

**ADDRESSING THE  
HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE  
NEEDS IN SOUTH DAKOTA  
THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP  
BETWEEN THE  
DEPARTMENTS OF  
EDUCATION, LABOR &  
REGULATION, HEALTH AND  
THE BOARD OF REGENTS**

# **Healthcare Workforce Update**

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## **HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE COLLABORATIVE**

Greetings from the South Dakota Office of Rural Health. This office along with our many partners continues to work at addressing South Dakota's healthcare workforce needs. Read on to see what's noteworthy over the past few months as well as upcoming! As always, we welcome your feedback regarding these and other workforce development issues.

# SDAHO AWARDED HRSA RURAL WORKFORCE NETWORK GRANT: SEEKING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

CONTRIBUTED BY SOUTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS

The South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations (SDAHO) was recently awarded the Rural Network Developmental Grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which is an agency of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

The project will create a network of healthcare organizations and community partners called **South Dakota Rural Workforce Network (SDRWN)** consisting of critical access hospitals, nursing homes, a technology school, post-secondary university, and a nonprofit social services organization across rural South Dakota.

The purpose of the project is to improve access to healthcare services in rural South Dakota by developing an all-inclusive pipeline of healthcare essential workers. "As a part of our overall strategic plan for SDAHO, we want to address the number one concern for our members, which is workforce recruitment and retention, and this grant helps us get one step closer to achieving that goal." Tammy Hatting, COO, SDAHO

Healthcare essential workers are the entry level jobs that provide support to healthcare professionals to improve quality and delivery of healthcare services. Examples include dietary, environmental services, nursing assistants, phlebotomists, and home health aides.

Grant funds will be used to hire a dedicated workforce coordinator that will manage the project. Becky Heisinger, SDAHO's Director of Quality Integration will assist as the project director. "This grant provides the needed resources to support South Dakota as it faces the challenges of the healthcare workforce shortage. We are looking forward to collaborating with key partners from across the state as we address the growing need for essential healthcare workers for now and in the future." Becky Heisinger, SDAHO Dir. Of Quality Integration

The project will target rural ethnic and racial minorities, refugees, second career adults and high school students. The expected program outcomes and community impact include a stable pipeline of essential healthcare workers to serve the rural healthcare facilities throughout rural South Dakota. In addition, the project will help improve economic stability in those communities where new essential healthcare workers reside. Other expected program outcomes include a more skilled healthcare workforce resulting in improved patient outcomes and patient safety measures. SDAHO continues to be committed to workforce solutions that impact the healthcare community.

The project period will run from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2027. Total award amount \$1,150,097.00. This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$1,150,097 with 0% percentage financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov).

For more information about the SDAHO Workforce Development Coordinator, view job description and/or job application [click here](#). For questions about the **South Dakota Rural Workforce Network (SDRWN) Grant**, contact [Becky.Heisinger@sdaho.org](mailto:Becky.Heisinger@sdaho.org).

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# **SDSU, AVERA AWARDED GRANT TO ADDRESS NURSING SHORTAGE**

CONTRIBUTED BY SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OF NURSING

South Dakota State University's College of Nursing is using a three-year grant to help address the growing shortage of nurses in rural areas.

The grant—totaling more than \$1 million—is in partnership with Avera Health and comes by way of the Health Resources and Services Administration, an agency of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

The SDSU-Avera Health collaborative project, "PREPARE-RNS: Partnering to Address the Critical Nursing Shortage in South Dakota," will prepare BSNs and RNs for careers in rural acute-care critical access hospitals by providing education in cultural awareness, social determinants of health, health equity and health literacy. SDSU and Avera Health will work to train, recruit and retain nursing staff by removing barriers and perceptions about practicing in rural settings.

Theresa Garren-Grubbs, a clinical assistant professor, serves as the education project director for SDSU in the partnership. Karna Pfeffer, director of clinical excellence and education at Avera St. Mary's Hospital in Pierre, is project director for the PREPARE-RNS grant.

"The goal is really to improve the recruitment and retainment of new nurses in rural health care settings," Garren-Grubbs said. "We are also hoping to identify students who are interested in rural health and provide them with targeted experiences in this setting."

Many rural states—including South Dakota—are currently experiencing a nursing shortage. The COVID-19 pandemic played a significant part in that, but the large number of nursing graduates leaving the state has also been a contributing factor.

## **TWO FEDERAL GRANTS PROVIDE NECESSARY FUNDING AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMT STUDENTS IN RURAL AREAS**

CONTRIBUTED BY SANFORD HEALTH

Sanford Health - Center for Prehospital Care in partnership with SD AHEC, the City of Redfield, and Tripp County Ambulance are offering FREE EMT course opportunities to qualified students in rural areas. Individuals need to be interested and committed to serving within the EMS workforce locally. The collaborative partnerships provide funding to qualified students in rural areas to attend the Sanford Health EMT course offered in August and again in January each year. The EMT course is offered LIVE online Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6-10p CST. Students are required to attend a Saturday skills lab day each month at regional locations throughout the State. Students are able to easily navigate the online course curriculum over a four-month window utilizing video conferencing technology. The purpose behind the Department of Labor and SAMHSA grant opportunities is to increase the active workforce serving rural areas as emergency responders. EMS agencies across the State and Nation are impacted by a shortfall of available staff. The staffing shortage can impact EMS agency response times to emergency situations when they occur. The funding and format provide participants an amazing opportunity to qualified educators and educational services to complete the EMT course from the comfort of their home. The next EMT course will start in August 2023. For more information, email [EMServices@sanfordhealth.org](mailto:EMServices@sanfordhealth.org) or visit their website [www.sanfordemseducation.org](http://www.sanfordemseducation.org)

# RAPID CITY CENTRAL WELLNESS FAIR

CONTRIBUTED BY WEST RIVER AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER



WRAHEC's Cohort III Scholars hosted a Wellness Fair at Rapid City Central High School for their Community Health Impact Project. At the Wellness Fair, held May 17, each Scholar chose a health topic and presented an interactive display for the students. Topics included the impact of smoking, first aid and CPR, nutrition, summer sun safety, hand hygiene, mental health, and concussions.

Throughout the day, students from biology, health pathways, family & consumer science, SPED, and ELL classes came and circulated through the displays, with additional students attending during the lunch periods. Thanks to a grant from the Midwest Dairy Association, WRAHEC was also able to serve peach smoothies and highlight the importance of dairy in everyday diets. Altogether, about 300 students attended this event!



The AHEC Scholars program is designed for college-level health profession students interested in supplementing their education by gaining relevant knowledge and experiences in rural and underserved areas of SD. Program activities cover the following eight Core Topics: Interprofessional Education; Behavioral Health Integration; Social Determinants of Health; Cultural Competency; Practice Transformation; Current and Emerging Health Issues; Connected Communities and Supporting Health Professionals; and Virtual Learning and Telehealth.



Learn more about this free, professional development program at <https://www.westriversdahec.org/higher-education-students/sd-ahec-scholars/>.

# SOUTHEAST TECHNICAL COLLEGE - SANFORD HEALTH PARAMEDIC PROGRAM: WORKING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS THE EMS STAFFING SHORTFALL IN RURAL AREAS

CONTRIBUTED BY SANFORD HEALTH

In 2021, Southeast Technical College and Sanford Health partnered together to offer an Associates in Applied Science Paramedic degree for students in the region. The first graduating class of paramedic students at Southeast Technical College crossed the stage in May to accept their degree and enter the workforce. Two Build Dakota Scholars were proudly part of the first graduating cohort of paramedics at Southeast Technical College. The Build Dakota Scholarship program was started in 2015 to help fill the South Dakota workforce shortage. In recent years, the paramedic profession was added to the expansive list of eligible jobs that are Build Dakota eligible. A new cohort of paramedic students will start the program every January and August at Southeast Technical College. EMS agencies and paramedics play an instrumental role in the healthcare team. The delivery of advanced care in rural areas plays a pivotal role in patient outcomes when emergencies occur. EMS agencies across South Dakota and throughout the Nation are impacted by staffing shortages. The Paramedic Program at Southeast Technical College is intending to increase the number of paramedics entering the workforce. For more information, email [EMSServices@sanfordhealth.org](mailto:EMSServices@sanfordhealth.org).

## 2023 Southeast Technical College AAS Paramedic Graduating Class Cohort 1



# USD IHEC HOSTED 2023 ASAHP REGIONAL SUMMIT

CONTRIBUTED BY UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA



The USD School of Health Sciences (SHS) was one of six locations nationwide that hosted a summit with the Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions (ASAHP) to bring together health industry and academic partners to identify emerging interprofessional trends and create alliances. ASAHP partnered with the Interprofessional Health Education Center (IHEC) at the SHS to co-host the 2023 Summit on May 25, 2023.

The ASAHP is a national professional organization of 130 universities and employers focused on critical issues affecting health professions education. Yearly summits bring together leaders, faculty and providers at “regional hubs” to promote attendance for member institutions. The regional meetings culminate in a virtual “harvest” session of ideas and initiatives between hub participants who then engage in a national-level conversation.

The theme of the 2023 ASAHP Summit was **Joining Forces to Build a Resilient, Collaborative and Practice-Ready Healthcare Workforce.**

In 2023, there were 6 regional summit hub locations held concurrently in Nuttley, NJ, at Seton Hall University, Layton, UT, at Weber State University and University of Utah, Houston, TX, at UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, UT Medical Branch (UTMB), and UT Health San Antonio, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, at Nova Southeastern University, Cincinnati, OH, at the University of Cincinnati, and in Sioux Falls, SD, Hub: University of South Dakota

In Sioux Falls, SD. Forty six people attended in Sioux Falls, representing USD, Avera, Sanford Health, SD Urban Indian Health (SDUIH), the VA, Huron Regional, Sanford Vermillion, Delta Dental, Lost & Found, among others. “These regional summits will inform future strategies to enhance health professions education through practice-informed dialogue.

The regional aspect will take into account specific needs of our local communities,” said Sabina Kupersmidt, associate professor SHS and chair of IHEC. “Our regional sessions will identify specific challenges facing health professionals in the Great Plains and generate insights about the direction of interprofessional education and practice needs and wants.”



# SANFORD HEALTH STUDENT NURSE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

CONTRIBUTED BY SANFORD HEALTH

Nursing students are invited to enhance their nursing education through the Sanford Student Nurse Internship Program (SSNIP).

SSNIPs experience the day-to-day life of an RN in a variety of roles and settings throughout Sanford facilities in South Dakota. This hands-on, 10-week, paid internship expands clinical skills and knowledge under the guidance of an experienced nurse preceptor.

Students who have completed their third year of a baccalaureate-nursing program and have had a minimum of two semesters of clinical experience are eligible for the internship. Associate degree students within 1-2 semesters of graduation will be considered for placement in rural Critical Access sites or long-term care. This is a great opportunity for nursing students to make a difference for those served and to strengthen clinical skill sets.

SSNIPs are encouraged to extend their internship into the school year. Sanford Health offers an extended student nurse internship for interns that completed the initial 10-week summer program. This program allows the student to continue to develop as a nurse and fully immerse into the real RN experience until graduation. Many extended interns accept full time RN positions at Sanford and realize the benefits of shorter orientation times and a smoother transition to practice.

Applications will open early in Fall of 2023 for the Summer 2024 internship. For more information, please visit <https://sanfordcareers.com/nursing-students/>.

## FULLY-FUNDED CNA PROGRAM WITH \$1000 STIPEND BY MONUMENT HEALTH AND WRAHEC

CONTRIBUTED BY WEST RIVER AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER

Monument Health in Rapid City and the West River Area Health Education Center (WRAHEC) are currently partnering to offer a Community CNA program, providing accepted students the opportunity to earn a CNA certification at no cost and with no employment commitment required. WRAHEC is providing the funding through a U.S. Department of Labor H1-B grant; 100% of the CNA course tuition is covered for students, who are also eligible for a \$1000 stipend. Monument Health is providing the instruction through their Nursing Professional Development department.

The Monument Health CNA Program is a 75-hour course which includes a four-hour orientation, 50 hours of online, self-paced coursework, 16 hours of clinical experience, an eight-hour skills and knowledge review, and state testing. New cohorts of eight students will be accepted each month from now through December 2024. For more information, contact WRAHEC at [westriversdahec@gmail.com](mailto:westriversdahec@gmail.com).

# USD OT PROGRAM PREPARES RURAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

CONTRIBUTED BY UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA.



Anyone who has ever needed the help of an occupational therapist knows how vital the profession is to help a person live a fulfilling life by promoting health, well-being and the ability to participate in meaningful activities. At USD, OT students develop skills beyond evaluation and interventions. Because of the unique needs of rural clients, students also learn the importance of being adaptable, creative, lifelong learners. USD's OT program focuses on connecting with individuals, families and rural communities, a concept that has always been a critical component of the curriculum.

To understand concepts they'll one day put into practice, students take part in a rural field trip as part of the Environmental Influences on Occupation course, where they learn to identify assistive devices or adaptations to farming equipment. They also hear from guest speakers who have been required to adapt their approaches to farm-related tasks after an injury or diagnosis. The in-person experiences allow students to understand how, when and why use of such devices is appropriate.

Each USD OT student is required to complete a 12-week Level II Fieldwork Experience in a rural community. Beyond that, some students opt to also earn a rural/underserved specialization by focusing research and experiences in those settings, preparing them for not only working in rural, clinically-diverse settings, but also presenting them with opportunities to build programs for underserved communities.

## CENTER FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD MALTREATMENT RECEIVES \$1 MILLION GRANT TO REACH MORE FAMILIES THROUGH INNOVATIVE WIC OUTREACH EFFORTS

CONTRIBUTED BY UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA.

The Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment (CPCM), a center of the University of South Dakota, has been awarded a \$1 million grant to implement a WIC Community Innovation and Outreach Project (WIC CIAO). WIC CIAO aims to support efforts to develop, implement, and evaluate innovative outreach strategies to increase awareness, participation, and benefit redemption in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and reduce disparities in program delivery.

"Too many women and children in South Dakota are missing out on the nutrition they need in order to thrive," said Darla Biel, interim director of the CPCM. "Overall, the WIC program aligns with several child abuse prevention strategies by providing support and education to parents, strengthening families, building social connections, screening for risk factors, and providing parenting support."

The Center will use the grant to partner with WIC to expand partnerships with community organizations and use community-level data to develop and test WIC outreach efforts. The grant will amplify the voice of parenting adults from underserved populations in South Dakota who are WIC-eligible and/or who are parenting WIC-eligible children.

Reaching more families with WIC will have positive impacts on the community. WIC has been shown to provide wide-ranging benefits, including longer, safer pregnancies, with fewer premature births and infant deaths; improved dietary outcomes for infants and children; improved maternal health; and improved performance at school, among others. In addition to health benefits, WIC participants showed significant savings in health care costs when compared to non-participants.

# THE AVERA GAME OF LIFE CREATED TO SPOTLIGHT HEALTHCARE CAREERS

CONTRIBUTED BY AVERA HEALTH

Avera's Talent Development team led by Sarah Siemonsma, Career Development Consultant, has created a new healthcare career experience for high school students. The Avera Game of Life was created to simulate an individual's journey from selecting a healthcare career, training for that career, and being hired into that career. A life-sized interactive board game, the Avera Game of Life highlights Avera's most critical workforce needs including Nursing, Radiology Technology, Surgery Technology, Medical Lab Scientist, Medical Lab Technician and Respiratory Therapy. The board game also highlights Avera employee benefits and opportunities for growth throughout their Avera career until retirement. Some of those benefits include career consultations, student loan repayment program, academic sponsorships and scholarships, tuition reimbursement, formal leadership training opportunities, etc.



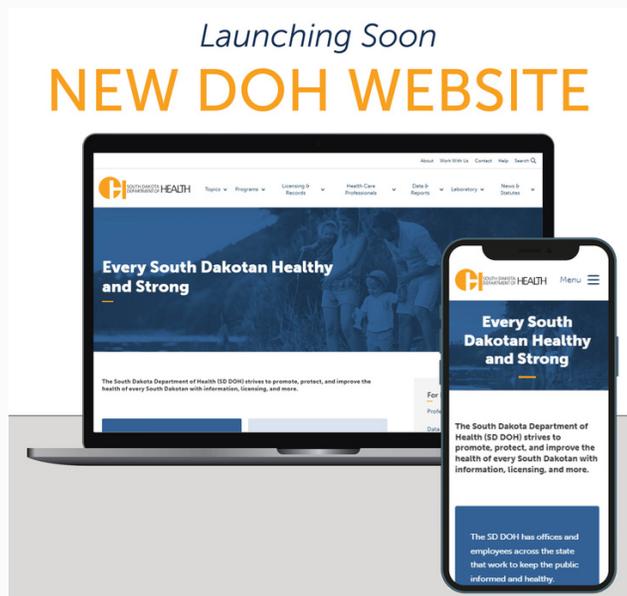
The Avera Game of Life debuted at HOSA's State Convention in Sioux Falls on March 30, 2023. Over 170 HOSA students participated in groups of 4-5 students each for approximately 35 minutes. The game was well received with many students and HOSA chapters asking to participate even though the available time slots were already filled.

Avera offers generous financial sponsorships to assist with the cost of college programs in the careers listed above. To inquire about those or bringing the Avera Game of Life to you and your students, please contact Avera's Career Planning Service: <https://www.avera.org/careers/career-planning-service/>.

Students participate in the Avera Game of Life at the HOSA State Conference, March 30, 2023.

## SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SET TO LAUNCH NEW WEBSITE

CONTRIBUTED BY SOUTH DAKOTA OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH



Get ready for an incredible update, healthcare professionals of South Dakota! The South Dakota Department of Health is thrilled to announce the upcoming launch of its brand new website. Packed with user-friendly features and cutting-edge tools, this website will provide resources for your healthcare workforce needs. We can assure you that the new website will offer a wealth of resources to keep you informed and connected, with a strong focus on addressing the projections of increased healthcare worker demand, and providing valuable resources for recruitment and retention, all aimed at building and sustaining a qualified healthcare workforce for South Dakota.

# SD DOH EXPANDS RURAL HEALTHCARE FACILITY RECRUITMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO INCLUDE DENTAL HYGIENIST

CONTRIBUTED BY SOUTH DAKOTA OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH

**PIERRE, S.D.** - The South Dakota Department of Health is pleased to announce the expansion of the Rural Healthcare Facility Recruitment Assistance Program (RHFRAP) to now include Dental Hygienists as eligible participants. In addition, dental offices will be added as eligible facilities under this program. The decision to include dental hygienists and dental offices is aimed at addressing the growing need for oral health services in rural communities across the state.

RHFRAP offers a \$10,000 payment to eligible health professionals who complete a three-year, full-time service commitment and have become new employees within the last 9 months. Health professionals must contract with the employing facility and the state to qualify for the program. Furthermore, eligible facilities must be situated in communities with a population of 10,000 or less.

"The inclusion of Dental Hygienists and dental offices in the Rural Healthcare Facility Recruitment Assistance Program is a significant step forward in expanding access to oral health services in rural areas of South Dakota," said Secretary Melissa Magstadt. "Dental care for South Dakotans is foundational to health care and we are excited to support the critical dental hygienist profession in our state."

Applications for dental hygienists interested in participating in RHFRAP can be submitted starting from July 5, 2023. Employing facilities are required to submit the applications on behalf of the participants, with a limit of 3 participants per facility. To access the application and learn more about the program, interested parties are encouraged to visit the South Dakota Office of Rural Health website at <https://doh.sd.gov/providers/ruralhealth/recruitment/Facility/>.

Applications are open for all other eligible professions under the program right now through December 31st, 2023.

For additional information or inquiries, please contact the South Dakota Office of Rural Health at 600 E Capitol Ave, Pierre, SD 57501, or call 1-800-738-2301.

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[View the full press release](#)

# USD RECEIVES \$3 MILLION, THREE-YEAR DEPARTMENT OF LABOR GRANT TO TRAIN NURSES

CONTRIBUTED BY UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA.

The University of South Dakota is a recipient of part of \$78 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Labor to support workforce training programs.

The USD Department of Nursing will use its \$3 million grant to create a worker-centered response to the critical nursing shortage in two ways: by working closely with workforce development and practice partners across the state to support the development of a nursing workforce through targeted recruitment and education strategies; and by facilitating new collaborations to develop long-term strategies for improving nursing workforce pipelines to meet the workforce needs of South Dakota.

“Training additional nurses is not enough,” said Anne Pithan, chair of the USD Department of Nursing. “Solving this shortage will require both nursing academics and practice to collaborate to create innovative solutions. We will work with practice partners, regulatory agencies, regional health centers, networks of small hospitals and community clinics, professional organizations, professional nursing networks and behavioral health partners to make this happen.”

The USD grant will allow its Nursing Department to strengthen and diversify the nursing workforce by educating nurses for the BSN and MSN programs at USD, and employing scholarship funds for students who agree to work in South Dakota. USD will provide educational pathways for those entering the profession and those looking to upskill to a higher degree in nursing.

As part of the Department of Labor Nursing Expansion Grant Program, the grant begins June 1, 2023, and will be administered over a five-year period.

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