



Core Topic Areas

a. **Inter-professional Education** (also known as interdisciplinary training), which supports a coordinated, patient-centered model of health care that involves an understanding of the contributions of multiple health care professionals;

b. **Behavioral Health Integration**, which promotes the development of integrated primary and behavioral health services to better address the needs of individuals with mental health and substance use conditions. To that end, AHEC Program award recipients are also expected to develop behavioral health and paraprofessional training as it relates to addressing clinician burnout and improve provider resiliency. Burnout in health care professionals is widespread and growing; recent studies indicate elevated levels of burnout, along with related conditions of depression and emotional exhaustion. Health care professionals experiencing burnout include physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, registered nurses, dentists, physician assistants, and other health professions.

c. **Connecting Communities and Supporting Health Professionals**, which aims to increase training and development of CHWs and paraprofessionals to be the connectors who are able to serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health professionals and the community to facilitate access to service and improve health equity, community/population health, and social determinants of health.

d. **Virtual Learning and Telehealth**, which seeks to improve virtual learning and telehealth curricula and community-based experiential training. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced all health care systems, hospitals, and clinics to rapidly implement telehealth services, simulation-based technology, and virtual trainings to continue delivering patient care.

e. **Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)** are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. SDOH can be grouped into five (5) domains: economic stability, education access, and quality; neighborhood and built environment and social and community context.

f. **Cultural Competency**, which seeks to improve individual health and build healthy communities by training health care providers to recognize and address the unique culture, language and health literacy of diverse consumers and communities (e.g., National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care);

g. **Practice Transformation**, which aims to fully support quality improvement and patient-centered care through goal-setting, leadership, practice facilitation, workflow changes, measuring outcomes, and adapting organizational tools and processes to support new team-based models of care delivery. This includes multi-disciplinary training and infrastructure support on cutting-edge technology, such as data analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) to advance health equity and population health. To that end, AHEC Program award recipients are expected to develop and implement educational and training activities and build and strengthen strategic partnerships as designed below.

Educational and training activities under practice transformation must target the specific skills and competencies needed to prepare students and practicing health professionals to effectively practice in a transforming health care system; and

h. **Current and emerging health issues** (e.g., COVID-19, Zika virus, pandemic influenza, opioid use disorder, maternal mortality, geographically relevant health issues, etc.) may be proposed, but will need prior approval from the HRSA program office before implementation.