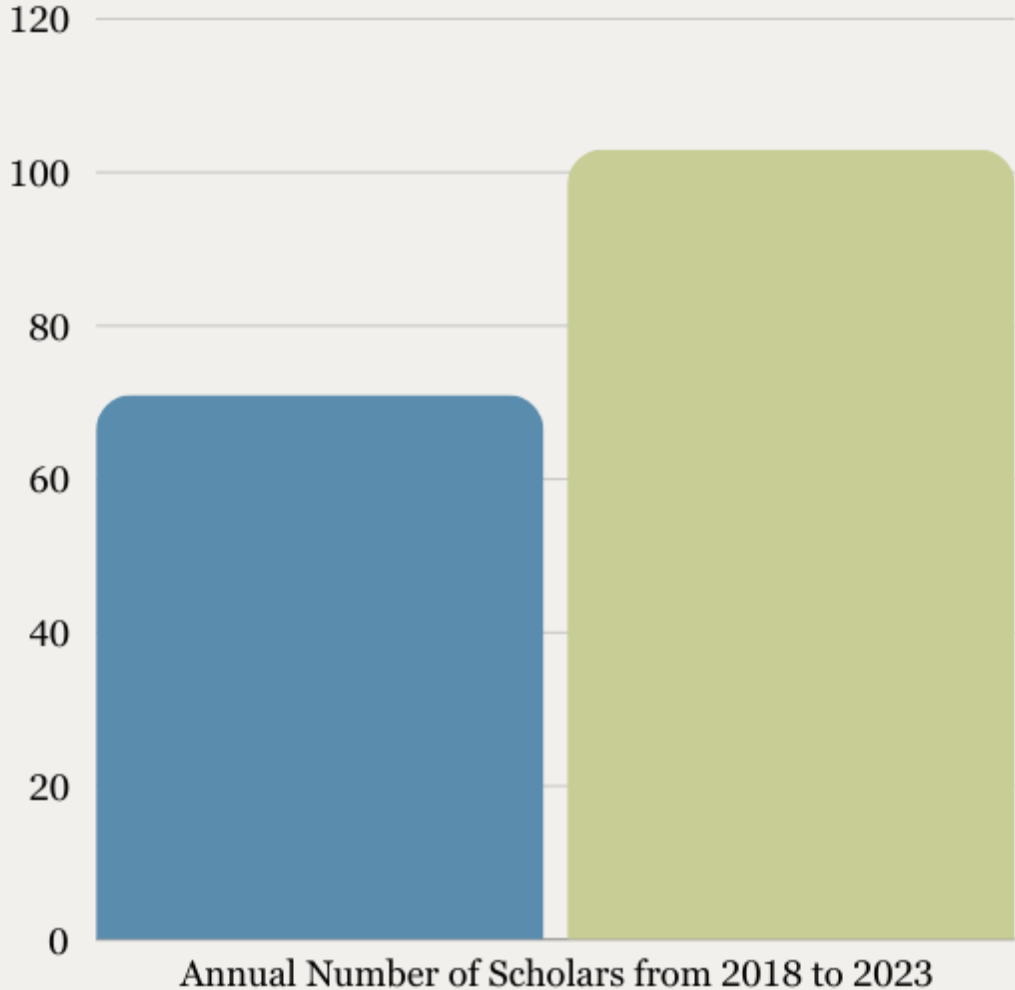
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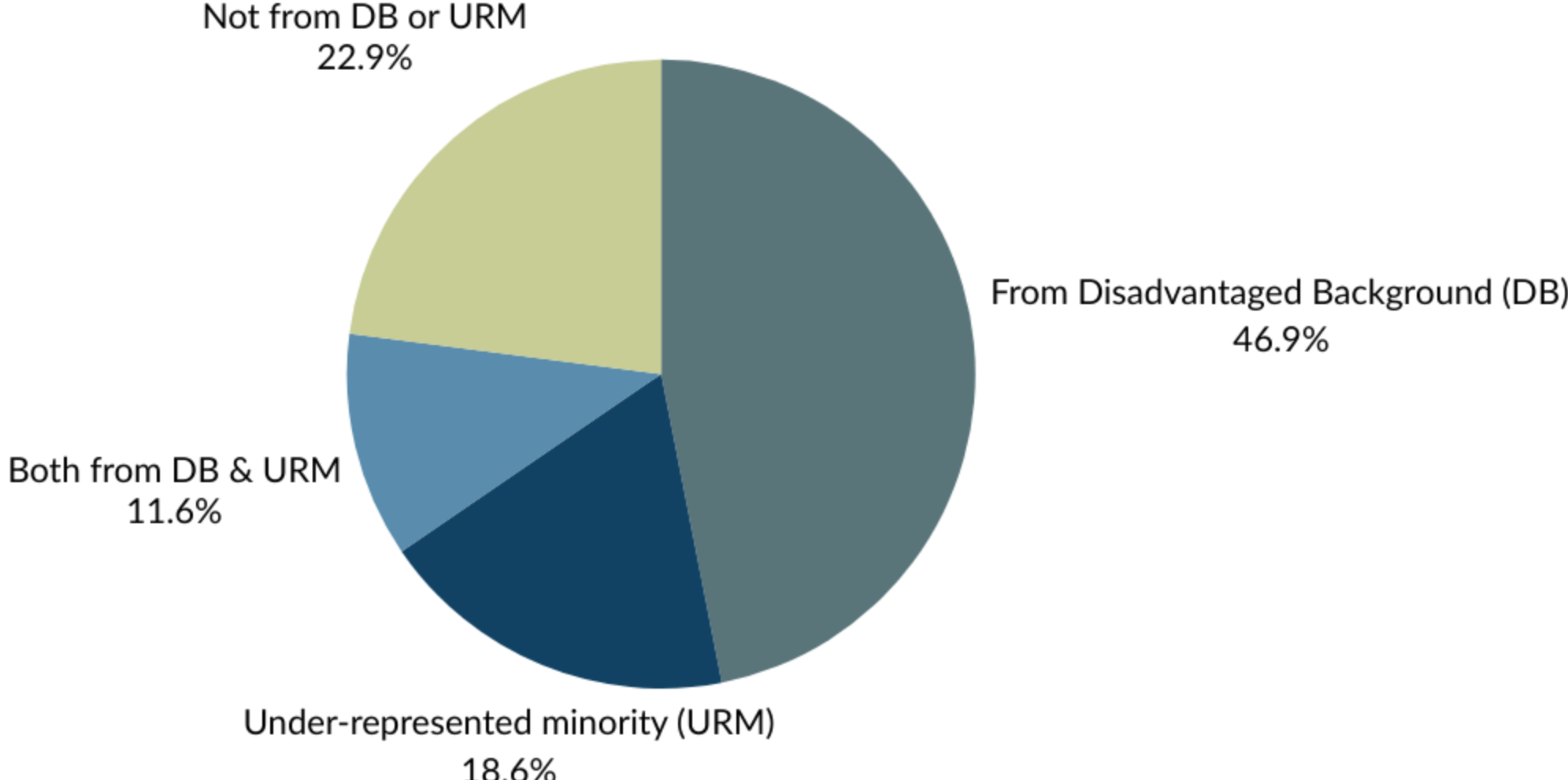
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# AHEC Scholars Program

We serve over 100 students annually across 12 programs, which is up from 71 students and seven programs in 2018.



The majority of our Scholars in the past three cohorts are from disadvantaged or under-represented minority backgrounds.





# Our Partners

## **Oregon Health & Science University**

School of Dentistry — DMD

School of Medicine — MD

School of Medicine — PA

School of Nursing — NP

## **Oregon Health & Science University and Oregon State University**

College of Pharmacy — PharmD

## **Oregon State University — Cascades**

Doctor of Physical Therapy — DPT

## **Pacific University**

College of Physician Assistant Studies — PA

College of Pharmacy — PharmD

School of Occupational Therapy — OTD

## **Western University of Health Sciences**

College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific Northwest — DO

College of Health Sciences NW — DPT

**OREGON AHEC PROGRAM**  
A Member of the National AHEC Organization



**AHEC**  
SCHOLARS

# AHEC Scholars Program

Significantly more students reported they intend to practice in rural and underserved areas after participating in the Scholars Program than before starting the program.

Fully intend to practice at a Critical Access Hospital/other Rural Hospital



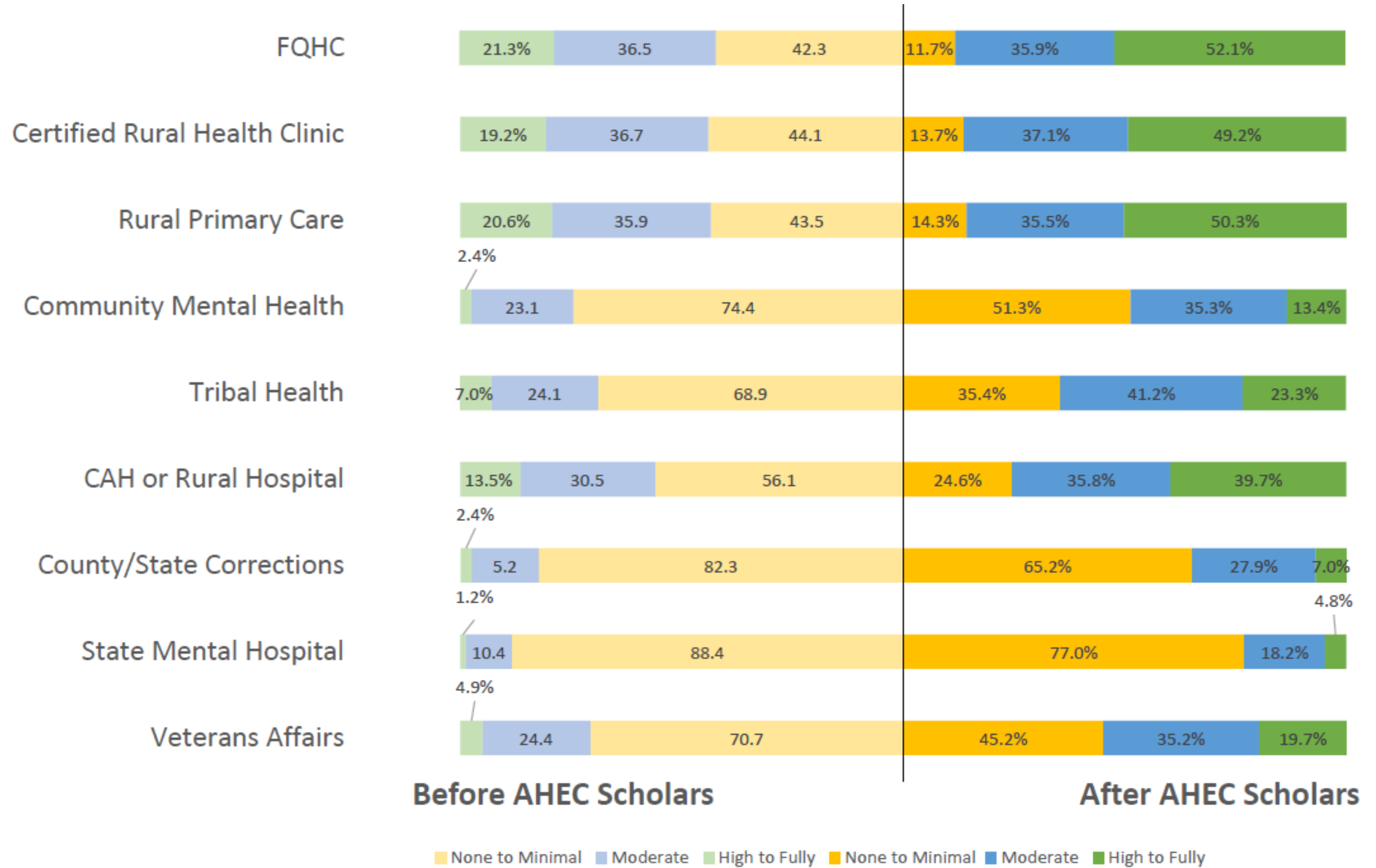
Fully intend to practice at a Federally Qualified Health Center



Fully intend to practice at a Certified Rural Health Clinic



# Intention to Practice Before & After AHEC Scholars





"Throughout my 7-year involvement with AHEC through the **Brightworks program in high school**, through the **Reconnect Fellowship**, and **AHEC Scholars**, **this organization has been monumental in supporting me throughout my journey to becoming a practicing PA**. The organization has offered me many opportunities to network, learn, and be involved in the ever-evolving scene of rural healthcare."

- OHSU PA-S; Class of 2024

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# PARTNERING WITH OREGON AHEC

There are many ways to partner with Oregon AHEC and support our work. Some possibilities include:



Offer youth job shadowing opportunities



Become a preceptor or clinical training site



Support our continuing education programs



Consider a gift

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# THANK YOU – CONNECT WITH US!

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Thank you to our partners!

