

PRESS RELEASE

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For more information contact:
Laura Calhoun, MHA
SOWEGA-AHEC
Executive Director
229-439-7185
lcalhoun@sowega-ahec.org

The Southwest Georgia Area Health Education Center (SOWEGA-AHEC) Announces \$1.3 Million Grant *The path to improving rural health starts with innovation and big intentions.*

Albany, Georgia – The Southwest Georgia Area Health Education Center (SOWEGA-AHEC) has been awarded \$1.3 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Nearly \$46 million was awarded to 31 organizations to support the Rural Public Health Workforce Training Network Program over the next three years. “Among the most important steps we can take to improve access to health care in rural communities is to invest in growing the rural health care workforce,” said HRSA Administrator Carole Johnson in the [HHS Press Release](#).

SOWEGA-AHEC, a community-driven non-profit, was established in 1991 to increase access to healthcare by expanding a diversely reflective healthcare workforce in 38 counties of Southwest Georgia. Through AHEC’s Recruit, Train, and Retain pipeline model, the Rural Public Health Workforce Training Network Program will create an innovative new approach for accomplishing AHEC’s pipeline initiatives.

The \$1.3 million grant will be used to develop and implement the Southwest Georgia Community Paramedicine Program to address how limited access to primary care causes higher ER visits and readmissions of chronic and non-emergent patients.

With SOWEGA-AHEC as the Lead Applicant, a network of rural partners will develop a CP Workforce Training Program to cross-train five EMS providers to work in five newly established hospital-based CP departments to reduce non-emergent ER visits through at-home education and access to needed resources. The Southwest Georgia Community Paramedicine Network members include the Georgia State Office of Rural Health in Cordele, Clinch Memorial Hospital in Homerville, Coffee Regional Medical Center in Douglas, Colquitt Regional Medical Center in Moultrie, Irwin County Hospital in Ocilla, and Tift Regional Medical Center in Tifton.

To learn more, please join SOWEGA-AHEC, our network partners and supporters for a Press Conference September 13, 2022, from 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM at the Flint RiverQuarium (117 Pine Ave, Albany, GA 31701).