



# CREATING A PIPELINE TO RURAL MAINE TO ADDRESS HEALTHCARE SHORTAGES



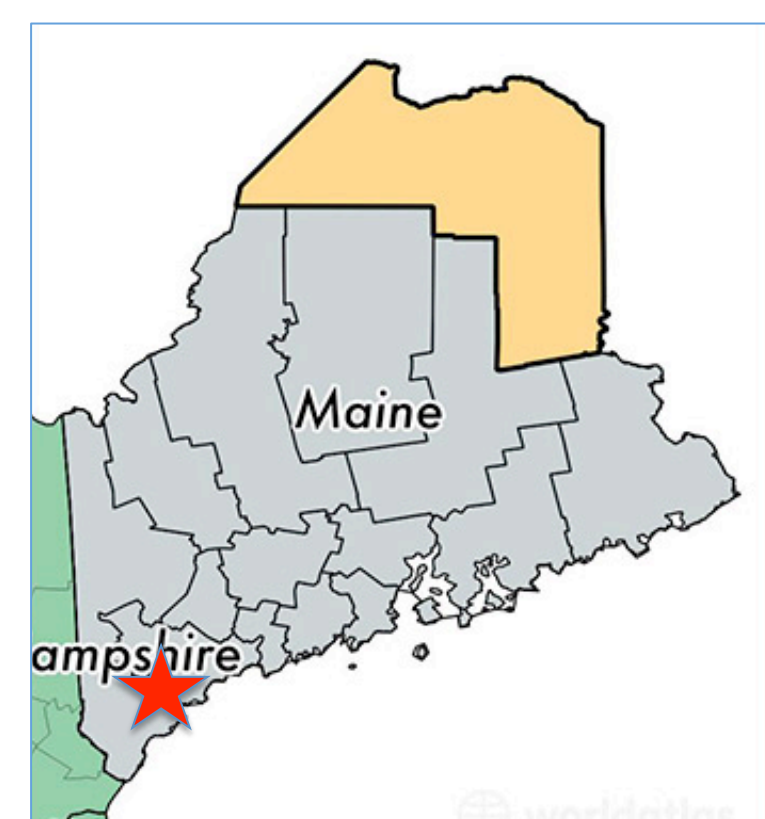
Imbert, I.,<sup>1</sup> Dosseva, J.,<sup>2</sup> Dufresne, R.,<sup>1</sup> Gunderman J.,<sup>1,3</sup> Mills, D.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Center for Excellence in Health Innovation, University of New England, Portland, ME, 04103 USA

<sup>2</sup>College of Graduate and Professional Studies, <sup>3</sup>Westbrook College of Health Professions

## Introduction

- ❖ According to the 2010 US Census Maine is the most rural state in the United States
- ❖ Maine's healthcare workforce demand is expected to increase as its population continues to age
- ❖ Innovative solutions to bolster the healthcare pipeline to rural and underserved population are needed to address the healthcare workforce shortage
- ❖ The University of New England's (UNE) Center for Excellence in Health Innovation (CEHI) innovates in the nexus of healthcare transformation, public health, and education
- ❖ The CEHI developed the Rural Health Intensive (RHI), a program aimed at expanding clinical learning opportunities in rural settings for healthcare students to increase interest in rural medicine
- ❖ This program was piloted May 23rd – 27th 2016 in Aroostook County, Maine and included 15 students with approximately equal representation from UNE's:



- ❖ College of Osteopathic Medicine
- ❖ College of Pharmacy
- ❖ College of Dental Medicine

❖ Students completed pre- and post-surveys to measure changes in competencies and practice intentions and all students participated in a group debriefing/focus group to gather lessons learned and suggestions for continuous quality improvement

## Student Goals and Our Hypothesis

- ❖ Accurately define **rural healthcare**
- ❖ **Identify the role** of public health and healthcare in a rural setting
- ❖ Understand the challenges, needs, and strengths of a rural community from a **systems approach**
- ❖ **Identify the values**, skills, and competencies required to work in rural health
- ❖ **Evaluate** personal interest in pursuing rural healthcare career

**Hypothesis: If graduate health care students are immersed in the culture of rural healthcare they will be more likely to practice in rural areas**

## Acknowledgements

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- UNE Center for Excellence in Health Innovation

## Experiences

A.



B.



C.



D.



E.



F.



**Student experiences:** Numerous sites were visited during the immersion and activities were completed in interprofessional teams among the three disciplines. Sites included a rural hospital, local elementary school, senior center, and Amish-centered health clinic to name a few. **A)** Students perform an 8 hour clinical obstructed airway training at The Aroostook Medical Center; **B)** Students observe an art gallery in downtown Presque Isle; **C)** Students spend an afternoon in a community pharmacy; **D)** Students tour a Federally Qualified Health Center in Eagle Lake; **E)** The group poses in front of the designation of America's First Mile in Fort Kent; **F)** Students and preceptors join a local TV station for a morning news broadcast to discuss their experiences in Northern Maine.

## Outcomes

Table 1. Ratings of RHI programmatic components

Answer Options	Below average	Average	Above average	Wicked good!	Rating Average
Coordination (logistics)	0	3	3	9	3.40
Facilitation discussion sessions	0	4	7	4	3.00
Content (balance between dental, medicine and pharmacy)	1	5	6	2	2.64
Format (balance between in-class presentations, discussions, and exercises)	1	5	4	5	2.87
Leadership of the trip	0	0	2	13	3.87
Overall facilitation of the trip	0	1	3	11	3.67

Table 2. Ratings of RHI Learning Objectives

Answer Options	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Rating Average
Define rural health	0	0	6	9	3.60
Describe the challenges and strengths of rural communities, healthcare, and public health	0	0	2	13	3.87
Assess the needs and strengths of a rural community	0	1	1	13	3.80
Identify essential partners to build a system to ensure health in a rural community	0	0	4	10	3.71
Identify the values, skills, and competencies required for working in rural health	0	0	6	8	3.57
Describe the benefits and strategies for team-based care in a rural community	0	0	3	11	3.79
Have an increased understanding of rural communities	0	0	5	10	3.67
Have an increased understanding of Aroostook County	0	1	1	13	3.80

Table 3. Level of interest in future rural or underserved rotations by health profession

Profession	Answer Options	Very likely/Likely		Not sure		Not likely/unlikely
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
Medicine	3rd or 4th year elective <u>rural</u> area	4	5	2	1	0
	3rd or 4th year elective in a non-rural <u>underserved</u> location	4	6	2	0	0
Pharmacy	APPE in a <u>rural</u> area	5	5	0	0	0
	APPE in a non-rural <u>underserved</u> location	4	4	0	0	1
Dental	Rotation in a <u>rural</u> area	4	4	0	0	0
	Rotation a non-rural <u>underserved</u> location	3	2	0	0	1

### Student Quotes:

"I had an idea that there would be a strong sense of community in Aroostook county, but seeing it first hand really blew away the previous thoughts that I had."

"Healthcare professionals believed that they were not just treating a patient, but were taking care of their family, friends, and neighbors."

## Conclusion

- ❖ Evaluation showed this was a valuable experience for students and has fueled discussions and plans for future immersions
- ❖ Planning is underway to expand the RHI to other communities in Western and Eastern Maine
- ❖ Future immersions will include other graduate healthcare professions at UNE
- ❖ Monitoring of students with follow-up surveys to track the location of clerkships, practicums, residencies, and practice will determine if this experience increased likelihood of practicing in rural areas

