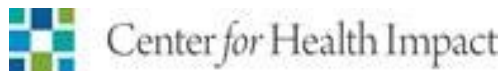


Central MassAHEC Program



Rosa Fernandez is a bilingual public health and regulatory affairs leader with over 25 years of experience advancing community health, equity, and strategic partnerships across hospital systems, nonprofit organizations, and community-based settings in Central and Northern Massachusetts. Fluent in Spanish and English, she is recognized for her collaborative, solutions-driven approach to improving health outcomes and strengthening systems of care for diverse populations.

ROSA FERNANDEZ, PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/ELLA
CENTRAL MASSAHEC CENTER DIRECTOR



What is AHEC?



AHEC, Area Health Education Centers, is a national program funded by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to medical schools across the country.

UMass has hosted the MassAHEC Network since 1977.

DIVERSITY

Preparing a diverse, culturally competent primary care workforce that can address the needs of the communities we serve.

DISTRIBUTION

Improving workforce distribution throughout the nation, with an emphasis on rural and underserved areas and communities.

PRACTICE TRANSFORMATION

Developing and maintaining a health care workforce that is prepared to deliver high quality care in a transforming health care delivery system.

Overview & Program Highlights



MassAHEC Program Orientation

Introduces AHEC scholars to program mission, leadership, community engagement, and service-learning opportunities.

Advocacy in Action Series

Multi-part sessions develop advocacy skills through perspectives of academic leaders and student advocates.

Specialized Advocacy Topics

Sessions cover family medicine, public health, HIV, queer health, immigration, dental health, and legislative advocacy domains.

Building Civic Engagement

The program equips future clinicians to influence policy, address inequities, and serve as community leaders.

Advocacy Sessions: Make Your Voice Heard

Introduction to health advocacy

Guest speakers: Physicians,
Public Health leaders, Legislators,
and community stakeholders

Scholars' perspectives



HIV Advocacy

Policy and
patient care
intersection

Expert-led
lecture

Emerging
public health
challenges



Clinical Skills, Health Education, and Patient-Centered Care

Holistic and Ethical Care Discussions

Discussions deepen understanding of ethical care topics such as end of life and oral health inequity with Dr. Silk.

Addressing Public Health Concerns

Education sessions target issues like vaccine hesitancy, substance use disorders, and human trafficking awareness.

Linguistic Equity and Communication

Training emphasizes effective communication with medical interpreters for equitable patient care.





Wound Care Session

- Hands-on clinical training
- Evidence-based wound management
- Skill-building for patient care

Sherman Center Multi-purpose room –

August 19, 2026 5:30-7pm

Building Connections Across Diverse Communities

Nutrition-Focused Cooking Sessions

Cooking sessions educate our aging population on heart health, fiber, low-sodium meals, and gut health through shared meals and discussion.

Community-Based Learning Experiences

Events like Walking Tour learning about the unhoused populations with Dr. Garcia and educational sessions with UMass Physicians highlight geographic and health access disparities.

Service-Driven Community Events

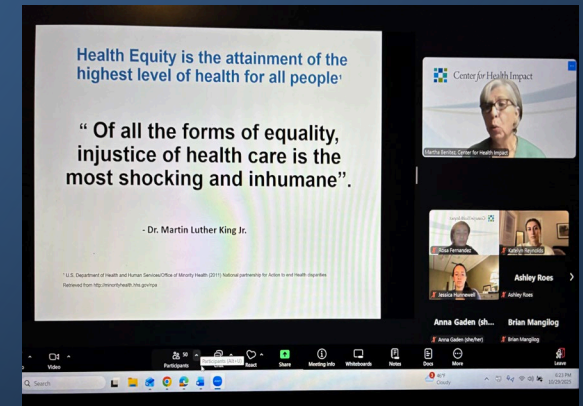
Health fairs, cooking with formerly incarcerated individuals, and farm give-back days emphasize meeting communities where they are.

Building Trust and Partnerships

Sustained engagement fosters trust, relationship-building, and effective health advocacy through community partnerships.



Linguistic Equity



WORKING WITH
INTERPRETERS



CULTURALLY
COMPETENT CARE



COMMUNICATION
STRATEGIES

Professional Development



CV workshop



Residency preparation



Networking opportunities



AHEC
SCHOLARS



UMass Chan
MEDICAL SCHOOL

**MassAHEC
Network**

Department of Family Medicine
and Community Health

AHEC Scholar Benefits –

- ✓ Participate in a national, federally funded grant with more than 3,000 health professions scholars across the country
- ✓ Enhance healthcare knowledge and skills for clinical and community settings
- ✓ Positively impact underserved communities
- ✓ Engage with interdisciplinary teams
- ✓ Gain career development skills
- ✓ CV building opportunities
Participation documented on residency application
- ✓ Network with like-minded healthcare providers
- ✓ Potential funding opportunities for projects and conference attendance
- ✓ Augment education on topics such as telehealth, cultural humility and practice transformation
- ✓ Recognize the role of practice transformation in addressing health and public health issues
- ✓ Increase leadership skills and build your professional network
- ✓ Broaden scope of practice and learn strategies to become a better practitioner



Rosa Fernandez, pronouns:
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Thank you!

