Meet Colby McGinn, 4th year medical student and AHEC Scholar (PHOTO)

Small-town roots
I was born and raised in Brattleboro, Vermont, a town of about 12,000. As the son of an ophthalmologist, I’ve wanted to be a doctor since I was little. I was always drawn to science and math in school and when I found how well medicine blends my love for complex problem solving with my love for making connections with others, I was sure I had found the perfect field for me.

Motivated by MedQuest
My interest in medicine was reaffirmed during my many years as a student, summer intern, and mentor at Southern Vermont AHEC. I was able to explore health care fields as part of my MedQuest experiences, something I learned about at school. (MedQuest, one of Southern Vermont AHEC’s signature programs, is a health careers exploration summer day program for students in grades 10-12.)

I also discovered my interest in teaching as a counselor during MedQuest in my first year of medical school.

Big-picture summers
I was able to learn about administrative practices and health policy during my summers as an AHEC intern. These summers included working with the Brattleboro Area Prevention Coalition to combat Vermont’s opioid epidemic, working with Springfield Medical Care Systems as they conducted their community health needs assessment, and working with the Vermont AHEC Network to promote dental health in Vermont’s youth population.

AHEC Scholars
I’m an active participant in the AHEC Scholars program at The Robert Larner, M.D. College of Medicine at the University of Vermont. The program emphasizes primary care in Vermont, with a fantastic primary care lecture series. I’ve attended many of these lectures and have learned so much about practicing general medicine, including patient care, finances, residency opportunities, and career opportunities, to name a few.

I also participated in a research project the summer after my first year of medical school that focused on burnout in the primary care physician. I did some data analysis using the University of Vermont’s EPIC EMR (Electronic Medical Records) to try and determine ways to mitigate burnout through more effective documentation practices.

Current Status
I’m actively applying to pediatrics residency and have talked at length about my AHEC experiences during my interviews.

Reflections on AHEC
AHEC was integral in my exploration of medicine and has continued to provide insights into my future career as a physician. I am so grateful for the amazing opportunities afforded me over the last 10+ years and would recommend AHEC programming for any prospective student interested in a health care field.