

Quarterly Newsletter



CONNECTICUT AHEC



DECEMBER 2025

“NOT JUST A STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM.”

CT SLRP'S IMPORTANCE TO CONNECTICUT



Our CT AHEC staff members at the NEHRA Rural Health Conference in Mystic, Connecticut

As we close out the first year of service for many of our awardees, CT SLRP would like to take the time to reflect on our activities over the past year.

Our program's data speaks for itself—across **188 awardees from 60 organizations**, the participants in CT SLRP have touched the lives of **150,000 residents statewide**, including **40% on Medicaid and 20% uninsured**—which are populations most vulnerable to gaps in care. Awardees are choosing to work in these settings while carrying an average debt burden greater than \$85,000.

After two years of service, approximately half of CT SLRP awardees will eliminate their educational debt. However, this is only part of our mission—CT SLRP is more than just a student loan repayment program.

We do not work in a silo—our organization prides itself on building partnerships.

Our site visits are excellent opportunities to check-in on organizations, while simultaneously looking for

improvement opportunities.

The CT SLRP team has heard you loud and clear—in August we implemented a Quality Improvement & Quality Assurance (QI/QA) Plan.

Dr. Anne Patterson, a CT SLRP contractor, took the time to review our internal processes and comments from emails/surveys, while also interviewing the CT SLRP staff. The information she gathered has tremendously helped our team create more efficient workflows, including:

- Improved awardee “My Portal” layout
- Professional development opportunities
- Communication, including faster response times, and more streamlined messaging

Read on to see how you as awardees are making an impact on the underserved populations in Connecticut, and how we have spread the word of the great work you continue to do!



MORE THAN JUST A LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM.





CT SLRP'S IMPORTANCE TO CT

“Advocacy” is defined as the act or process of supporting a cause through various actions designed to inform and influence others. Our team is dedicated to advocating CT SLRP to our local legislators and partners to showcase the benefits of continuing this program.



Our Connecticut AHEC and Nevada AHEC members post-presentation at the NERHA Rural Health Conference

The New England Rural Health Association (NERHA) and Community Health Center Association of Connecticut (CHC/ACT) annual conferences provided remarkable opportunities for our CT SLRP team to speak with Connecticut legislators and organizations regarding our program.

The first of the pair—the NERHA Conference was a key event for us to attend. Our team, which consisted of Connecticut Area Health Education Center (CT AHEC), which administers CT SLRP, presented here in collaboration with Nevada AHEC and West Virginia AHEC. We presented details on how our programs support clinicians who work with

underserved populations in rural areas in each state, highlighting the different approaches to workforce retention, and how with sustained funding, we can continue to make a difference in a positive way.

The CT SLRP team discussed key points of our program, including **professional development and financial and wellness coaching, which are as important as loan repayment in retaining the health professional workforce in Connecticut.**

“[CT SLRP] ALLOWED ME TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL TO BECOME AN APRN, DECREASED MY STRESS LEVELS, AND ALLOWED ME TO FOCUS MORE ON BETTERING MY EDUCATION TO HELP MORE INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS.”

Katelynn Skomro
Middlesex Health
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse

It was eye-opening to see how much of an impact CT SLRP has had in just over a year of existence. More importantly, we are excited to utilize the information we learned from other repayment programs, as well as build on new collaborations to improve the program!

We as an organization are grateful that we were invited to present at the NERHA Rural Health Conference in 2025, giving us the opportunity to disseminate our successes, and to learn of opportunities for improvement!

CHC/ACT Conference

The Rural Health Conference was not the only advocacy event that our team attended in the fall—we also represented CT SLRP at the CHC/ACT Conference in Mystic, Connecticut, during mid-November.

In a similar light, our staff members attended the CHC/ACT annual conference to discuss the work we are already doing at Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)—our awardees represent CT SLRP at each of these wonderful institutions.

This conference, like NERHA, brings together leaders from FQHCs, community health organizations, and workforce development programs to address pressing challenges regarding patient care.

For CT SLRP, this event was an **opportunity to share how loan repayment incentives can help recruit and retain clinicians in underserved areas**—a critical need across Connecticut. By engaging with healthcare leaders, we can ensure that CT SLRP continues to meet the needs of providers and their respective communities.

In terms of advocacy, CT SLRP's presence at these aforementioned conferences embodies our commitment to supporting clinicians serving in high-need areas. We were able to make connections with future partners, as well as rekindle existing professional relationships.

Although we did not present at the CHC/ACT conference, we were still able to promote CT SLRP, but also CTAHEC's health profession student training programs. This was all done in the name of improving access to care and professional development in Connecticut's medical field.



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CT SLRP'S IMPORTANCE TO CT

Advocate for CT SLRP

We as a team **HIGHLY ENCOURAGE** our awardees to volunteer for these testimonial opportunities. If you are interested at all, please, once again, contact our team by email at ctslrp@uchc.edu. Both written and in-person testimonials can be an excellent resource to help the CT SLRP team improve our processes for our awardees. They do not require a long-term, overzealous commitment either.

Our team can work with you to best suit you and your schedule. Once again, there is no requirement to volunteer for testimonials. This being said, our team really appreciate the feedback we do receive—both positive and negative.

Continuing Medical Education ensures clinicians stay current with best practices, improve patient care, and meet licensure requirements—all while supporting professional growth and retention.

CT SLRP awardees are setting the standard for professional development. 99.6% of our awardees have completed their CME requirements, earning a combined total of 489.5 CME credits in service year one. This exceedingly high level of engagement demonstrates the program's commitment to supporting clinicians with free, accessible education that improves retention and patient care.

Continuing Medical Education (CME) is more than a requirement—it's a cornerstone of professional growth and quality care. We as a program provide free CME modules to all our awardees to train these clinicians and ensure that patients across the state receive the highest standard of care. These modules are designed to support ongoing professional development, decision making, and skill-sharpening while our awardees do their best to meet licensure requirements. By investing in CT SLRP, value and

commitment is being fostered, reducing burnout and encouraging clinicians to remain in underserved communities, much to the benefit of Connecticut residents. Offering CME at no cost removes a financial barrier and demonstrates our program's dedication to supporting awardees beyond loan repayment.

"Course Catalog" can be located at CTSLRP.org under "My Portal"

It's part of a holistic approach: recruit talented professionals, equip them with tools for success, and sustain their engagement throughout their service period. CT SLRP is all about building a stronger, more resilient healthcare workforce for Connecticut.

"I HAVE BEEN RESPECTED, HEARD, AND VALUED THROUGHOUT THIS PROGRAM. I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMPLETE THE CME COURSES FOR FREE...."

Rashadaly Carter
Care Team CT Health
Licensed Medical Social Worker

Weekly Surveys & CME

The CT SLRP team has been sending out a series of surveys to help improve the program. This is an opportunity for our awardees to earn an extra 0.5 credits towards their CME requirements. Beginning in late

November, our awardees were issued a new survey each week regarding the program as a whole, and diving into more detailed topics as well. All surveys included will need to be completed for CME credit.

Please fill out your name and email address in order to receive CME half credit from the upcoming surveys

Please note: awardees who only fill out their name, without providing any responses or quality answers to the survey, will be disqualified from receiving the additional CME credit.

All survey-related submissions are due no later than January 11, 2026. Every awardee should have direct access to each of the four surveys which we have distributed. If you have any difficulties locating these files, please check your email for reference. Any additional questions/concerns should be relayed to our team at ctslrp@uchc.edu.

Lunch and Learn Recorded Sessions

Many of you are probably aware of the financial and mental wellness coaching benefits offered to our awardees. We regularly moderate group "Lunch and Learn" informative sessions about specific topics. These are all held between Noon and 12:30 p.m. and occur roughly once per month, and our team also updates the "My Portal" consistently with upcoming dates!



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CT SLRP'S IMPORTANCE TO CT

We at CT SLRP understand that your schedules are filled, and you might not have time during your lunch break to join us. For your benefit, all of our recorded files and lecture slides can be located on “My Portal,” → “Coaching Sessions” → “Past Recordings.”

Please utilize these recordings as a resource.

Site Visits and Testimonials: Listening, Learning, and Improving

In early December, members from our team visited the Community Health Center Inc. (CHC Inc.) in New London, Connecticut. While there, we were able to sit down and interview one of our amazing awardees.

After giving us a thorough and impressive tour of the beautiful New London facility, we discussed numerous aspects of the program with our awardee, going over organizational structure and what a normal day consists of. We followed a similar procedure with CHC Inc. management as well.

The question bank we used ranged from specific likes/dislikes of the program to health code requirements and minute details. We also gave the opportunity for management and awardees to ask us questions specifically about the program and more.



Community Health Center of New London

We quickly learned that because of our wide range of CME offerings on “My Portal,” our awardee noted that sometimes it could appear a bit much when they were looking for a certain topic. As a result, we

have rearranged our CMEs by topic now instead of their old layout, which was by organization. In a more positive light, our awardee did appreciate the general layout and information that “My Portal” provides—our team will make sure to keep up with the diligent updates both here and via email going forward. As a whole, our visit to CHC Inc. was a success, as we were able to gain more insight about what works (and what doesn't).

On the surface, you might not think visits like these do a lot, but our team takes feedback very seriously as we continue to monitor the program as a whole. Once again, **CT SLRP is not just a student loan repayment program.** We offer much more in terms of professional development, and financial and mental wellness coaching.

“CT SLRP HELPS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS THAT ARE GOING THROUGH UNCERTAINTIES.”

Marsha McGehee
Cornell Scott Hill Center
Director of Business Intelligence and EMR Applications



Our CTAHEC team wishes everyone a wonderful holiday season!

CT SLRP Wishes You a Wonderful Holiday!

Finally, as we wrap up the holiday season, our team wishes each and every one of you a fantastic break—enjoy your off time to celebrate with loved ones, and we cannot express our gratitude enough for partnering with CT SLRP. Cheers to a Happy New Year! We will see you again in 2026.



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