

Rural Health Professions Program

Tracks & Requirements

RHPP Tracks:

1. Rural/medically underserved interest (participate only in activities interested in, no application needed)
2. RHPP Scholar (formal application, also awarded certificate of completion if complete requirements)
3. AHEC Scholar (interprofessional 2-year fellowship, required activities, open to RHPP Scholars)

RHPP Scholar requirements:

1. Enrollment in a UA CON DNP Program
2. Completion of an online program application, including demographics and short statement of interests/goals related to rural and medically underserved populations
3. Rural focused coursework
4. Clinical rotations in rural/medically underserved areas
5. Rural focused DNP Project
6. Participation in the annual RHPP Interprofessional Rural Health Conference (on-site or remote) and other RHPP activities

Successful completion of these above elements is required to receive an RHPP certificate of program completion upon graduation. **Completion of this program will not be noted on the official UA transcript.**

Coursework

RHPP Scholars are required to take 3 courses with coursework that focus on rural and medically underserved populations. Coursework should include NURS 638, 773, and/or 774. Coursework must be approved by the RHPP Director.

NURS 638 Conceptual Foundations for Rural Health Nursing; offered each Spring (1 unit) The purpose of this course is to build a conceptual basis for understanding rural nursing practice. The rural phenomenon of interest to nursing and the three dimensions that characterize it (occupational, ecological, and sociocultural) will be explored in relationship to the nature of rural nursing practice and research. Middle-range theory from other disciplines that are relevant to rural nursing will be discussed. Rural nursing practice will be examined broadly on parameters such as regulatory issues, workforce preparation and distribution, rural vs. urban nursing practice characteristics, as well as various local, state, federal, and international perspectives that impact rural nursing practice. Strategies for intervening with rural populations will be analyzed.

NURS 773 Rural Health Systems; offered alternating summers (3 units) This course provides students with opportunities to integrate knowledge of theories, models, and research in the area of rural health systems. Rural health care delivery systems will be analyzed and evaluated on aspects of delivery systems related to rural clients; provider, and organizational outcomes; informatics; and leadership in the design, implementation and evaluation of rural healthcare systems. Example units of study include: rural clinical service integration, networks and fiscal performance of rural hospitals, how rural providers compare on cost and quality performance indicators, rural mental health services, the impact of managed care on rural service, rural public health infrastructures, rural safety nets, and rural-urban interdependence as evidenced through interregional resource flow, informatics and telemedicine, and referral and economic systems. This course is open to any student with graduate standing.

NURS 774 Rural Community Health; offered alternating summers (3 units) This course focuses on the health of rural communities. The health of rural populations will be examined within the context of diverse rural communities and

students will be provided with opportunities to integrate knowledge of theories, models, and research on multiple community levels including exploration of issues such as the impact of rural occupations and economies, demography, migration and geography, culture and history, and the impact of local, state, and federal programs and policies on the health of rural populations. Vulnerability will be explored on at least two levels: how communities identify and recognize vulnerability, and how public policy and interventions respond to perceptions of vulnerability. The impact of living on the rural U.S.-Mexico border will be also explored.

Clinical

RHPP Scholars must complete a minimum of one semester in a rural area to be eligible for the certificate of complete. Typically rural area are defined using the US Census definition of having a population of <50,000, though there are a number of definitions. Contact the Director if you are unsure if your site meets the requirements.

- Area Health Education Centers in each state have excellent resources for students interested in clinical training, such as clinical sites, housing options, and continuing education post-graduation. The centers vary by state. Check the AHEC site for your state.
- Arizona AHEC resources: <http://azahec.uahs.arizona.edu/>
- Arizona student clinical rotation resources: [Students AzAHEC regional resources.pdf](#)

Stipends

Limited stipend support is available for Arizona primary care rural and medically underserved rotations (2 week min). Students do not need to be Arizona residents to be eligible, but the rotations must be Arizona. RHPP Scholars have priority. Funding is limited. Stipend applications are sent to students prior to the end of each clinical rotation. Students from other states doing rotations outside of Arizona should check with their Area Health Education Center to see what support they may be eligible for.

Clinical Decision Making Support

RHPP Scholars doing rotations in Arizona are eligible for Epocrates Plus licensing and an RHPP iPad for use during their Arizona rotations. Limited availability. Contact the Director for additional information.

DNP Project

RHPP Scholars must complete a DNP Project that includes a rural focus or rural-urban comparison.

RHPP Activities

There are a range of RHPP activities within the CON, AHSC, and statewide. Many of these are interprofessional. Some are required (such as the annual interprofessional conference, which is also live streamed). These activities are also open to students who are interested in rural health but not RHPP Scholars.

- Interprofessional Clinical Education Activities
- Monthly Breakfast Meeting Videoconferences
- On-Campus Brown Bag Lunches
- Annual Interprofessional RHPP Conference and Poster Session (information and registration: <http://azahec.uahs.arizona.edu/content/annual-rhpp-conference-information>)

Application Process

An email invitation will be sent to students each fall and early spring to apply. Applications include short answer and essay responses. RHPP Scholars do not need to reapply once accepted into the program. AHEC Scholars applications will also be emailed.