



News Release

Contact:
Jason Parent
Development and
College Relations Office
33 Edgemont Drive
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: (207) 768-2808
Fax: (207) 760-1101
jparent@nmcc.edu

October 15, 2010

NR10092

County Health Education Resources group disbands and donates remaining funds to NMCC Foundation endowed scholarship fund for students in nursing and allied health

Aroostook County - The vision of a collaborative of health care educators and professionals from throughout Aroostook County will live on despite the organization's decision to disband, as members have designated their remaining funds to a Northern Maine Community College Foundation endowed scholarship for nursing and allied health students.

For the past decade, County Health Education Resources (CHER) has been a non-profit, self-supporting consortium dedicated to providing education that enhances health care services in Aroostook by evaluating, coordinating and delivering cost effective, quality programs to health care providers, professionals, caregivers and other interested groups in northern Maine. For various reasons, the group decided earlier this year to disband, but the question remained of what to do with the just over \$1,600 in remaining funds.

"As a group, we felt that a scholarship would be a good way to support students entering into health careers. NMCC has always had a strong commitment to education in this area, so we felt this would be the best way to help students and ensure that the legacy of CHER continued," said Susan Dugal, the chairperson of CHER, who was appointed by the group to make arrangements with the NMCC Foundation to transfer funds to support students.

After consulting with NMCC Foundation executive director Jason Parent to learn about the alternatives for the donation, Dugal returned to CHER members with three options, including one that would add the group's money to an endowed fund established recently to support nursing and allied health students. The Sunshine Health Scholarship Fund was created in December 2009 through an anonymous \$10,000 gift.

"We collectively felt that contributing our money to the Sunshine Health Scholarship Fund was the best option. This way, CHER funds would continue to be of benefit to future generations of students studying to become health care professionals," said Dugal.

In 2001, the CHER Consortium evolved from a group known as Northern Maine R.A.I.S.E. (Regional Approach to In Service Education) that was founded by The County's four hospitals and Katahdin Area Health Education Center (AHEC).

Since drafting bylaws, developing a strategic plan and setting goals in 2001, CHER has been active in facilitating several educational opportunities for health care providers in the region, as well as supporting efforts to introduce youth to health professions. The consortium has provided monetary assistance to the annual Survivor Aroostook camp held each summer.

Additionally, CHER has sponsored a number of seminars and educational forums throughout The County over the past decade that have covered topics including psychiatric emergencies, natural healing, post traumatic stress disorder and addressing prescription drug diversion within the community and workplace.

In 2002, on the one-year anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks, CHER partnered with several local agencies to host a very successful symposium on grief and managing grief. A year later the organization coordinated the first-ever Northern Maine Living with Cancer Conference, partnering with the American Cancer Society.

The group has also organized specific educational programs for regional health care professionals, including a fall 2006 skills workshop for office nurses and medical assistants and a spring 2008 seminar for the emergency medical community.

#####



Members of the County Health Education Resources (CHER) Consortium recently presented representatives with the Northern Maine Community College Foundation with a check for just over \$1,600. The money, which represents the remaining funds of CHER, was designated for an endowed scholarship fund for nursing and allied health students by the members of the group after a decision was made to disband the organization. Presenting the funds (from left to right) are CHER members Darcy Kinney, community education coordinator for the Aroostook Medical Center; Linda Menard, library/CME coordinator for TAMC; Dean Grivois, northern Maine coordinator for Eastern Maine AHEC; and Susan Dugal, nursing instructor at Northern Maine Community College to Kimberly Esquibel, chair of the NMCC nursing and allied health department; Richard Engels, immediate past chair of the NMCC Foundation Board of Directors; and Mariah LeMieux-Lupien and Dustin Graham, NMCC student representatives on the NMCC Foundation Board.