

Youth Health Service Corps Evaluation Report

June 2014



YHSC Evaluation Report

INTRODUCTION

Northwestern Connecticut Area Health Education Center (NWCTAHEC) conducted a comprehensive multi-site evaluation of the Youth Health Service Corps (YHSC). YHSC is a health career recruitment program that engages high school students in quality service learning projects that address pressing community health issues. Through service, YHSC members explore health careers while acquiring real life experience working with underserved populations in community health care settings. Successful YHSC members complete the following YHSC program components: five-module curriculum, CPR certification, and up to 20+ hours of service.

The evaluation was designed as an assessment of YHSC outcomes. It included two components: comparison of over-years YHSC program results including a retrospective and pre/post survey completed by currently participating YHSC members and a graduate follow-up study completed by past YHSC members who have graduated from high school.

Overall, evaluation results were positive. Results show that YHSC students are actively participating, although there is regional variation accomplishing desired outcomes. In the retrospective survey, most YHSC members indicate that they are planning on attending college (87%), planning on studying a health career (75%) and are getting better grades (59%) as a result of participating in the YHSC Program. Results also show that students who are most involved have better outcomes and that there are lasting outcomes for students. In the pre/post survey more than half of the students reported an increase in four of the six academic achievement indicators – 1) participated in activities that taught them about college (75%); 2) talked to an adult other than a parent or other family member about class work or college (55%); 3) completed service hours as part of a school or after school program (65%); 4) have an adult at school who gives good suggestions about their problems or concerns(59%). Most YHSC graduate follow-up survey respondents reported being in college or previously in college (87%) and more than half reported that their area of study is health care related (63%). Most graduates indicated that YHSC influenced their interest in a health care career (69%). Detailed findings follow.

I. YHSC RETROSPECTIVE SURVEY PROGRAM RESULTS 2013-14 and 2012-13

After one year of involvement with YHSC, participants are asked to assess their own learning and outcomes resulting from their involvement in the program. Results of participation and feedback from the 2013-14 and 2012-13 program years are summarized below and presented in the following tables.

- Results varied by region and to some degree by year.
- Fewer students in the 2013-2014 cohort participated in 20 or more hours of service than the 2012-2013 cohort (33% for 2013-14 and 50% for 2012-13). This varied across regions (see Table 1a and Table 1b).
- Both the average hours of service¹ and the proportion of students spending more time participating in community service decreased between the two cohorts (see Appendix Table 1a and Appendix Table 1b).

¹ Average hours of service was calculated for all students and for just those students whose records indicated they had at least 10 hours of service. Both results are shown in Appendix Tables 1a and 1b. Results described in this summary are for participants with at least 10 hours of service.

- YHSC students from 2013-14 spent about 28.73 hours on average, on community service, and 5% of them were involved for 50 or more hours (including 1% who logged \geq 100 hours).
- YHSC students from 2012-13 spent about 39.9 hours on average, on community service, and 24% of them were involved for 50 or more hours (including 5% who logged 100 or more hours).
- Almost two-thirds of the participants in 2013-14 (n=395) and 2012-13 (n=429) completed a survey at the end of their program year. (see Appendix Tables 2a and 2b).
- In both years, two-thirds or more of the survey respondents agreed they had accomplished each of the stated outcomes except the one about school grades and attendance.
- In both years, one-half or more of survey respondents agreed they are getting better grades in school as a result of participating in the YHSC program (59% in 2013-2014 and 53% in 2012-2013).

On the 2013-14 survey

- A total of **90%** of students *agreed* that the YHSC **Program taught them things they did not know about careers in health care.**
- A total of **87%** reported that they were **planning to attend college** as a result of participating in YHSC, and 85% agreed that they **feel more responsible for helping others.**
- A total of **83%** reported that participating in YHSC **taught them what to do to prepare for college.**
- A total of **82%** report that **they have at least 1 teacher or other adult who take their interest seriously** as a result of participating in the YHSC Program
- A total of **75%** agreed that as a result of participating in YHSC they want to **work in a health care career** and **75%** indicated they plan on **studying a health career in college.**
- More than half for the survey respondents reported **achieving better grades (59%)** and **improved attendance (54%).**

On the 2012-13 survey

- A total of 89% of students *agreed* that they *did things to make the community a better place* as YHSC members, and that they *feel more responsible for helping others.*
- A total of 86% agreed that participating in YHSC *taught them things they did not know about careers in health care.*
- A total of 80% agreed that as a result of participating in YHSC they want to work in a health care career. A total of 80% reported that they were planning to attend college as a result of participating in YHSC, and 81% agreed that they have at least one teacher/other adult who takes their interests seriously.
- More than half of the survey respondents reported achieving better grades (53%)
- The vast majority of participants in both years reported they are succeeding in school (making good grades and attending regularly). A total of 84% of 2013-14 students and 74% of 2012-13 students reported they are making mostly “A’s and B’s.” A total of 54% of 2013-2014 students reported regular school attendance (i.e., they missed 5 or fewer days, see Tables 3a).

- In 2013-2014, there were substantial differences in reported outcomes for those students who logged the most service hours (see Table 4).

Table 1a: Community Service Participation Distributions for 2013-14 YHSC Participants; by Region

	Central n= 85	Eastern n= 157	NW n= 182	SW n= 217	TOTAL n= 641
< 10 Hours	47%	40%	52%	28%	40%
10 – 19 Hours	16%	38%	25%	24%	26%
20 or More Hours	36%	23%	22%	48%	33%
<50 Hours	95%	92%	92%	99%	95%
50 – 99 Hours	5%	3%	8%	1%	4%
100 or More Hours	0%	5%	0%	0%	1%

Table 1b: Community Service Participation Distributions for 2012-13 YHSC Participants; by Region

	Central n=294	Eastern n=55	NW n=158	SW n=192	TOTAL n=699
< 10 Hours	57%	9%	53%	4%	37%
10 – 19 Hours	8%	16%	17%	16%	13%
20 or More Hours	35%	75%	30%	80%	50%
<50 Hours	82%	69%	91%	59%	76%
50 – 99 Hours	12%	15%	6%	40%	19%
100 or More Hours	6%	16%	3%	1%	5%

*Does not include participants with less than 1 hour of work

Table 2a: Percentage of 2013-14 Survey Respondents who Agreed* that Participating in YHSC led to Important Outcomes; by Region

	Central n=46	Eastern n=133	NW n=62	SW n=154	TOTAL n=395
As a YHSC member I did things to make the community a better place.	98%	74%	76%	68%	75%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I feel more responsible for helping others.	91%	86%	87%	82%	85%
Participating in the YHSC Program taught me things I did not know about careers in health care.	96%	80%	97%	94%	90%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I plan to attend college after I graduate high school.	98%	80%	84%	91%	87%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I have at least one teacher or other adult who takes my interests seriously.	87%	76%	82%	86%	82%
Participating in the YHSC Program taught me what to do to prepare for college.	93%	76%	79%	84%	83%

As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I want to work in a health care career.	74%	66%	71%	84%	75%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I plan on studying a health career in college.	72%	66%	66%	87%	75%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I am getting better grades in school.	76%	54%	63%	57%	59%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program my school attendance has improved.	74%	47%	61%	51%	54%

* includes those who *agreed* and *strongly agreed*.

Table 3a: Percentage of 2013-14 YHSC Survey Respondents who Reported they Kept Their Grades Up and Attended School Regularly; by Region

	Central n=46	Eastern n=133	NW n=62	SW n=154	TOTAL n=395
Percent reporting they are making mostly A's and B's	74%	81%	900%	86%	84%
Percent reporting they missed 5 or fewer days during the school year	57%	55%	64%	49%	54%

Table 2b: Percentage of 2012-13 Survey Respondents who Agreed* that Participating in YHSC led to Important Outcomes; by Region

	Central n=184	Eastern n=38	NW n=66	SW n=141	TOTAL n=429**
As a YHSC member I did things to make the community a better place.	85%	97%	97%	89%	89%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I feel more responsible for helping others.	87%	88%	97%	90%	89%
Participating in the YHSC Program taught me things I did not know about careers in health care.	78%	70%	90%	96%	86%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I have at least one teacher or other adult who takes my interests seriously.	75%	79%	84%	87%	81%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I want to work in a health care career.	52%	12%	74%	86%	80%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I plan to attend college after I graduate high school.	82%	30%	90%	89%	80%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I plan on studying a health career in college.	60%	15%	77%	86%	67%
Participating in the YHSC Program taught me what to do to prepare for college.	60%	27%	81%	81%	66%

As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I am getting better grades in school.	47%	21%	77%	62%	53%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program my school attendance has improved.	45%	18%	65%	42%	43%

* includes those who *agreed* and *strongly agreed*. **Here, n = number of participants who completed survey

Table 3b: Percentage of 2012-13 YHSC Survey Respondents who Reported they Kept Their Grades Up and Attended School Regularly; by Region

	Central n=184	Eastern n=38	NW n=66	SW n=141	TOTAL n=429**
Percent reporting they are making mostly A's and B's	69%	58%	94%	75%	74%
Percent reporting they missed 15 or fewer days during the school year	96%	97%	94%	85%	92%

**Here, n = number of participants who completed survey

Table 4: Percentage of 2013-14 Survey Respondents who Agreed* that Participating in YHSC Led to Important Outcomes; by Level of Volunteer Participation (20 or more hours)

	<20 hours n=245	20 or more hrs n=150	Difference
As a YHSC member I did things to make the community a better place.	68%	85%	17%
As a result of participating in the YHSC program I have at least one teacher or other adult who takes my interests seriously.	79%	88%	9%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I plan to attend college after I graduate high school.	84%	91%	7%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program I plan on studying a health career in college.	73%	79%	6%
As a result of participating in the YHSC Program my school attendance has improved.	56%	51%	-5%

* includes those who *agreed* and *strongly agreed*.

II. YHSC PRE/POST SURVEY PROGRAM RESULTS 2013-14

In 2013-14, a pre/post survey was added to the YHSC evaluation protocol. YHSC members were asked to respond to a pre/post survey measuring academic engagement indicators including educational aspiration, interest in school and attachment to school. The pre survey was administered prior to participation in the YHSC Program and the post survey was administered at the end of the school year in May/June.

- 251 YHSC members (39%) completed the both the Pre and the Post survey
- More than half of the survey respondents reported an increase in four of the six academic achievement indicators

Table 5: Percentage of 2013-14 Pre/Post Survey Respondents who reported an increase in the academic engagement indicator

	% of students reporting an increase
In the last 6 months how many times did <i>you participate in activities that taught you about college</i>	75%
In the last 6 months how often have you <i>talked to an adult other than your parents or other family member about class work or college</i>	55%
In the last 6 months you <i>completed service hours as part of a school or after school program</i>	65%
In the last 6 months how often have you <i>talked to an adult at your school about your personal life</i>	46%
Right now <i>you know an adult at your school who gives you good suggestions or advice about your problems</i>	59%
<i>How interested are you in your classes now</i>	37%

III. FOLLOW-UP RESULTS: YHSC GRADUATES

Once a YHSC program participant graduates from high school they are categorized as “YHSC graduates” and are contacted using available contact information including phone numbers, email addresses, and Facebook accounts and asked to complete a YHSC Graduate survey. Out of 215 YHSC graduates who were identified through the AHEC Nation database, a total of 56 YHSC graduates (26%) responded to the follow-up survey. Overall, contact was made with 67 YHSC program graduates from the four AHEC sites in Connecticut. Of these 67, 56 answered the survey fully.

About the Graduate Follow-up Survey

The YHSC Graduate Follow-up Survey was designed to obtain status updates and to collect retrospective program perceptions since graduation for the former participants. Call logs were provided to each of the four AHEC sites to track the number and types of attempts made to contact each YHSC graduate. Copies of these call logs were provided for this report from the four AHEC sites. Data gathered from these records showed that AHEC worked hard to try and contact as many YHSC graduates as possible through repeated attempts using available phone numbers, email addresses, and sometimes via Facebook, although many attempts were unsuccessful (see Table 6).

Table 6: Follow-up Survey Completion for YHSC Graduates; by Region

	2012-13 n = 215	2011-12 n = 196
Completed a survey	56 26%	47 24%

- Out of 215 YHSC graduates who were initially identified on the call log, 159 did not complete the survey. 148 or 69% were unable to be reached after 3 attempts and 11 respondents were reached but refused to take the survey.

2012-13 Graduate Follow-up Survey Findings

- Of the 46 respondents who were currently or had previously been enrolled in college, 63% reported that their major or area of study was health care-related.
- Health care-related majors of YHSC follow-up respondents included nursing; psychology; biology; and several other related majors such as pharmacy; public health; neuroscience; health science, physical therapy; exercise science. One respondent was minoring in a psychiatric technician program.

Table 7: College Enrollment Status of YHSC Graduates

	TOTAL 2012-13 n=56	TOTAL 2011-12 n=47
Currently in college	82%	85%
Previously in college but not now	5%	4%
Never in college	9%	11%
No response	4%	0
Current/Former College Student	n=46	n=41
Area of study or major is health care-related	63%	73%
4-year college	63%	56%
2-year college/program	33%	39%
Vocational school	4%	5%

Most YHSC graduate follow-up survey respondents reported being currently employed, and more than half said they were interested in a career in health care (76%) or primary care (66%), and for a substantial majority, YHSC influenced their interest in a health care career (69%).

- A total of 15% of the 38 respondents who were currently employed were working in a health care-related job, including positions like home health aide (1), pharmacy technician (4), and nursing.
- 66% of respondents indicated they were interested in a career in health care.

Table 8: Current and Projected Employment for 2012-13 YHSC Graduates

<i>Percentage who . . .</i>	TOTAL 2012-13 n=56	TOTAL 2011-12 n=47
Were currently working	69%	74%
In a health care related job	15%	22%
Are interested in a health care career	76%	76%
Are interested in a career in primary care	66%	61%
Reported YHSC influenced their interest in a health care career	69%	76%

- A total of 39 respondents reported being interested in a health care career both before and after their participation in YHSC.
- There were 6 Graduate survey respondents who were interested in a career in health care after participating in YHSC who said they did not have any interest in a health care career prior to participation in the program.
- Seven respondents were never interested in a career in health care, neither before nor after YHSC.

YHSC graduate survey respondents were asked about other factors that could be related to their interest in a health care career, including whether or not their family members or guardians were employed in the health care field or whether they had been encouraged to pursue one. Most respondents indicated they had a “B” average or better in high school and had encouragement from their families to pursue a career in health care (see Table 9 below).

Table 9: Other Factors Related to Health care Career Interest; by Region

<i>Percentage who had . . .</i>	TOTAL* 2012-13 n=56	TOTAL 2011-12 N=47
One or more family members work in a health care profession	68%	64%
Parents encouraged them to pursue a career in health care	52%	78%
A “B” average or better in high school	80%	89%

Respondents were also asked about other aspects of their lives related to civic engagement in the community. Most (55%) were registered to vote and 32% of the respondents indicated that they voted in the last election. There were some (48%) who were engaged in volunteering or community service work and a few (2%) were mentors. One respondent indicated having military service (see Table 10 below).

Table 10: Other Civic Outcomes; by Region

<i>Percentage who . . .</i>	TOTAL* 2012-13 n=56	TOTAL 2011-12 n=47
Were in the military	2%	0
Volunteered or did community service	48%	43%
Were mentors	2%	11%
Registered to vote	55%	71%
Voted in the last election	32%	55%

Future Communications and Final Comments

Most (44 of 56) respondents gave permission for CT-AHECs to contact them in the future with additional requests for information and provided either alternate contact information or confirmed existing contact information. A total of 44 offered contact information for someone else who would be willing to get in touch with them to be contacted again. To help increase the possibility of a strong response rate in future evaluation efforts, AHEC sites in CT will inform YHSC members during the program that they will be contacted after leaving the program for the purpose of gathering information related to their experiences in the program and in post-secondary training. Future efforts will be made to gather several types of contact information from participants (phone, emails). Furthermore, participants will be asked to provide an alternate contact person and contact information as another way to reach them to get this information.

In conclusion, respondents were given an opportunity to provide any last feedback about the YHSC program.

- The YHSC program opened her up to various ideas of what healthcare is. Before she had a more limited understanding of what it meant to be a healthcare professional based off of what most people think healthcare is.
- Helped me figure out what i wanted to do with my life and volunteer at hospitals
- Volunteer opportunities spurred an interest in health care, especially those which involved working with children. In particular, she remembers the dental hygiene workshop with younger students.
- In particular remembers and enjoyed volunteering at Southmayd, and now wants to work in hospice care after becoming an RN.
- The YHSC program opened her up to various ideas of what healthcare is. Before she had a more limited understanding of what it meant to be a healthcare professional based off of what most people think healthcare is.
- It made her want to work harder to become a nurse, which has always been her dream job.

IV. Conclusions and Issues for Further Consideration

As stated in the introduction, YHSC results were positive. The evaluation showed that participants were involved in community service and that involvement made a difference in

terms of key project outcomes. Proportionately more of the most involved students reported achieving outcomes as compared to their somewhat less involved peers. Program graduates confirmed that they are continuing their post-secondary education and many plan to work in health care careers. On both the annual surveys and the graduate follow-up survey participants and graduates indicated they attribute their interest in health care careers to participation in YHSC.

Overall, these results show both annual and longer-term benefits for students who participate in YHSC. They also highlight a few challenges that AHEC may want to address.

- Both community service participation and participant outcomes varied by region. AHEC leadership is encouraged to determine if these differences are indicative of deeper program challenges such as inconsistent program implementation, or if they are simply a reflection of expected community variation.
- Survey compliance and community service volunteer time record keeping are also both variable by region. AHEC stakeholders are encouraged to devise additional strategies to ensure that community service participation and survey responses for all students are recorded.
- Follow-up data are particularly important for understanding YHSC outcomes, but despite valiant efforts, contact with former participants was incomplete. AHEC officials are encouraged to advise students that follow-up studies will be conducted and to ensure that multiple reliable contact references are obtained from participants.
- Though not considerable, there were differences by year in the percentage of participants who reported achieving AHEC outcomes. AHEC leadership is also encouraged to determine if these differences are indicative of a downward trend suggesting needed program modifications, or just acceptable variation. AHEC leadership is also strongly encouraged to set targets for all its outcomes measures to ensure that programs in all regions are achieving desired results.
- AHEC should also continue building on its programming successes and continue to offer YHSC to Connecticut students and to involve AmeriCorps members in the effort.

Appendix Table 1a: Average Hours of Community Service for 2013-14 YHSC Participants; by Region

	Central n=85	Eastern n=157	NW n=182	SW n=217	TOTAL n=641
All Participants					
Mean Hours	16.9	22.0	15.73	26.6	20.6
Minimum	1.0	4.0	0.5	1.0	1.67
Maximum	90.5	162.0	97.5	128.0	59.42
	Central n=45	Eastern n=94	NW n=87	SW n=157	TOTAL n=383
Participants with at least 10 hours					
Mean Hours	29.53	33.35	28.03	36.12	28.73
Minimum	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Maximum	90.5	162.0	97.5	59.42	162.0

Appendix Table 1b: Average Hours of Community Service for 2012-13 YHSC Participants; by Region

	Central n=294	Eastern n=55	NW n=158	SW n=192	TOTAL n=699
All Participants					
Mean Hours	26.3	59.2	20.3	41.4	31.7
Minimum*	1.0	5.0	1.0	1.0	1
Maximum	128.0	251.0	223.0	100.3	251.0
	Central n=129	Eastern n=50	NW n=75	SW n=185	TOTAL n=534
Participants with at least 10 hours					
Mean Hours	53.3	64.4	38.8	42.7	39.9
Minimum	10	10	10	10	10
Maximum	128.0	251.0	223.0	100.25	251.0

*Does not include participants with less than 1 hour of work

Appendix Table 2a: Survey Completion for 2013-14 YHSC Participants; by Region

	Central n= 85	Eastern n= 157	NW n= 182	SW n=217	TOTAL n=641
Completed a Survey	54%	85%	34%	71%	61%
Did not Complete a Survey	46%	15%	66%	29%	39%

Appendix Table 2b: Survey Completion for 2012-13 YHSC Participants; by Region

	Central n=294	Eastern n=55	NW n=158	SW n=192	TOTAL n=699
Completed a Survey	63%	69%	42%	74%	61%
Did not Complete a Survey	37%	31%	58%	26%	39%