

VERMONT AHEC SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Program Overview: Larner College of Medicine 2026-2027

The AHEC Scholars Program is a voluntary, nationally recognized program for health professions students. It provides opportunities for students to increase knowledge, strengthen leadership skills, and gain competencies within eight broad topic areas.

National AHEC Scholars Priorities	Emphasis or examples
Interprofessional Education	-team-based care and patient-centered care
Behavioral Health Integration	-services that better address the needs of individuals with behavioral, mental health and substance use conditions, including training for health professionals to address burnout and resiliency
Connecting Communities and Supporting Health Professionals/ Community Health Workers (CHWs)	-increase training and development of paraprofessionals who serve as connectors between health professionals and the community
Virtual Learning and Telehealth	-leverage technology to improve curricula and community-based experiential training
Social Determinants of Health	-addressing food insecurity, economic inequality, access to education, social and community context, access to health care, neighborhood and built environment, etc.
Cultural Competency	-care that address the unique culture, language, and health literacy of diverse communities
Medical Practice Transformation	-quality improvement, care coordination, cost containment, rural health care, primary care, care for underserved or disadvantaged populations
Current and Emerging Health Issues	-current HRSA-approved topics: Opioids and Substance Use Disorders, Oral Health as part of Overall Health, COVID-19

The AHEC Scholars Program and its projects are part of AHEC's longitudinal workforce research about influences on specialty selection and future practice—location, type of practice, and the patient population served.

National AHEC Scholars requirements:

To achieve recognition as an AHEC Scholar, students must complete a minimum of 80 hours of AHEC eligible activities per year in two separate years (160 hours total). Each year, the activities must be comprised of 40 Didactic hours and 40 Clinical or Experiential Field hours.

Interested students are required to “enroll” in the AHEC Scholars Program. If you have not already enrolled, the enrollment form is available here: <https://redcap.link/AHECscholarsDataCollectionEnrollmentForm>

Vermont AHEC Scholars Program at LCOM

The **VT AHEC Scholars** program offers opportunities for exploration of identified topics through activities that complement and expand upon the LCOM curriculum. The overarching goal is for students to gain an understanding of social and cultural factors that influence an individual's overall health and ability to access care. We aim to prepare tomorrow's health professionals to be leaders in interprofessional, transformative practice, especially for those with the greatest needs. Program activities are provided in collaboration with the VT AHEC network, working together to provide education and training opportunities to increase the supply, geographic distribution, diversity, and education of Vermont's primary care workforce.

While we center primary care as a foundation for health care, program activities are designed to be relevant for students interested in any medical specialty. Our flexible pathways approach offers students the option to focus on the topics of most interest to them. Community engagement activities highlight the people and programs working to improve health in Vermont's communities. AHEC projects and didactic learning allow students to learn from providers, community agencies, policy makers, health care advocates, and cross-sector partnerships. With a focus on health equity, we strive to understand the specific challenges, strengths, and resources available in rural areas and for underserved populations. Our focus on Vermont leans into our mission to encourage and support Larner students who may choose to return to practice medicine in Vermont. We believe this focus on Vermont is valuable for those who will go on to practice in rural or underserved communities in any location, and that all medical students can benefit from the experience of feeling tied to the community during the time that they are here.

Medical students interested in practicing in Vermont can receive information and guidance from Jennifer Gaudreau, AHEC Physician Placement Professional about job options in Vermont. Jennifer provides group and individual sessions on financial incentives, including the AHEC Scholars Medical Student Incentive Scholarship/Loan Forgiveness Program. Additional information can be found here: [Scholarships | AHEC | The University of Vermont](#)

Larner students pursuing the designation of AHEC Scholar must meet the national requirements. The **Vermont AHEC Scholars program** offers five opportunities for LCOM students to complete a year of AHEC Scholars eligible activity. Only those students completing all requirements -- **a minimum of two 80-hour pathway activities in two separate years** -- will be designated as "Vermont AHEC Scholar" at time of graduation. AHEC maintains a record of eligible activities for students enrolled in the AHEC Scholars program. AHEC transcripts are provided to students at regular intervals, and we are always happy to answer questions about progress toward meeting requirements.

AHEC Scholars 80-hour pathway options are distributed across the four years at LCOM, with several options in M1 and M2 to allow students to complete requirements during foundations years, if they choose. Once minimum requirements are met, students are encouraged to continue working with AHEC. Many students who have completed the requirements choose to enroll in a 4th year elective.

AHEC Scholars 80-HOUR PATHWAY OPPORTUNITIES

AHEC Sponsored Education and Mentoring SIG (can complete in M1 or M2)

- Didactic curriculum offered August – January
- Field hours include mentoring/medical education activities associated with the HERO and/or Med Mentors SIG groups. The 40 field and 40 didactic hours are completed in the same M1 or M2 year
- Interested students apply via application by September 1, 2026

AHEC Summer Projects in the Research/Quality Improvement or Education/Mentoring Tracks

- Projects completed June-August (summer between M1 and M2)
- Approximately 100 hours: 40 hours didactic and 60 hours of field activity
- Stipend is usually \$2,000
- Competitive application process in February/students are selected and notified in early March
- Summer Projects Information Session on January 20, 2027

AHEC Sponsored Public Health Projects (PHP)

- Projects completed Fall (M2)
- Students rank and are assigned to an AHEC- sponsored project via LCOM PHP assignment process
- In addition to didactics provided for the course, students completing the AHEC Scholars program log attendance at AHEC Spotlight events and complete an end of program reflection.

AHEC Community Engagement and Service

- Can be completed in M2, M3, or M4 year
- Didactic curriculum is a combination of required asynchronous assignments, attending in-person events such as the AHEC Spotlight series events, and student selected training opportunities.
- Field hours are completed in volunteer service to a local Vermont community agency.
- Students apply via a rolling application and are selected based on the needs of our community agency partners and the strength of the student application.

AHEC Sponsored Advanced Integration elective courses (4th Year elective courses)

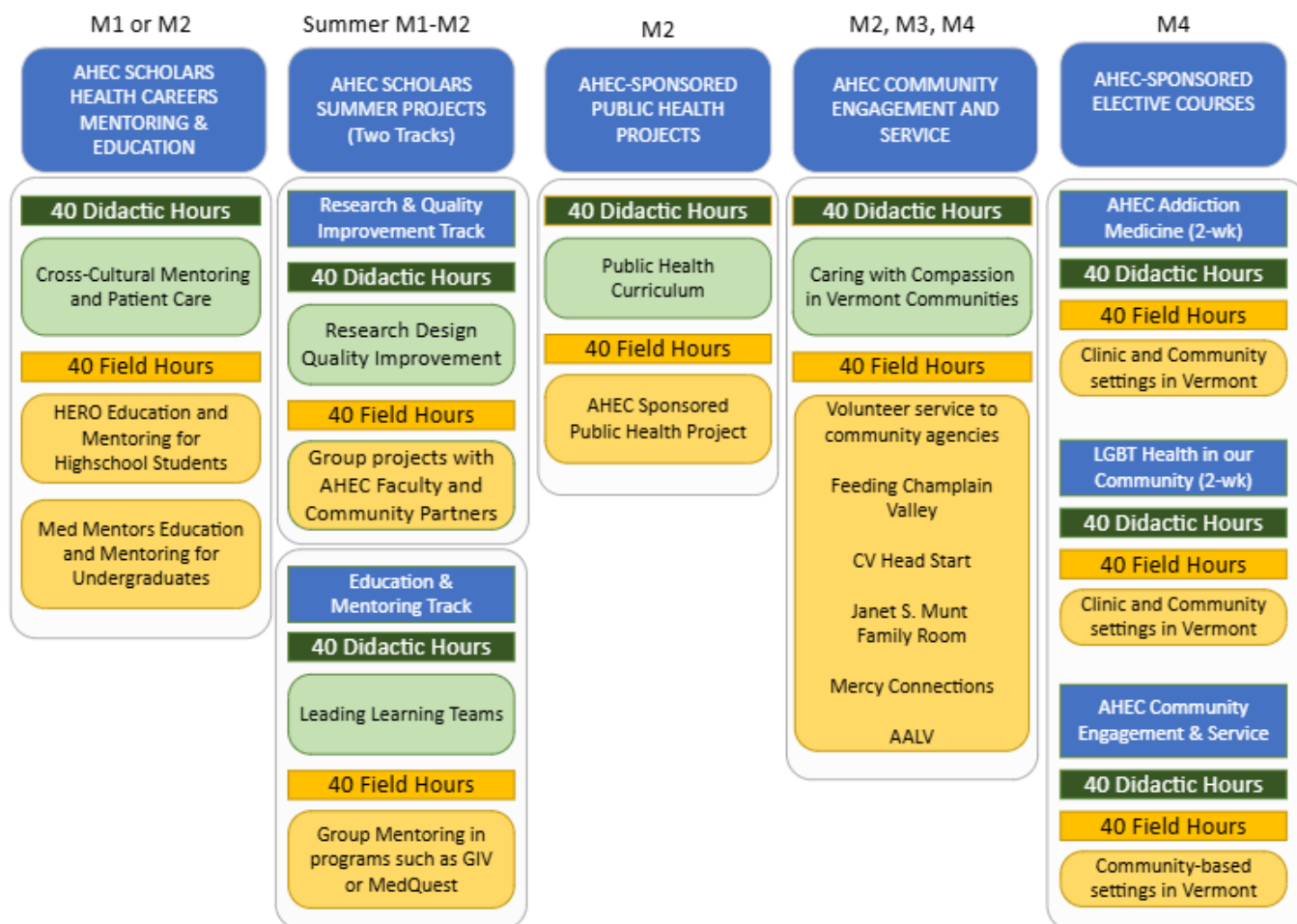
- Courses are offered during 2-week elective blocks, currently Sep, Feb, or March.
- Current topics include Addiction Medicine in Sept and LGBT Health in March.
- Community Engagement and Service in M4 includes 40 longitudinal service hours completed during a specified timeframe. Didactic learning must be completed by the end of the elective block.
- Courses are announced in November prior to LCOM's Advanced Integration lottery.
- AHEC electives are open to all LCOM students. Students in the AHEC Scholars program are given priority when a course has a waitlist.

Information about the 80-hour pathways – including pathway overviews and application instructions – can be found on the AHEC website. [AHEC Scholars | AHEC | The University of Vermont](#)

AHEC Spotlight events are advertised in the WeeklyWire, events calendars, and via email to students enrolled in the AHEC Scholars program. We welcome student input and requests for training topics.

This graphic is a visual representation of the 5 AHEC Scholars pathway opportunities. Students who complete 2 pathway options, in two separate years, meet the required 160 hours.

AHEC SCHOLARS 80-HOUR PATHWAY OPPORTUNITIES



As the AHEC Scholars program continues to develop and evolve, we request student feedback at the completion of each 80-hour pathway activity. We are grateful for the collaboration and support from the many Laner students who have participated in activities and been a part of building the program with us.

The past three graduating classes have included 45-50 Vermont AHEC Scholars.

Please reach out to Patti Smith Urie, Outreach Professional for AHEC Scholars, for more information or to discuss program opportunities. Patti.smith-urie@med.uvm.edu