

# *A Summer SEARCH Experience*

First year medical, FNP, PA, dental and mental health/behavioral health students are accepted into this six-week summer program which is designed for students with limited clinical background. At the beginning of the program, students gather for a two-day orientation session to learn about Maine, their training sites and community health projects, to meet some of the Program's preceptors and other staff, and to get acquainted with each other.

After orientation, students travel to their rural training sites and participate in a full range of community-based primary care activities. A community health project is designed to build student competencies in responding to such rural cultural issues as geographic isolation, poverty, and ethnic/cultural beliefs about health. Home visits and participation in various community health events expand students' understanding of how health care is delivered apart from hospital-based, academic centers.

Students also spend time with primary care providers, learning how to increase rural access to care through interdisciplinary collaboration. Students typically work with physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, mental and dental health providers, and such community services as public health nursing.

A one-day mini-rotation can also be arranged at one of Maine's five family practice residencies. Among the oldest, most dynamic and best known programs in America, these residencies include (from north to south):

- Eastern Maine Medical Center FPRP in Bangor
- Maine-Dartmouth FPRP in Augusta and Fairfield
- Central Maine Medical Center FPRP in Lewiston
- Maine Medical Center FPRP in Portland
- University of New England FPRP in Biddeford

## *Who is Eligible to Participate?*

Medical, family nurse practitioner, and physician assistant students who have completed at least one year of school are considered for summer rotations. Students with an interest in rural, community-based primary care will benefit most from SEARCH. Special consideration is given to NHSC Scholars and Maine students fulfilling Finance Authority of Maine's Access to Medical Education Program requirements.

## *Housing and Stipends*

SEARCH arranges low-cost housing within a reasonable driving distance from sites, often in the home of a community member. A stipend is provided for students to defray the cost of housing, travel and living expenses.

Due to the realities of rural living, participants must have an automobile. There is no public transportation, and the great distances required for hospital rounds, home visits, and other project activities require independent transportation.