



Utah AHEC holds Second Annual Primary Care Summit and looks forward at change to come

The Utah Area Health Education Centers, or Utah AHEC, held its second Annual Utah Primary Care Summit at the University of Utah’s Rice Eccles Stadium Scholarship Room on Oct. 27. The conference was held to share perspectives on the state of Utah’s primary care workforce, celebrate accomplishments from the past year, and identify

priorities for the upcoming year with key primary care stakeholders in Utah.

“We are here to improve health,” said Dr. Michael Magill, Director of Utah AHEC, as he opened and welcomed those in attendance.

Utah AHEC is a statewide program that helps current and future health professionals gain the knowledge and skills needed to practice in a transforming health system. Utah AHEC focuses on the medically underserved rural and urban communities in Utah, as well as the transformation of primary care health systems to deliver high quality care at lowered costs.

The Utah Primary Care Summit focused on bringing together Utah’s primary care stakeholders to a one-day event to engage in open conversation regarding the overarching challenges, opportunities, and priorities facing Utah’s primary care workforce.



“AHEC is a collaboration,” Dr. Magill said. “It is a consortium of all of us.”

After a warm welcome, Dr. Magill reviewed the accomplishments and priorities that were set for the 2017 year, some of which included developing workforce projections based on the population’s health needs, advocating for Utah Preceptor Tax Credit to support preceptor-training capacity, and expanding current family medicine residency programs with additional residents.

Following Dr. Magill, Isabella Alder, Associate Director for Utah AHEC, spoke to conference attendees about enhancing Utah’s primary care workforce. Utah AHEC’s core topic areas, which included items such as practice transformation and inter-professional education, were discussed along with a review of Utah’s primary care workforce demographics and distribution and the role AHEC serves in enhancing primary care for the state of Utah.

The remainder of the conference was spent discussing the development of a comprehensive, long-term plan for enhancing primary care in Utah. Notable participants in these discussions included representatives from major health systems (Intermountain Healthcare, University of Utah Health, and Shriners Hospitals for Children- Salt Lake City) and health organizations (panelists included representatives from





Utah Department of Health and Association for Utah Community Health). State legislators, including panelists Senator Brian Shiozawa, Senator Ann Millner, Senator Gene Davis, and Representative Steve Eliason, and attendees Senator Allen Christensen, Representative Norman Thurston, and Representative Mike Winder also participated throughout the conference. Topics such as payment reform, delivering care in “teams” of professionals, and upcoming health policy affecting primary care were among the many items discussed throughout the afternoon.

“If we talk about the issues on health care and where we go with that, we have to talk about the work force,” said Utah Senator Brian Shiozawa. “We have to talk about the providers and how they are going to make sure that items, such as affordable access that is timely and appropriate and quality of care, all start with the providers.”

The conference concluded with the conference attendees creating priorities for the 2018 year, as well as providing input on the future agenda of Utah AHEC.

“I would like to see more of the inter-professional educational opportunities because that is the way that they will be working in the field of this profession,” said Dr. Eliezer Bermudez, Dixie State University’s Dean of the Colleges of Health Sciences. “It’s going to open a better system of health care.”



Moving forward into the 2018, Utah AHEC will be a vehicle that moves progress on the priorities established at the Utah Primary Care Summit forward. These priorities include:

- Expanding preceptor training capacity
- Enhancing Inter-professional education opportunities
- Exploring workforce implications of payment reform
- Supporting tele-health initiatives
- Promoting rural health emphases in health professions education

“It is wonderful to see stakeholders come together and really have the desire to make improvements for the state,” Ms. Alder said. “A common theme has been that we are well positioned here in Utah to address the challenges discussed today. The fact that we have so many key stakeholders here today willing to join together to discuss needs of the state is huge. Utah AHEC plans to build on this synergy and facilitate opportunities for stakeholders to collectively make progress on the priorities established today.”

For more information regarding Utah AHEC or the Utah Primary Care Summit, visit the [Utah AHEC webpage](#).

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