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Florida AHEC Network Launches 86000Patients.com

The Florida AHEC Network has launched a website highlighting the AHEC Network's achievements in treating Florida patients and training Florida's future health care workforce. The website, www.86000Patients.com, tells the AHEC story and encourages patients, students, and other concerned Floridians to take action to save the Network's funding.

"Everyone has heard of The Social Network, but perhaps not the AHEC Network," said Andrée Aubrey, President of the AHEC Network. "Taking a cue from The Social Network's tagline— 'You don't get to 500 million friends without making a few enemies'—the AHEC Network has an equivalent message: 'You

don't treat 86,000 patients without legislative funding.'

"The Florida AHEC Network provided services to well over 86,000 individuals in Florida last year, even with a 60% cut in our budget," explained Aubrey. "To continue providing services to Florida's neediest patients—including children, the elderly, and pregnant women—we are requesting level funding from the Florida Legislature this year. This website allows us to better explain how the AHEC Network treats patients, trains students, and saves taxpayer dollars in Florida."

Florida's AHEC Network provides primary care services directly to patients in Florida's underserved areas and trains the state's future health care workforce. Comprised of five Programs and ten community-based Centers across the state, the AHEC Network is the only program in which Florida's medical schools collaborate to provide direct primary care services to patients in their surrounding communities. The AHEC Network focuses on empowering patients and encouraging them to take more personal responsibility for their own health care, which drives down costs and keeps patients out of expensive emergency rooms.

"Instead of asking the thousands of Floridians who have benefited from the AHEC Network to send a pre-written letter or canned email, www.86000Patients.com allows individuals to tell their own story about AHEC by emailing legislators, using Twitter to contact them, or posting a note on their Facebook page," continued Aubrey. "It's important not only to tell the AHEC story, but to encourage others to tell their stories too. This website is a forum to educate Floridians and lawmakers about why it is critical to preserve the Network and allow us to continue treating underserved patients."

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