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**AHEC: Promoting the Common Health throughout the Commonwealth**

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**Getting Ready for HIPAA**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, set to take effect in April, 2003, is causing major headaches for health providers. To help clinics and physicians' offices prepare for the looming deadline, the NC AHEC teamed up with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in Atlanta to provide two free workshops in August, 2002. The workshops were broadcast to 21 sites around the state using the Kentucky Tele-care Network, the University of Kentucky's live videoconferencing system.

The workshops originated from the UK Medical Center, and were broadcast to locations in Covington, Ashland, Morehead, Louisville, Glasgow, and Hazard, among others. A total of 672 participants had the opportunity to listen to experts discuss how to prepare for HIPAA implementation, and could interact with the speakers. Free workbooks and other materials were available at each site. Other AHEC centers across the state assisted with logistical arrangements at the various sites. This unique program received good reviews from attendees, and requests for more workshops about HIPAA.



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**Promotores Class Offered in Covington**

Community health education in northern Kentucky has taken a new turn with the graduation of the first class of "promotores", the innovative community health education program sponsored and coordinated by the NC AHEC. *Promotores de Salud* (health promoters in Spanish) are Hispanic community volunteers who agree to share their newly-acquired health knowledge with others in the Hispanic community.

The two men and eleven women who volunteered for the course had no experience with health care prior to the *promotores* class. Now living in Kentucky and Ohio, they are natives of Mexico, Columbia, and El Salvador. They were all motivated by a desire to learn more about health topics for themselves, and to help others deal with serious illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease or sexually transmitted diseases.

The twelve classes, held on Saturday afternoons in July, August and September, were conducted in Spanish by local healthcare professionals, who included physicians, nurses and nurse-midwives. The classes covered a variety of health topics, such as prevention and treatment of common health problems, mental health and substance abuse, domestic violence, CPR, and first aid. A special focus of the class was helping the participants learn about the local healthcare system, especially clinics and health departments that focus on providing services in Spanish, such as the HealthPoint Family Care's Spanish team at the Covington office. The participants also learned hands-on skills such as the technique of taking a blood pressure.

The extensive curriculum used in the class was originally developed by the Midwest Migrant Health Information Office and used in many lay health worker training programs. The material was adapted for use in Kentucky, and emphasized Kentucky resources available.

A partnership with Gateway Community and Technical College (formerly Northern Kentucky Technical College) allowed the participants to earn 2 hours of college credit. They were encouraged to continue their education at Gateway in the medical and health professions or in the English as a second language program.

While the *promotores* were attending classes, their children had a special class of their own. Rather than the time being spent with a babysitter, the nine "*Promotoritos de Salud*" (little health promoters in Spanish) learned about health topics such as good nutrition, dental health and



All promotores in the class were certified in CPR and first aid

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**AHEC MISSION**

The mission of the North Central AHEC is to promote healthy communities through innovative partnerships. This is accomplished by providing:

- Educational support services to health professions students and health care providers;
- Community health education, and
- Programs that encourage health professions as a career choice.

### Promotores Class Offered in Covington (cont.)

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exercise in an active, child-friendly way. The *promotoritos* participated with enthusiasm, and received certificates of completion.

Graduation day, October 19<sup>th</sup>, was a festive occasion at the Centro de Amistad, a Hispanic community center adjacent to the Cathedral Basilica in Covington where all the classes were held. The eleven graduates brought spouses, children and friends to help them celebrate as they received their certificates of completion. The graduation speaker was Haydee Canovas, RN, President of the Kentucky Association of Hispanic Nurses. The graduates received a first aid kit, a blood pressure cuff and a stethoscope, and digital thermometer to use as they continue to assist their friends and neighbors.



The latest group of promotores proudly display their certificates

Future plans call for the new Northern Kentucky *promotores* to sponsor health fairs and public events for their Hispanic neighbors. More *promotores* classes are planned for the area.

### Health Fairs Target Hispanic Population

Since its beginning, the NC AHEC has been working toward improving the health of the growing Hispanic population of northern Kentucky. Recent health fairs in Covington and Cynthiana especially for the Hispanic population are examples of that commitment.

The Covington Feria de Salud (Festival of Health), which took place on Sunday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, was planned and implemented by NC AHEC staff with cooperation from St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica of Covington and the Centro de Amistad. It has been an annual event since September, 2000.



UK dental student, Ryan Robinson, performs a dental screening with assistance from Dr. Ken Rich

Over 300 community members, including children, came to the Cathedral's Howard Hall for a variety of screening tests and health information. The free tests included blood pressure checks, height and weight assessments, vision and hearing checks, blood glucose and cholesterol tests, dental screening, mammograms and pap smears. Over 25 local health professionals (physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, dentists, dietitians, audiologists, and others) volunteered to provide the testing, counseling and explanation of test results. UK dental students and University of Cincinnati medical students and dietetic interns were on hand to assist with the procedures and testing.

A number of participants were referred to local health centers, dentists or physicians for additional follow-up of screening results. All services were provided in both Spanish and English, with many volunteer interpreters on hand to assist those participants who did not speak English. The NC AHEC produced and distributed the Spanish language booklet, *Guia*

*Para Servicios Medicos En El Norte De Kentucky (A Guide to Medical Services in Northern Kentucky).*

Community agencies such as the Northern Kentucky Independent Health Department, the American Red Cross, Catholic Social Services, Alcoholics Anonymous, and others provided information about their services. Students from the Boone County High School Spanish class assisted with interpreting, and Girl Scouts from the Licking Valley Girl Scout council provided child care services.

Food and prizes contributed to the festive atmosphere. Local companies were extremely generous in supporting the health fair. Fifth Third Bank provided a very large gift which underwrote the cost of the medical supplies for the cholesterol and glucose testing. Corporex, United Dairy Farmers, Trauth Dairy and the Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky all provided food and/or prizes for the event.

The Cynthiana Feria de Salud was held on Sunday, September 29, at the River Road Park. A number of community

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### Health Fairs Target Hispanic Population (cont.)

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agencies, including Harrison Memorial Hospital, the Cooperative Extension Office of Harrison County and the WEDCO District Health Department, were involved in planning and implementing the health fair.

Over 80 local residents took advantage of the free tests, which included blood pressure, cholesterol, PSA, mammograms, vision, hearing and dental screenings. Harrison Memorial Hospital provided the equipment and materials for the blood tests and mammograms. Local physicians, dentists and other healthcare workers were on hand to provide the tests, interpret the findings and refer participants to other health services for followup, if needed. All services were provided in Spanish, with interpretation provided by numerous volunteers. A variety of health publications in Spanish were available to the participants, as well as a Spanish language guide to health services in Harrison County.



A young participant at the Cynthiana health fair smiles after finishing the vision screening.

### Health Occupations Workshop Informs Students about Health Careers

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row, the NC AHEC has presented the Health Occupations Workshop for high school students in northern Kentucky. The all-day program, which took place in the Holmes High School gymnasium in Covington, attracted 324 students from 7 local high schools. The participating high schools were Bellevue High, Dayton High, Holmes High, Holy Cross High in Latonia, Ludlow High, Newport Central Catholic High and Newport High School. The students had all indicated that they were considering pursuing a health career.



Students receive chair massages from Gordon Clark, Director of the Massage Therapy program at Gateway Community and Technical College, assisted by Katie Keefe, massage therapy student.

The high school students talked with health professionals, faculty members and students representing 19 different health professions and 9 colleges, universities, and programs. The diverse displays featured information about each health career, as well as hands-on activities that would give the students a feel for the responsibilities of each career. The Northern Kentucky University respiratory care booth featured an intubation model complete with lungs and an Ambu bag for managing respirations. The Cincinnati State surgical technology booth gave students the opportunity to practice suturing a simulated wound and handling instruments used in surgery. Mr. Gordon Clark, director of the massage therapy program at Gateway Community and Technical College (formerly Northern Kentucky Technical College) brought several massage chairs and demonstrated therapeutic chair massage to 75 high school students.

The faculty members, together with the college students, provided materials and advice about choosing a career, qualifying for the programs, paying for college, and making the transition from high school to a post-secondary program.

Evaluations from the high school students, their teachers and counselors were uniformly positive. The students agreed that the workshop provided information that would help them pursue their career goals. Each student was given a cloth backpack, and many informational brochures about the various health careers. A typical comment from a guidance counselor was "I thought the set-up was excellent. Very organized with lots of information for both students and counselors. Thank you for letting us come."



Students learn about the pharmacy technician program at Gateway Community and Technical College.

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