

## AHEC Wicked Problem Discussion

In 2012, UAB launched an initiative to expand access to primary care – especially for rural and other under-served populations – in Alabama, a state that ranks 49th nationally for access. UAB School of Medicine was awarded a 5-year-, \$5.25 million grant from the Federal Health Resources and Services Administration to create an Area Health Education Center (AHEC) program that will work to recruit, support and retain health-care professionals in all 67 Alabama counties.

The intention of AHEC is to reduce health disparities by improving the quantity, diversity, distribution and quality of Alabama’s health-care workforce. In the words of Dr. William Curry, MD, who also serves as an Edge of Chaos Scholar, “UAB is committed to encouraging resident physicians and nursing, medical and health professions students to consider careers in rural or other underserved areas. The AHEC will provide the first statewide comprehensive effort, incorporating students and graduates from educational institutions around Alabama.”



The program’s intention is also to reach out to young people in rural communities who may consider a career in health care beyond their grasp.

The UAB AHEC program gathered at The Edge of Chaos in order to discuss some of the Wicked Problems it faces in reaching out to rural communities. The discussion was facilitated by The Edge of Chaos Scholar Dr. Nir Menachemi; the goal of the session was to develop approaches to overcome barriers to serving target populations.

