

Cherokee Regional Medical Center  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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

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

Area students from South O’Brien, Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn, Washington-Cherokee 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, Obstetrics, Physical and Occupational Therapies, Laboratory, Pharmacy, Surgery, Radiology and Nursing.

The mission of West Central 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. West Central 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. WCI AHEC programs provide opportunities for student exploration of the multitude of occupational opportunities in the healthcare field.

“We were pleased to partner with West Central Iowa Area Health Education Center 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 as a rural healthcare professional.”

### 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.



**PHOTO-** A total of 17 area students from Cherokee, Alta–Aurelia, MMC and South O’Brien participated in the “Experience Health” Day Camp at Cherokee Regional Medical Center. Pictured are (front l-r) Shelby Elrod, Noelle Kruse, Kacy Wolf, Brooke Pigott, Mikka Baker, Leah Peterson, (middle l-r) Jillian Letsche, Uniqueua LaPointe, Sarah Miller, Paige Reinert, Eden Keller, Jaden Lux, Jordan Taylor, Arielle Wohlert, (back l-r) Derek Simonsen, Trent Morton, and Stetson Dagele.



**Photo** – Claude Hogle, Paramedic Specialist at CRMC, teaches Noelle Kruse (seated), Sarah Miller, and Jordan Taylor how to properly splint and stabilize a broken arm during the “Experience Health” day camp held at Cherokee Regional Medical Center.



**Photo-** CRMC Surgical Nurse, Kathy Woodall, RN, shows Shelby Elrod and Derek Simonsen how to properly wash and scrub their hands prior to entering a surgical procedure. The Surgery Department was one of several areas the students rotated through during the “Experience Health” day camp at Cherokee Regional Medical Center.