

Addressing Alabama's Need for More Minority Doctors

Southern Rural Access Program Conference
October, 2003

John R. Wheat, MD, MPH, Professor
Robert Garner, PhD, Professor Emeritus
Benjamin Rackley, Director, Tuskegee AHEC

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA
RURAL HEALTH



Rural Health in Alabama

UA College of Community Health Sciences

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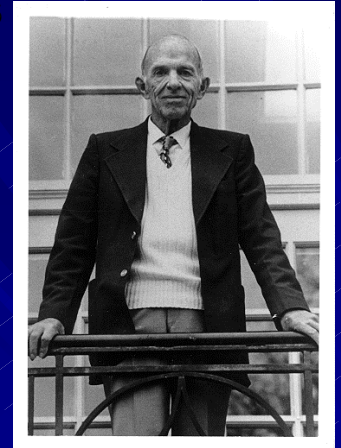


The College of Community Health Sciences University of Alabama School of Medicine Tuscaloosa Program



Founding Dean William R. Willard, M.D., (center) with U.S. Surgeon General Julius Richmond and UA President David Mathews (right) at a reception marking the establishment of CCHS.

University of Alabama College of Community Health Sciences



CELEBRATING
Thirty Years
OF MEDICAL EDUCATION



Rural Medicine Pipeline

good country doctors

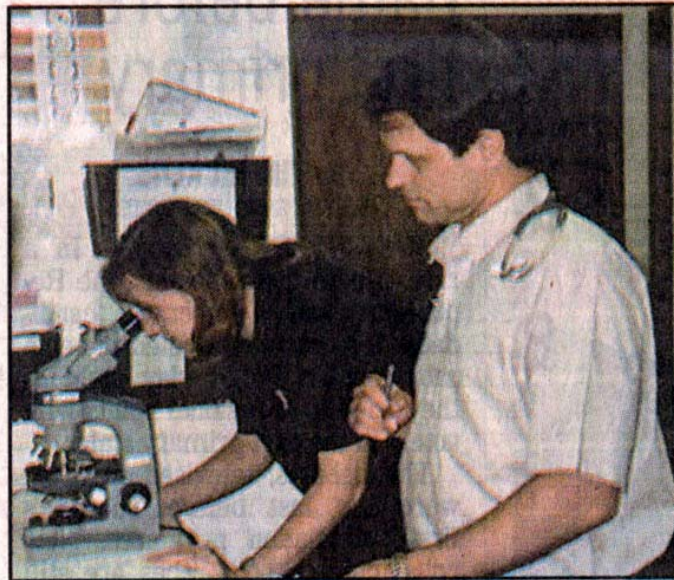
focus on improving access to health care and eliminating disparity in those who receive care.

An Alabama plan with specific state goals, called Healthy Alabamians 2010, will be released by the state Health Department within a few weeks.

Access to health care in rural, underserved areas likely will be part of the plan, said Jim McVay, spokesman for the Alabama Department of Public Health.

"People talk about rural and urban areas. While we do have some densely populated areas, we are basically a rural state and the health

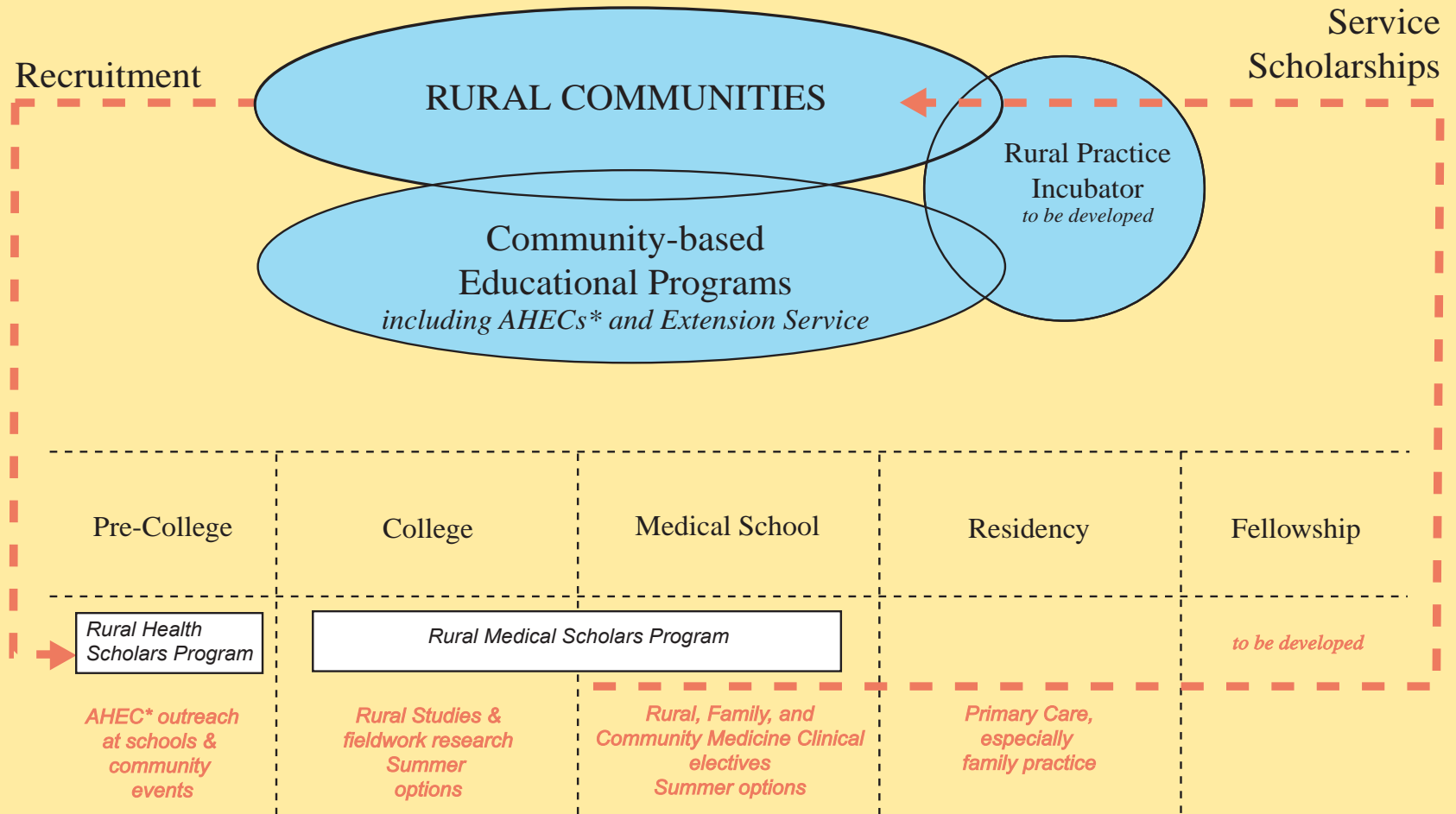
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Dr. John Brandon of Gordo, shown with Rural Alabama Medical Scholar Katie Powell, is medical director of the rural scholars program at the University of Alabama medical school.

Special to the Post-Herald

Rural Medical Pipeline



*AHEC - Area Health Education Center

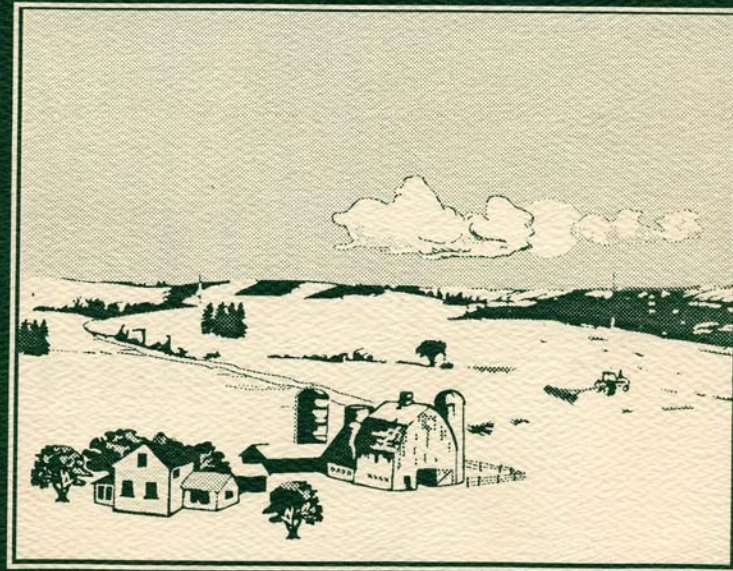
Students in the pipeline are recruited from rural communities and service scholarships bring them back to rural communities.



A photograph of a collection of books and journals related to rural health and education, arranged on a shelf. The books include 'Partnerships in Healthcare', 'Rural Health', 'The SCOPE', 'Mentor Journal', 'Higher Education Exchange', 'Rural Medicine Scholarship Program', and 'RCQ Rural Clinical Quarterly'. Several articles are also displayed in front of the books.

Alabama's Rural Health Care Crisis

*Report to the Legislature
from the
Rural Health Task Force*



December 1989

HEALTH STATUS OF RURAL ALABAMIANS



PRESENTED BY

The Alabama Rural Health Association

January 1998

William R. Willard, M.D.

**Medical
Education
and
Medical Care
in Alabama**

Some Inadequacies,
Some Solutions

INSTITUTE FOR RURAL HEALTH RESEARCH



BlackBelt

Fact Book



Rural Health Projects

- Rural Health Scholars
 - Rural Medical Scholars
 - Minority Rural Health Pipeline
- Rural Environmental Medicine & Agromedicine
- Child Caring Initiative • Rural Alabama AHEC
 - Community Medicine Rotations

Department of Community and Rural Medicine
UA College of Community Health Sciences
University of Alabama School of Medicine-Tuscaloosa

For more information, call (205) 348-5892

<http://bama.ua.edu/~ruralmed>

Rural students are more likely to live and practice in rural areas.



Rural Children Most Likely Prospects



Medically Underserved Counties...



...in Alabama often have significant African-American populations.





The Agromedicine Scholar Bowl team from Sumter County, who placed 2nd in a recent tournament involving teams from five counties.

In the first 7 years of RMSP (Rural Medical Scholars Program), no African-American students matriculated to medical school.





The University of Alabama Minority Rural Health Pipeline Program (MRHPP)

**founded in 2001
with support from the**

**Alabama Southern
Rural Access
Program**

MRHPP



- **High School Graduation**
 - ↓ Year 1 MRHPP summer participant
- **Year 1 of College**
 - ↓ Year 2 MRHPP summer participant
- **Year 2 of College**
 - ↓ Year 3 MRHPP summer participant
- **Year 3 of College**
 - ↓ MMEP or other MCAT preparation
- **Year 4 of College and application to medical school as RMS***
 - ↓
- **Medical School (4 years)**
 - ↓
- **Primary Care Residency (3 Years)**
 - ↓
- **Establishing a Primary Care Medical Practice in Rural Alabama**

*RMS -- Rural Medical Scholar



MRHPP Program Components

Our program is designed to address all factors enhancing the desired transformation over an eleven-twelve period of African-American high school graduates into an Alabama rural physicians. These factors include:

- rural high school-to- college transition
- study skills and life styles for successful college study
- science background required for medical school
- exposure to the study and practice of medicine
- role model African-American physicians
- perspective of a rural provider
- rural health profession as attractive and satisfying career choice
- Enhancing the prospects for students achieving competitive scores on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)



Joel Stancer, Pickens County



Dr. George Thomas
Lowndes County family physician

2001 Rural Medical Scholars



Entered medical school in Birmingham in 2002 and return to CCHS for clinical training in their last two years of med school.

MRHPP Curriculum

- Attend introductory chemistry supplemented by tutorial sessions.
- Attend classes in physics and biology.
- Attend reading comprehension and writing skills class.
- Participate in a current events seminar emphasizing health care topics and stressing reading for information.
- Attend a seminar on skills for college survival and success.
- Shadow a local African-American physician and submit reports on their experiences.
- Take two field trips.
- Write a final report on the summer experience.

Modifications in Second Year

Summer 2002: (Changes made due primarily to funding cuts.)

- The on-campus session was reduced to five weeks
- 10-day assignment to work with a physician in the student's home county was added to make the program last a total of seven weeks.
- The credit awarded for participation was reduced to three semester hours.
- For the eight students entering the program, this necessitated reducing all the 10-week components of the program to five weeks, and eliminating the physics class.
- The seminar was reorganized into an independent study project in which students prepared presentations on the four major health problems encountered by rural African-Americans.

Modifications in Third Year

Summer 2003:

- **First time students took intro chemistry class with lab for credit.**
- **A special tutorial for the course was provided.** (This was an experiment to see if students could handle in the short summer session the pressure of performing well in a course that is a medical school entrance requirement and for which they would receive a permanent grade.)
- the seminar for first year students was eliminated. (to allow more time and energy to be devoted to this course) All the students performed at a satisfactory level, and this modification will most likely be continued.

Individualizing MRHPP for Returning Students

- For students who returned for second and third year participation, we have attempted to make the program more individualized, taking into account the progress each student made in the previous year of college study. For example, students who completed introductory chemistry in the previous year attended on an audit basis a regular organic chemistry class, supplemented by a tutorial. The intent was to augment their preparation for taking the subject in the academic year that follows.

Individualizing MRHPP for Returning Students

- Returning students continued to attend a reading comprehension class which included an emphasis on reading passages of the type to be encountered on the MCAT. Students returning for second or third summer sessions also were assigned longer periods with local African-American physicians.

Individualizing MRHPP for Returning Students

- In all components of the program, the relevance of the content to a long-term preparation for the MCAT is stressed whenever possible and appropriate. We want students to gain repeated insight into how to translate what is learned in undergraduate study into skills needed for competitive performance on the MCAT. For students who advance to the fourth summer of participation and are prepared to take the MCAT in August of that year, an intense preparation for the MCAT is planned. This will most likely involve having the students enroll in a Minority Medical Education Program at the University of Alabama School of Medicine or some equivalent MCAT preparation program.





Cynthia Moore and Dr. Bob Garner

2001 MRHPP Class



2002 MRHPP Class



2003 MRHPP Class



M

R

H

P

P

2001

2002

2003

First name	Gender	County	Post office	2001	2002	2003
Jamie	F	Choctaw	Silas	X	X	
Shamekia	F	Dallas	Selma	X	X	
Travis	M	Lee	Smiths	X		
Jacquelyn	F	Autauga	Marbury	X		
Larea	F	Walker	Oakman	X	X	X
Glenda	F	Dallas	Selma	X	X	
Clarrisa	F	Pike	Troy	X	X	
Calvin	M	Dale	Ozark	X	X	
Charlene	F	Hale	Sawyer ville	X	X	
Dana	F	Hale	Greensboro	X	X	X
Sheena	F	Wilcox	Arlington		X	
Colette	F	Washington	Millry		X	
Kimberly	F	Clarke	Thomasville		X	
Alexis	F	Lawrence	Town Creek		X	X
Anthony	M	Chilton	Jemison		X	X
Danita	F	Wilcox	Boykin		X	
Bridgette	F	Pickens	Ethelsville		X	X
Joel	M	Pickens	Aliceville		X	
Tiffany	F	Dallas	Selma			X
Miriam	F	Clarke	Jackson			X
Sirena	F	Marengo	Faunsdale			X
Tonyunika	F	Pike	Troy			X
Ralpheal	M	Washington	Sunflower			X
Tyckese	F	Hale	Greensboro			X
LaKesha	F	Marengo	Sweet Water			X
Robert	M	Wilcox	Camden			X

Minority Rural Health Pipeline Program





Minorities given opportunity to attend medical school in exchange for service

BY JOY CHESTNUT
Times-Journal Writer

Minority students who have the desire to attend medical school are being encouraged to apply for a unique program that offers free tuition in exchange for service.

Dr. John Wheat, professor of Community and Rural Medicine in the College of Community Health Sciences at the University of Alabama, was the guest speaker at the Rotary Club's weekly meeting held Monday at the St. James Hotel.

Wheat, who was introduced by his brother-in-law attorney Alston Keith, gave a Powerpoint presentation on the Minority Rural Health Scholars Program, stressing the need for more minorities to go to medical school and serve rural areas.

"We are looking for young people who have a calling and who want to serve their community. We have gaps in the number of minorities attending medical school in Alabama and we have to get that understanding and diversity in these rural areas. That's why we offer these scholarships to encourage minority students to go to medical school," said Wheat.

The Minority Rural Health Scholarship is awarded to 10 outstanding students each year.



Times-Journal - Bob Ealum

Pictured from left is Dr. John Wheat, Cynthia Moore, coordinator for Minority Rural Health Pipeline, second-year students Dana Todd of Hale County, Shamekia Dixon and Glenda Morrisette of Dallas County.

The program is a state funded program that pays

100 percent of a student's tuition with the understanding that he or she will go back to a rural community and practice medicine in Alabama for five years after graduation.

Some of the students who have been involved in the Rural Medicine Pipeline Program, a five year track of medical studies with an emphasis in practicing medicine in rural communities are Philip Beverly, Ainka

Sanders, Tamera Carrington, Obasi Okeke, Veranita Waller, Glenda Morrisette, and Shamekia Dixon.

Wheat asked Rotary Club members to help him start seminars in the area that would recruit minorities who have the aptitude and desire to go to medical school.

For more information on the minority rural health program at the University of Alabama, contact Linda Jackson at 205-348-1302.

Outreach

to minority students

And

increasing
**public
awareness**

of the shortage of rural physicians are components of the Minority Rural Health Pipeline Program (MRHPP).

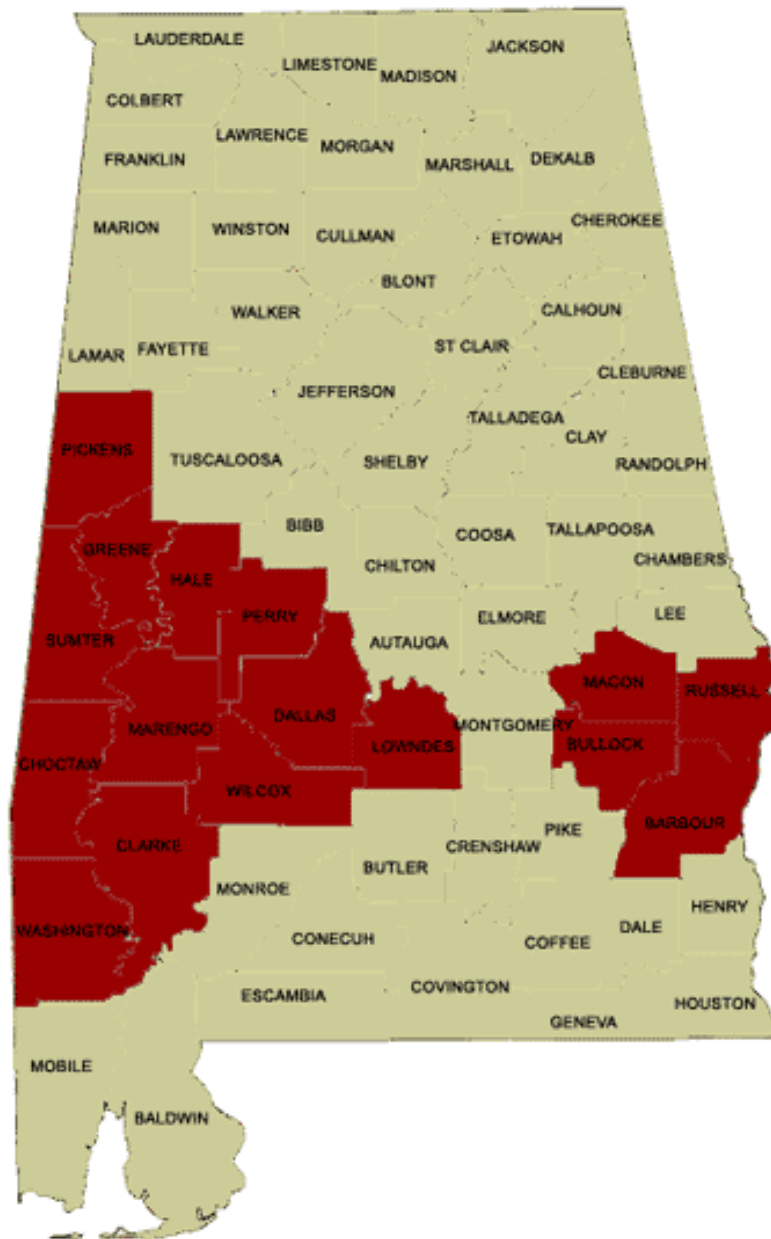
MRHPP Selection Criteria

Entering Students

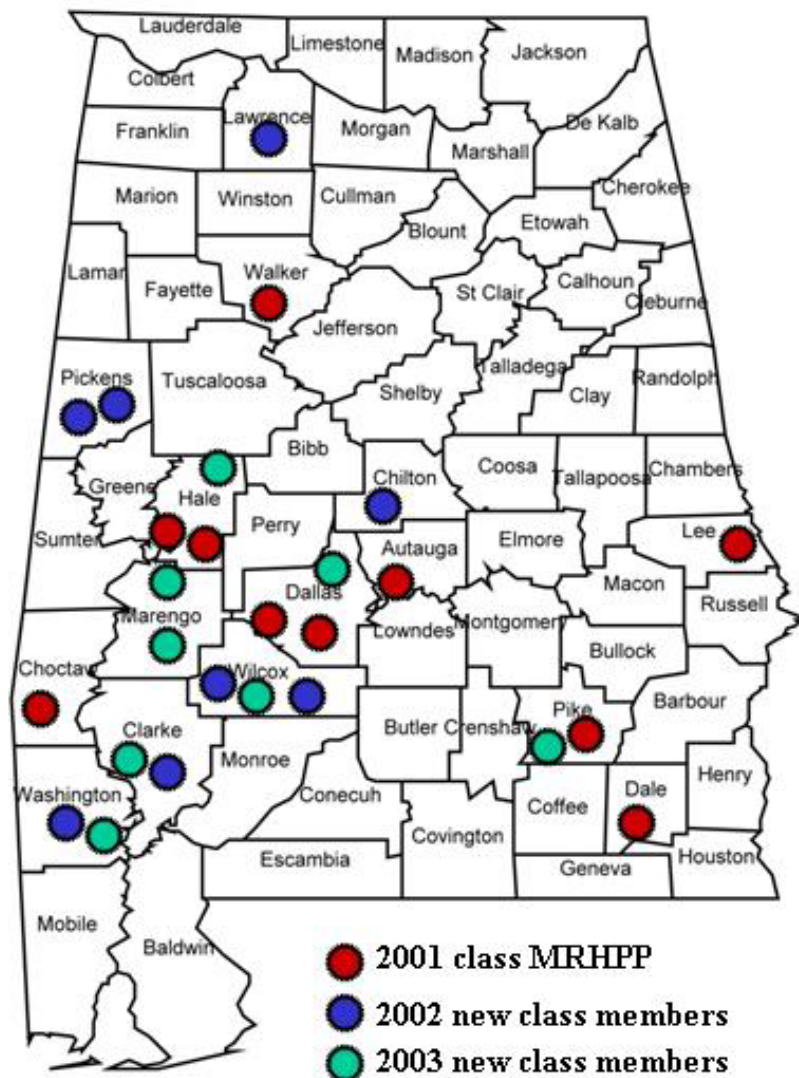
- **High School record**
- **Recommendation(s) from counselors and teachers**
- **ACT scores**
- **Statement of interest**

Returning Students

- **College performance**
- **College course selection**
- **Demonstrated level of commitment**



Minority Rural Health Pipeline Program Students' Home Counties





Cynthia Moore (left), Assistant Director of Rural Scholars Programs, and one of the many volunteers and Rural Scholars supporters serve breakfast at an annual Rural Scholars Reunion, an event which enhances peer support.





Cynthia Moore (left) with the first Rural Health Scholars to graduate from medical school: (L-R) Moore and Dr. Robert Garner, program co-founders; Kris Cummings, MD; Aprile Brown, MD; Joey Gasson, MD; John Wheat, MD, MPH, program co-founder.

<http://bama.ua.edu/~ruralmed>

