

Cherokee Regional Medical Center
300 Sioux Valley Drive
Cherokee, Iowa 51012

PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT:

Kent Lundquist
(712)225-3368 ext. 259
klundquist@cherokeermc.org

December 10, 2012- **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE!**

AREA STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN “*EXPERIENCE HEALTH*” DAY CAMP AT CRMC

Cherokee Regional Medical Center and Northwest Iowa Area Health Education Center (NWI AHEC) recently partnered to present the second “Experience Health” occupation exploration day camp at Cherokee Regional Medical Center. Micki Paulsen, NWI AHEC Recruitment Coordinator, Administration, and staff at CRMC, worked together to coordinate the event.

Area students from South O’Brien, Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn, Washington High School in Cherokee, Ridgeview, and Alta-Aurelia High Schools, attended an eight hour activity packed day at the Cherokee Regional Medical Center to explore a multitude of different careers available to students in healthcare. CRMC healthcare professionals were involved to extend knowledge of their chosen occupation and the benefits of working in a rural hospital or health environment. They also addressed questions and inquiries of future health related occupation choices.

Throughout the day, healthcare professionals and students involved themselves in various hands-on activities, discussions and rotations through the Emergency Room, Ambulance, LifeNet, Obstetrics, Physical and Occupational Therapies, Laboratory, Pharmacy, Surgery, Radiology and Nursing.

The mission of Northwest Iowa Area Health Education Center is to “grow our own” quality healthcare workforce by recruiting youth into healthcare professions, assist youth with pre-professional training, and then provide continuing education to retain professionals in rural communities. Northwest Iowa Area Health Education Center strives to establish partnerships with local professionals and healthcare facilities to coordinate opportunities like “Experience Health” days for area youth. NWI AHEC programs provide opportunities for student exploration of the multitude of occupational opportunities in the healthcare field.

“We were pleased to partner with Northwest Iowa Area Health Education Center again this year to offer this opportunity to area students interested in further exploring a possible career in healthcare,” said John Comstock, CEO of Cherokee Regional Medical Center. “The intent of programs such as the “Experience Health” Day Camp is to provide a meaningful, hands-on experience that will hopefully lead some of these bright, young minds to pursue a career in rural healthcare.”

About AHEC

Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) recruit, train and retain a health professions workforce committed to the underserved. Developed by Congress in 1972, the AHEC program aims to increase access to quality healthcare in rural and underserved areas.

Although AHEC's have been around for nearly 40 years, Iowa was one of the last states to build an AHEC program. In 2007, Des Moines University received a federal grant to create a network of four regional AHEC's in the northern half of the state, coordinated through a central program office. Each regional AHEC is established locally and designed to assess and meet the needs of the underserved citizens in the region.

The AHEC program combines best-practice methods of workforce development with creative collaborations among key healthcare stakeholders in local communities. Each center develops programming specific to the needs of its service area in order to address regional health issues and increase workforce. AHEC programming accomplishes this by:

- Organizing activities for **kindergarten through undergraduate students** to foster interest in the pursuit of health careers.
- Connecting **health professions students** to career opportunities by setting up clinical experiences in rural and underserved areas.
- Offering continuing education courses to **practicing healthcare professionals** that address the unique challenges of providing quality care to the medically underserved.

If you would like to partner and make a contribution to assist in the development and delivery of healthcare activities for area youth with NWI AHEC, please contact Sharon Meyers, Executive Director NWI AHEC (smeyers@stanthonyhospital.org or call 712-794-5960).



Photo 1- Students participating in the second “Experience Health” occupation exploration day camp at Cherokee Regional Medical Center spent some time interacting with the LifeNet Air Ambulance crew to learn more about career opportunities within the air medical services industry. Students pictured in the front row (l-r) Jennifer Davis (WHS), Maddy Woodall (WHS), Kevin Fajardo (WHS), and Jasmine Espinoza (Alta-Aurelia). Back row (l-r), Nate Fowler (WHS), Brett Walker (WHS), Elizabeth Hinkey (MMC), and Cenzie Wood (WHS).



Photo 2- Maddy Woodall (WHS) practices intubating a mannequin instructed by Ben Cox, CRNA with Cenzie Wood (WHS) and Nate Fowler (WHS) looking on.