



# ELEVATING OUR APPROACH

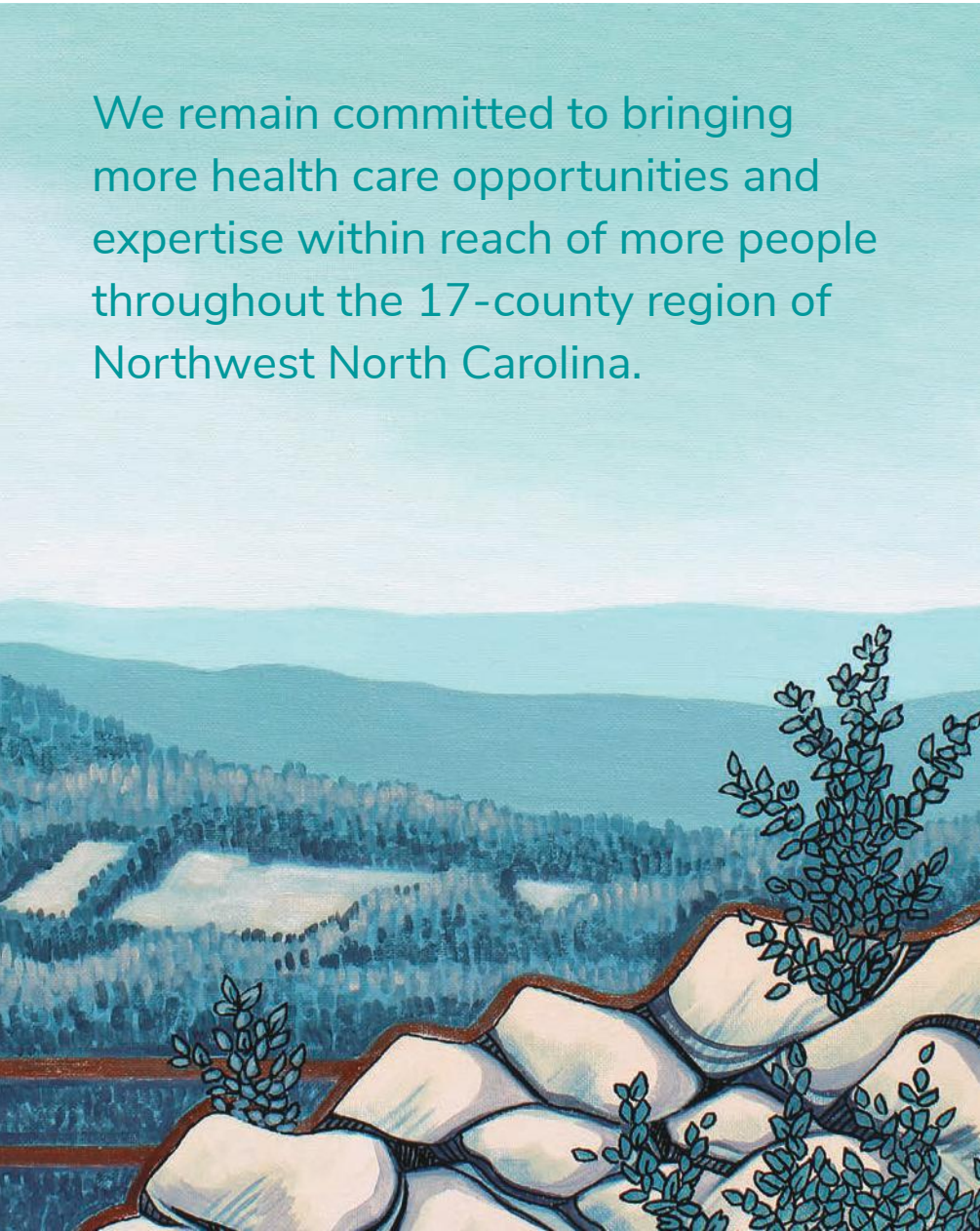
RECRUITING AND EDUCATING TO EXPAND ACCESS  
AND QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE FOR ALL



Wake Forest University  
School of Medicine

NORTHWESTAHEC

We remain committed to bringing more health care opportunities and expertise within reach of more people throughout the 17-county region of Northwest North Carolina.



“Hanging Rock” features the elevated view that awaits those willing to make the hike into one of our region’s most cherished parks.

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## OUR MISSION

The Northwest AHEC of Wake Forest University School of Medicine provides and supports educational activities and services with a focus on primary care in rural communities and those with less access to resources to recruit, train and retain the workforce needed to create a healthy North Carolina.

## Our method of partnership and collaboration

At Northwest AHEC, partnership is about process and accountability. We look for organizations and communities to work with to develop activities based on specific, clearly defined goals and responsibilities. Rather than being a source of funding, we collaborate to prioritize and develop training, educational content and resident activities to create solutions for the shortage of health care options in underserved areas.

### Guiding objectives for partnerships and collaborations

Every collaboration starts with the following set of guiding objectives. These give all parties a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and expectations moving forward.

**MISSION ALIGNMENT:** While individual organizations have their own missions, partnership means investing where missions combine to create a shared vision of the future.

**SHARED RESOURCES:** When everyone brings something of value to the table, the shared human and material resources can accomplish so much more.

**SHARED RELATIONSHIPS:** Extending existing relationships and establishing new ones broadens the visibility and value of each organization's activities.

**MUTUAL BENEFIT:** Each organization must gain from collaboration in terms of opportunities to improve their ability to pursue their mission.

**LEVERAGED IMPACT:** Results work harder for all partners when they are leveraged to enhance or further develop resources.

**MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:** Clearly demonstrating effectiveness is critical. Building in metrics up front makes for more straightforward accountability for all.





## 50 YEARS OF NORTH CAROLINA AHEC

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the North Carolina AHEC. Beginning in 1972, North Carolina AHEC has provided leadership, guidance and support for the regional and statewide health care workforce. We invite you to visit our Healthcare Insights podcast to hear from the many health care professionals and community leaders that have and continue to be supported by our organization. Listen at [nwahec.org/50thanniversary](https://nwahec.org/50thanniversary).

## NORTH CAROLINA AHEC

Developing the Workforce to Create a Healthy North Carolina.

### VISION

Every North Carolinian is healthy and supported by an appropriate and well-trained health workforce that reflects the communities it serves.

### VALUES

**EXCELLENCE** We deliver quality activities and services that our customers and partners value.

**DIVERSITY** We promote equity and inclusivity.

**INTEGRITY** We act with fairness, transparency and the highest level of ethics.

**COLLABORATION** We value partnerships and support interprofessional approaches.

**IMPROVEMENT** We continuously innovate and improve our work.

### CORE SERVICES

1. Health Careers and Workforce Diversity
2. Student and Preceptor Support
3. Graduate Medical Education and Patient Services Support
4. Continuing Professional Development Activities and Services
5. Practice Support Services
6. Library Services and Information Technology



*Michael P. Lischke, EdD, MPH  
Richard Janeway, MD,  
Distinguished Director  
of Northwest AHEC*

## Letter to Stakeholders

Greetings and welcome to the Northwest Area Health Education Center (Northwest AHEC) Annual Report for 2021-2022, an important year for our region and state. This year, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the North Carolina AHEC and the many individuals who have elevated our mission over the years to address health care needs in communities across North Carolina.

We celebrate health care professionals like Dr. John Tinga, one of the first “AHEC doctors” who first participated in our programs 45 years ago. Dr. Tinga completed his Bowman Gray/NC Baptist Hospital obstetrics and gynecology (OBGYN) rotations at Catawba Valley Memorial Hospital while living in Northwest AHEC-supported housing. He attended many continuing medical education activities through Northwest AHEC over the 40 years he spent practicing in New Bern, NC. His retirement included a celebration of the 8,000 babies he delivered in this rural community.

We also celebrate Dr. Joel Miller, who traveled to Hickory in 1977 and became the first Bowman Gray/NC Baptist Hospital resident to practice in the OBGYN department there. He credits his success to Northwest AHEC housing and resources that allowed him to begin a career spanning more than 40 years at Catawba Valley and Frye Regional medical centers. Now retired, he gives back by teaching part-time in the Physician Assistant (PA) program at Wake Forest University School of Medicine and through his generous philanthropic efforts. In 2018, the Pro Humanitate Award, given each year to a graduating PA student, was named in Dr. Miller’s honor.

And we celebrate new professionals, like Dr. Erin Saner, who completed her residency in 2021 and hopes to inspire more young people from under-represented populations to pursue careers in health care. She saw the effects of Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) firsthand growing up in a small town. After attending our Camp Med program in high school, she went on to Wake Forest University. While earning her medical degree at Wake Forest University School of Medicine (WFUSM), she founded and helped run the Boomer Share the Health Fair, with support from Northwest AHEC, for her rural, hometown community in Wilkes County. She completed the Northwest AHEC-supported family medicine residency program at WFUSM and now serves on the faculty.

With the inspiration of so many individuals throughout our history, we recognize that now is the time to elevate our approach to recruit, train and retain health care professionals. The COVID-19 pandemic has driven issues of public health into the spotlight, bringing opportunities to focus new resources on the disparities and gaps in health care that our organization has been working to resolve for a half century.

We continue to increase the frequency and substance of conversations around SDOH and racial equity in health care throughout our core service areas. We are going even further by setting goals and implementing intentional learning objectives in every program to help current and future health care professionals and community leaders understand and address disparities in public health.

How we reach and engage health care professionals has also required us to keep developing more effective ways to meet learners where they are. Our more robust virtual resources, along with more focused communication programs and services allow students, residents, and practitioners to learn more without taking additional time away from the communities they serve. Plus, we are collaborating more with practices to coach and personalize training around individual practice needs.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to elevate our efforts as we work in collaboration with our area health science programs, health care organizations, and community partners to recruit, train and retain health professionals in our region and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael P. Lischke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Michael P. Lischke, EdD, MPH Richard Janeway, MD, Distinguished Director of Northwest AHEC

## CORE SERVICE 1

### *Health Careers and Workforce Diversity*

"Parkway Overlook" captures one of many long-ranging perspectives found along the portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway that winds through our region.

## Building momentum.

The North Carolina AHEC Scholars Program at Northwest AHEC continued to be an effective component in acquiring and retaining students from Wake Forest University (WFU) and Winston-Salem State University (WSSU). The program provided learning activities to train a diverse group of 42 students through 80 hours of clinical and didactic programming.

These clinical experiences were provided through the North Carolina AHEC on-demand modules, student arranged experiences, and a newly designed live simulation virtual model. Clinical experiences were also provided by the academic programs at the respective institutions.

Our relationship with the Health Occupational Students of America (HOSA) grew stronger, as well. HOSA supported our Camp Med program with an introductory video. We supported the HOSA regional meeting in November 2021, for which 105 students registered, and partnered for their state leadership conferences in 2022.

We also worked with the Crosby Scholars and Office of Student Inclusion and Diversity of WFUSM for one of the African American Males Pursuing Educational Dreams (AAMPED) sessions focusing on simulation. This program was for minority males interested in health careers and had 27 middle and high school student participants.

WSSU and Northwest AHEC again collaborated for the Healthcare Legends of East Winston event last October. The annual event honors individuals who have made a positive impact on the health and wellness of the residents of East Winston. Honorees included: Mr. Michael L. Clements, who led the creation of the Downtown Health Plaza and is a local expert on the history of racism and disparities in health care in Winston-Salem; Dr. Charles Richardson, a visionary, inventor of the Total Artificial Heart; and the WSSU alumni nurses working on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic for their continuing dedication and strength.

## NORTHWEST AHEC HEALTH CAREERS OUTPUTS

| TOTALS               | 37<br>ACTIVITIES | 436<br>HOURS | 677<br>PARTICIPANTS |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Exposure             | 9                | 16           | 169                 |
| Pipeline (20-40 hrs) | 17               | 340          | 466                 |
| Intensive (>40 hrs)  | 11               | 80           | 42                  |

### Northwest AHEC Camp Med 2022

Camp Med activities continued in person across the Northwest Region with programs in Alleghany, Ashe, Caldwell, Catawba, Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, Iredell, Stokes, Surry, Watauga and Wilkes counties. Camp Med's Virtual Summer Program also returned for 2022 in partnership with Appalachian State University, Brenner FIT®, Catawba College, College Foundation of North Carolina, High Point University, Health Occupational Students of America (HOSA) North Carolina, Livingstone College, Salem College, Wake Forest University School of Medicine Center for Experiential and Applied Learning, and Winston-Salem State University.

**235** Virtual Camp Med  
unique participants

**231** In-person Camp Med  
unique participants

**20+** Hours per  
unique participant

**38** "Meet the Health Professionals"  
unique participants

## My Experience with Northwest AHEC



Alan Morales is a high school senior from Conover, NC, who saved the life of a classmate using the Heimlich maneuver that he learned as a Camp Med participant the previous summer. To view Alan's full story, visit [nwahec.org/campmedstory](https://nwahec.org/campmedstory).

"After the incident with my classmate, my interest in the health care world has definitely skyrocketed. Before Camp Med, I wasn't even aware of all the different aspects to the health field and then with helping my friend in that situation, I'm even more interested now... One of the first techniques we learned at Camp Med was the Heimlich maneuver and I'm really grateful I had that knowledge and experience to help my friend. They taught us the warning signs to look for, how to safely administer the maneuver and the importance of staying calm in those situations."

– Alan Morales

### Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Northwest AHEC increased and enhanced activities and resources to inform, support and nurture Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in the health care workforce. Our efforts and programs for this year included:

- ▶ Monthly Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) team awareness trainings
  - DEI activities: My Full Name; Active Bystander Scenarios; Salem Academy and College's Anna Maria Samuel Project Tour; Virtual Show and Tell; and an Historic Bethabara Tour
  - Presentations: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion — Language and Stigma in the OUD Population (Troy Manns, NCCPSS-Trainer); Downtown Health Plaza — A Look at SDOH (Monica T. Brown, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist (AHWFB) Downtown Health Plaza & Winston East Pediatrics); Cancer Disparities Among American Indians in North Carolina (Ronny Bell, AHWFB/WFUSM Office of Cancer Health Equity); Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity (Goldie Byrd); FaithHealth Ministries (Angela Brown); Crisis Control Ministries (Rev. George Banks); and the Community Health Worker Project (Evan Richardson)
- ▶ In April 2022, staff assessed previous DEI team meetings and provided suggestions for future topics.
- ▶ Continuing in AY22, staff held weekly discussions on systemic racism in the United States, leading to open and honest conversations around anti-racism including sharing personal stories and anti-racism reading lists.
- ▶ Intentionally incorporated Cultural Competency (CC), Health Disparities (HD), Health outcomes by race and ethnicity (HORE), Impact of Racism on Health (IRH) and/or Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) into all service lines. Examples include:
  - Continuously updated the collaborative SDOH resource list and created a blog focusing on Practice Support initiatives around SDOH.
  - The NC AHEC Scholars program incorporated several modules and speakers that either addressed CC, HD, IRH, SDOH, and HORE, or featured these as main topics.
  - All activity directors and planning committees were strongly encouraged to address at least one formal learning objective addressing CC, HD, HORE, IRH, and SDOH into activities.

**50%** OF AY22 EVENTS INCLUDED A TARGETED OBJECTIVE\*

**143** events including a targeted objective

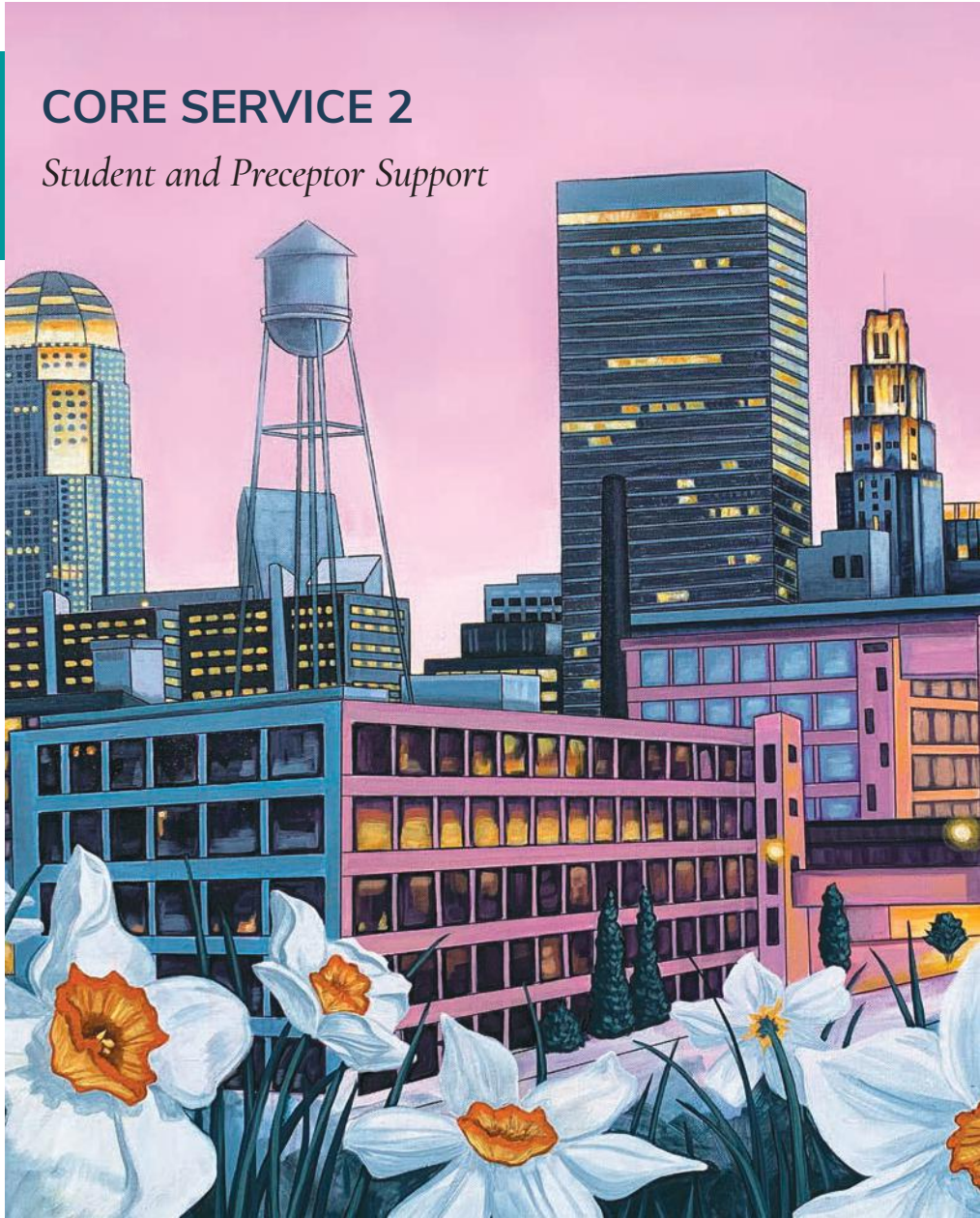
**287** total events

\*Targeted objectives: Cultural Competency, Health Disparities, Health Outcomes by Race and Ethnicity, Impact of Racism on Health, and Social Determinants of Health



## CORE SERVICE 2

### *Student and Preceptor Support*



"Winston-Salem Dusk" provides a glimpse of the skyline that serves as an important source of innovation and growth for our region.

## Extending each community-based opportunity.

Students' community-based education activities are vital for training and retaining future health care practitioners for service where they are needed most. Northwest AHEC takes an active role in coordinating with each partnering university to help secure preceptors and housing for students in rotations. Rotations are determined and organized by the schools.

Offering housing to rotating students relieves those visiting students of the burden of extra expenses and encourages them to live in the community and to become more familiar with the people they are there to serve.

### Housing indicates a deeper engagement

The past year saw different growth that suggests deeper engagement from students and preceptors, even though preceptor payments ended, as expected, halfway through the academic year (AY). The number of students housed saw a slight increase, yet the nights of housing significantly increased by 505 nights from AY21, raising the average number of nights per student to 33.

The numbers from AY22 seem to indicate a shift in how student and preceptor support is utilized coming out of the pandemic. While the number of rotations, students and preceptors decreased, the increase in nights provided and students housed tells us that students were better able to engage housing support within the rural and underserved communities in which they served.



## Student and Preceptor Support Key Indicators

### ROTATION TOTALS:

**401**

ROTATIONS

**887**

WEEKS

**287**

STUDENTS

**180**

PRECEPTORS

**38**

PROGRAMS

### HOUSING TOTALS:

**5,997**

NIGHTS  
PROVIDED

**180**

STUDENTS  
HOUSED

**33**

NIGHTS PER  
STUDENT (AVG.)

**273**

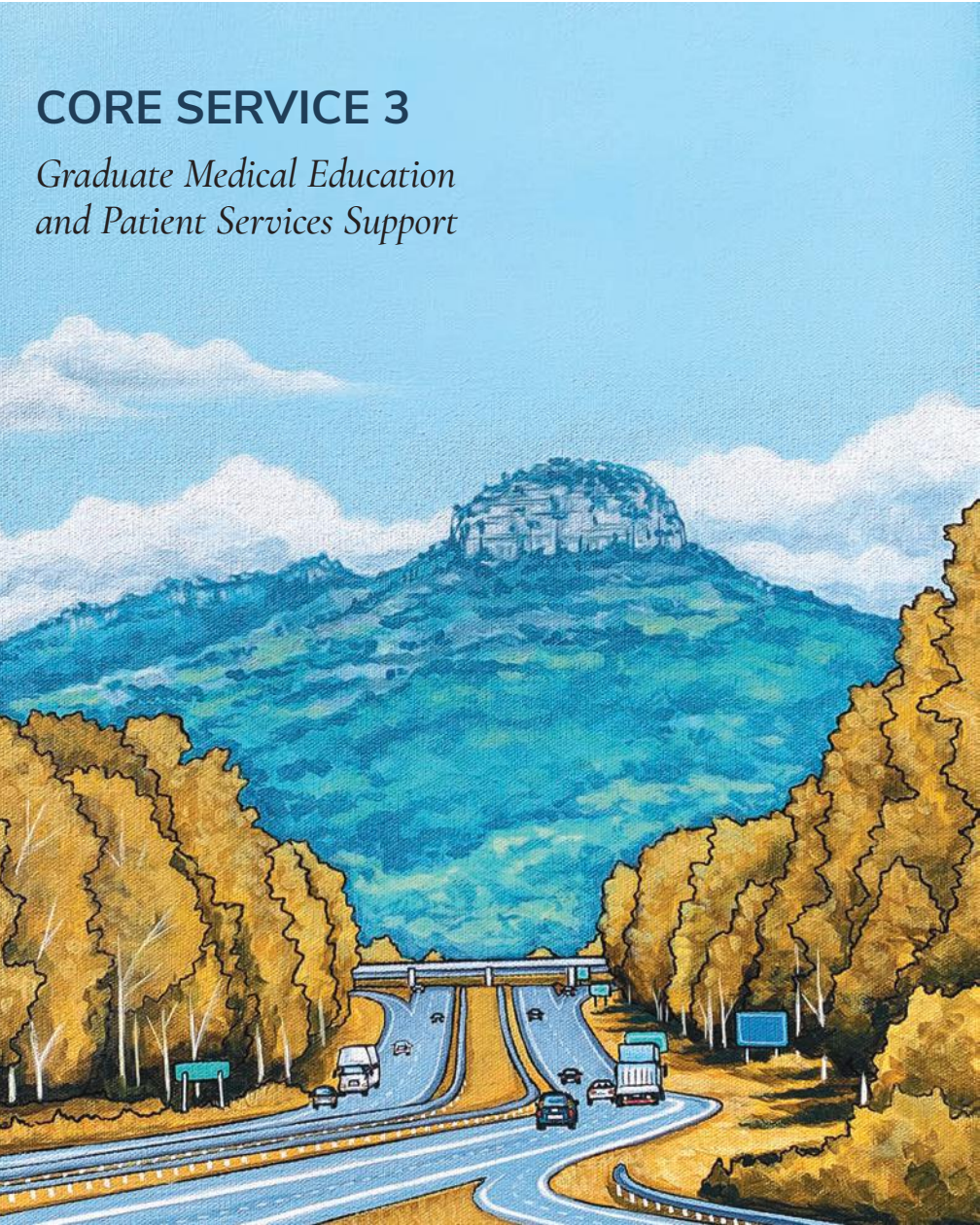
HOUSING  
REQUESTS

**11**

MANAGED  
APARTMENTS

### PARTNERING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:





CORE SERVICE 3

*Graduate Medical Education  
and Patient Services Support*

Elevating what it means to serve.

Northwest AHEC helps residents and medical students see the impact they can make on the lives of uninsured, underinsured and underserved people in our communities. Through our support of graduate medical education at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist, we create opportunities to train and retain health care professionals for the future and the rising needs of different populations across North Carolina.

Of the Northwest AHEC-supported  
Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist  
residents who graduated in AY22:

**63%**  
chose to stay in NC (37 of 59)

|                                                                                                   |               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Total estimated number of<br>indigent/underserved patients served<br>by the residents during AY22 | <b>46,822</b> |
| Family and Community Medicine                                                                     | <b>14,500</b> |
| Internal Medicine                                                                                 | <b>14,600</b> |
| Psychiatry and Behavioral Health                                                                  | <b>6,663</b>  |
| Pediatrics                                                                                        | <b>11,059</b> |

"Pilot Mountain Fall" depicts a beloved regional landmark that people have looked to for safe guidance on their journeys for centuries.

This core service provides training in under-resourced communities and treatment of vulnerable populations. Examples of these AY22 community-based rotation initiatives included:

### FAMILY AND COMMUNITY MEDICINE

- ▶ OB rotation at the Stokes County Health Department providing prenatal care in a rural community.
- ▶ Elective experience providing general outpatient medical care at the Bethesda Center for the homeless population.
- ▶ The Highland Avenue clinic allows residents to complete elective rotation providing outpatient medical and behavioral health care to underserved patients.
- ▶ Residents at four Federally Qualified Health Centers provided obstetrical, gynecological and general care to the surrounding communities.
- ▶ Residents provided care to WSSU student-athletes during sports medicine rotations.
- ▶ Refugee clinic at United Health Center, Peters Creek, where residents assisted a family medicine faculty member in providing care to the area's Syrian refugee population.
- ▶ School-based health alliance allowed residents to deliver care in Title 1 schools.
- ▶ The Community Care Clinic (Centro Clinico) gives residents an elective experience providing general care to an underserved and mainly Latino population.
- ▶ Providing care at Dragonfly House, a clinic for pediatric victims of abuse.
- ▶ Application of Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) resources and information into regular patient care, including population health and value-based care, along with routine screening of patients for SDOH.

### INTERNAL MEDICINE

- ▶ Residents rotate at the VA Clinic in Kernersville (focusing mainly on primary care), the University Internal Medicine clinic, and High Point Regional Hospital.
- ▶ Residents and faculty provide continuity clinics and urgent care for underserved populations in the Outpatient Department and Downtown Health Plaza (DHP).

- ▶ Strategically located in a health care manpower shortage area, the DHP has a unique attachment to the underserved east Winston-Salem community.
- ▶ Through three large clinics (Pediatrics, Adult Medicine and Ob/Gyn), more than 25,000 individual patients are offered primary care, acute care and post hospital services.
- ▶ The DHP patient population has a Medicaid enrollment of 15,109 (August 2018) and an aged, blind and/or disabled cohort of 3,361 — the largest of any N.C. Medicaid site.
- ▶ Integrated behavioral health, counseling, legal and food pantry services, and a community garden are available to families served by the DHP.
- ▶ Ongoing collaboration with the Northwest Community Care Network provides onsite case managers to patients in pediatrics and internal medicine.
- ▶ Some residents on elective months chose to rotate at the Community Care Clinic.

### PSYCHIATRY AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- ▶ Tele-Psychiatry Services are available to provide behavioral health services to hospitals in underserved areas.
- ▶ Opioid group therapy and treatment are offered through Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Behavioral Health.
- ▶ School Health Alliance, Crossnore School and Children's Home in Winston-Salem allow fellows to provide psychiatric care to elementary and middle school-aged students, as well as services to children living in the Children's Home.
- ▶ The Children's Law Center in Winston-Salem provides fellows with forensic experience in the family court system.
- ▶ University-Based Student Health provides psychiatric care to young adults in a university setting.
- ▶ Funded through the United Way, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry provides behavioral health services to indigent children.

- ▶ The academic program delivered lectures and a Grand Rounds on SDOH and Mental Health Equity. However, the Health Equity Curricular Toolkit represents an opportunity to heighten health equity and education in our residency program in the coming academic year.

### PEDIATRICS

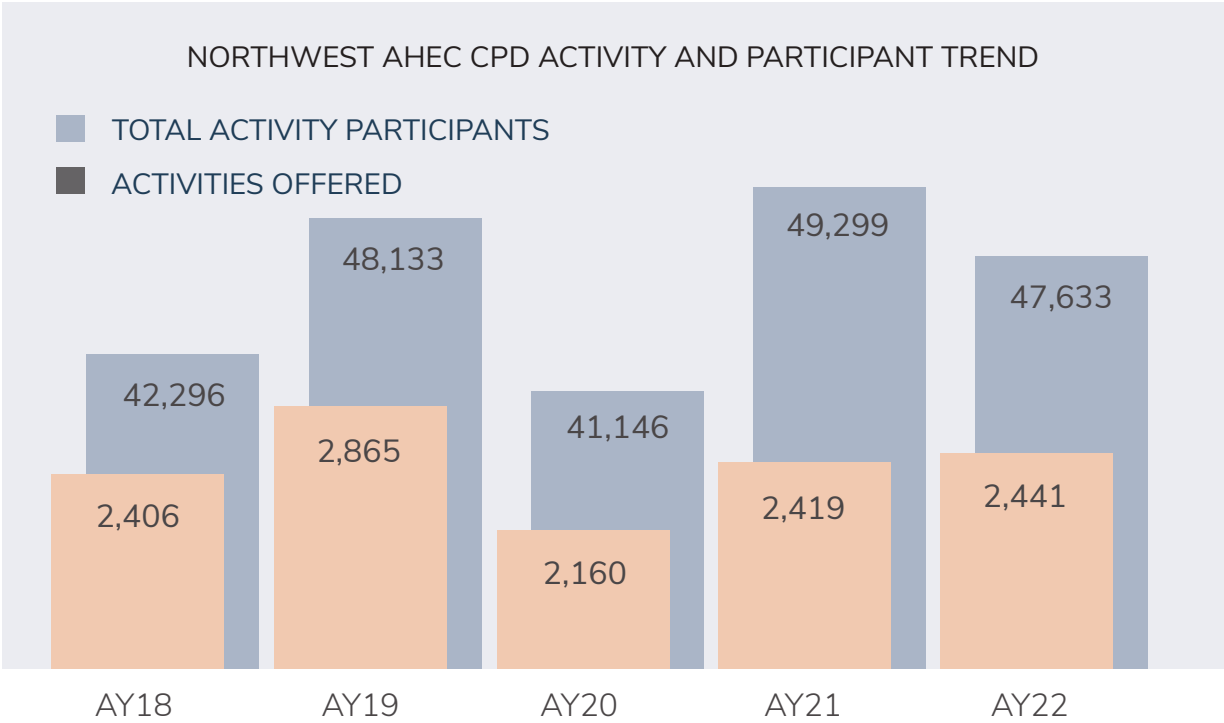
- ▶ Pediatric residents and medical students engaged in projects relating to the Forsyth Refugee Health Collaborative, including advocacy, quality improvement initiatives, research, and efforts to expand the initiative to meet emerging needs.
- ▶ The projects are related to the Health Equity and Global Health certificate programs of the Wake Forest University School of Medicine designed to provide health equity education and training in addressing local and global health needs for residents and medical students.
- ▶ Work with refugees is part of a partnership between several medical practices, the Forsyth County Department of Public Health, the refugee resettlement agency (World Relief), and other community partners. Residents rotate to a twice-monthly clinic at the Community Care Center for uninsured, immigrant adolescents.
- ▶ The DHP evaluates newly arrived immigrant children from under-resourced settings and offers expanded resources for legal referrals, and conducts refugee health assessments for children as follow-up to screenings done at the Forsyth County Department of Public Health.
- ▶ The DHP screens children for SDOH, including determining assistance for food insecurity, transportation needs, basic needs, legal assistance, housing concerns, caregiver depression or substance use.
- ▶ Integrated behavioral health providers within the DHP assist residents in learning how to screen, diagnose and manage behavioral health disorders.
- ▶ The DHP has been certified by the National Committee for Quality Assurance as a Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Home.





## Adapting to reach professionals more easily.

Continuing professional development furthered its comeback from pandemic levels. However, Northwest AHEC has refined CPD efforts to make high-quality training even more accessible to health professionals. Virtual programs have become preferred options for allowing participants to get the insight and training they need without having to take time away from their communities.



Source: North Carolina AHEC

total unique participants

from NW AHEC 17-county region

from the rest of the state

from the rest of the country

Source: North Carolina AHEC

*"Always enjoy the speakers this conference brings in because each one of their presentations provides new data and new ideas to put into my skill set!" – High Country Conference attendee*

## CORE SERVICE 4

(continued)

### *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities and Services*

#### 2. NC ANNUAL STI UPDATE

The North Carolina Annual STI Update was fully remote for presenters and attendees for the second year in March 2022. The event had the largest attendance since Northwest AHEC started managing the activity in 2013. This year, 957 participants attended across several disciplines – allied health, behavioral health, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and public health. Within NC, 98 out of 100 counties were represented along with four other states – Alabama, California, South Carolina and Virginia.

The event was provided at no cost to attendees thanks to Northwest AHEC and our supporting partners: NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, Epidemiology Section and Communicable Disease Branch; University of Alabama at Birmingham, Division of Infectious Diseases; Southeast STD/HIV Prevention Training Center; NC HIV Training and Education Center; and Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Section on Infectious Diseases.

Recorded sessions from the event are available online on topics that include: Hepatitis A, B and C; PrEP and public health; ways substance use increases the risk of STIs; updates in the epidemiology, diagnosis and treatment of vaginal infections (BV, trichomoniasis, and change in guidelines for use of oral Fluconazole for VVC during pregnancy); syphilis trends in women and factors associated with risk of congenital syphilis; and CDC recommended strategies to diagnose, treat and prevent common STIs.

*“I thought the meeting went well and enjoyed being able to get right back to work after it was over. Virtual is definitely the way to go.”* – North Carolina Annual STI Update attendee

#### 3. BASIC FETAL MONITORING COURSE

Northwest AHEC offered a workshop in April 2022 titled “Basic Fetal Monitoring for North Carolina Health Departments” with Northwest AHEC Nurse Educator, Mona Brown Ketner MSN, RN, C-EFM, serving as the faculty member. This live webinar educated 50 public health nurses from health department obstetric areas across 21 North Carolina counties.

Many nurses who attended were new to fetal monitoring, while others had 30 years of experience and were using the day as a refresher.

The goal of the workshop was to empower nurses with the crucial knowledge to interpret fetal monitoring strips accurately and provide patients/families with education. With this knowledge, nurses are better prepared to help provide the best possible care and outcome for mothers and babies.

This was the second workshop of this type offered specifically to health department staff members across the state. The first was held in June of 2021. The workshop offers credit of 5.0 Nursing Contact Hours from Northwest AHEC.



#### 4. CLINICAL TEACHING ASSOCIATE (CTA) WORKSHOP

The 19th Annual Clinical Teaching Associate (CTA) Workshop was held in February 2022 via a live webinar. This workforce development course is designed to develop the skills of experienced nurses so they may serve in the role of a clinical teaching associate. This partnership serves as a viable strategy to provide professional development to experienced registered nurses. The CTA Course is approved for 45 Nursing Contact Hours and meets the North Carolina Board of Nursing Teaching/Learning requirement.

The goal is to help alleviate the nursing faculty shortage at two local schools through education and clinical mentoring of hospital staff nurses. Without enough nurse educators to teach the increasing number of nurses that are needed, the health of North Carolina residents is at stake. During the workshop we educated five future adjunct faculty for Forsyth Technical Community College and four for Winston-Salem State University. Workshop agenda topics included: socialization to the CTA role; teaching/learning theory; clinical reasoning; legal issues; evidence-based practice; and simulation as a learning strategy.

Northwest AHEC has been collaborating for 19 years with key partners — Novant Health, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist and our local Forsyth County nursing academic programs at Forsyth Technical Community College and Winston-Salem State University School of Health Sciences' Nursing Program. Together we have educated 420 active nurses to potentially serve as Clinical Teaching Associates to precept nursing students.

There are plans for another Northwest AHEC CTA Workshop for fall of 2022. There is also interest in expanding the program across North Carolina to assist other regions, hospitals and academic programs.

*"My journey as a CTA has been immeasurable. My students are my 'why.' I have been challenged to enhance my knowledge of the nurse educator role and have consistently worked towards translating the knowledge into my daily practices. In addition, becoming a CTA has presented me with an immense exposure to professional opportunities."*

- CTA Workshop attendee and current faculty member

#### 5. THE COUNSELING FOR CHANGE COURSE

For 18 years Northwest AHEC has provided an online course called "Counseling for Change: An Online Tobacco Cessation Course." This course is designed to provide tools to enhance the skills of health care providers when counseling for tobacco use including smoking cessation, exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS), the use of smokeless tobacco and electronic cigarettes.

The course has gone through several iterations over the years as one of Northwest AHEC's longest running courses. Initially started with help from The Duke Endowment, the program was intended to improve smoking cessation services offered to women of childbearing age in order to reduce risks of low birth weight, or premature birth — two major causes of infant morbidity and mortality.

As a result of the initial grant, the course was expanded to address global issues related to tobacco use. Counseling for Change has since evolved from a basic website to its current interactive form in the Articulate RISE Web App and Storyline e-Learning platform. Through case scenarios and interactive lessons, participants learn about change talk and other strategies to help clients from pre-contemplative stages to active quitting.

The course targets physicians, nurses, behavioral, public, and allied health professionals and offers continuing education credits.

#### COUNSELING FOR CHANGE PARTICIPATION

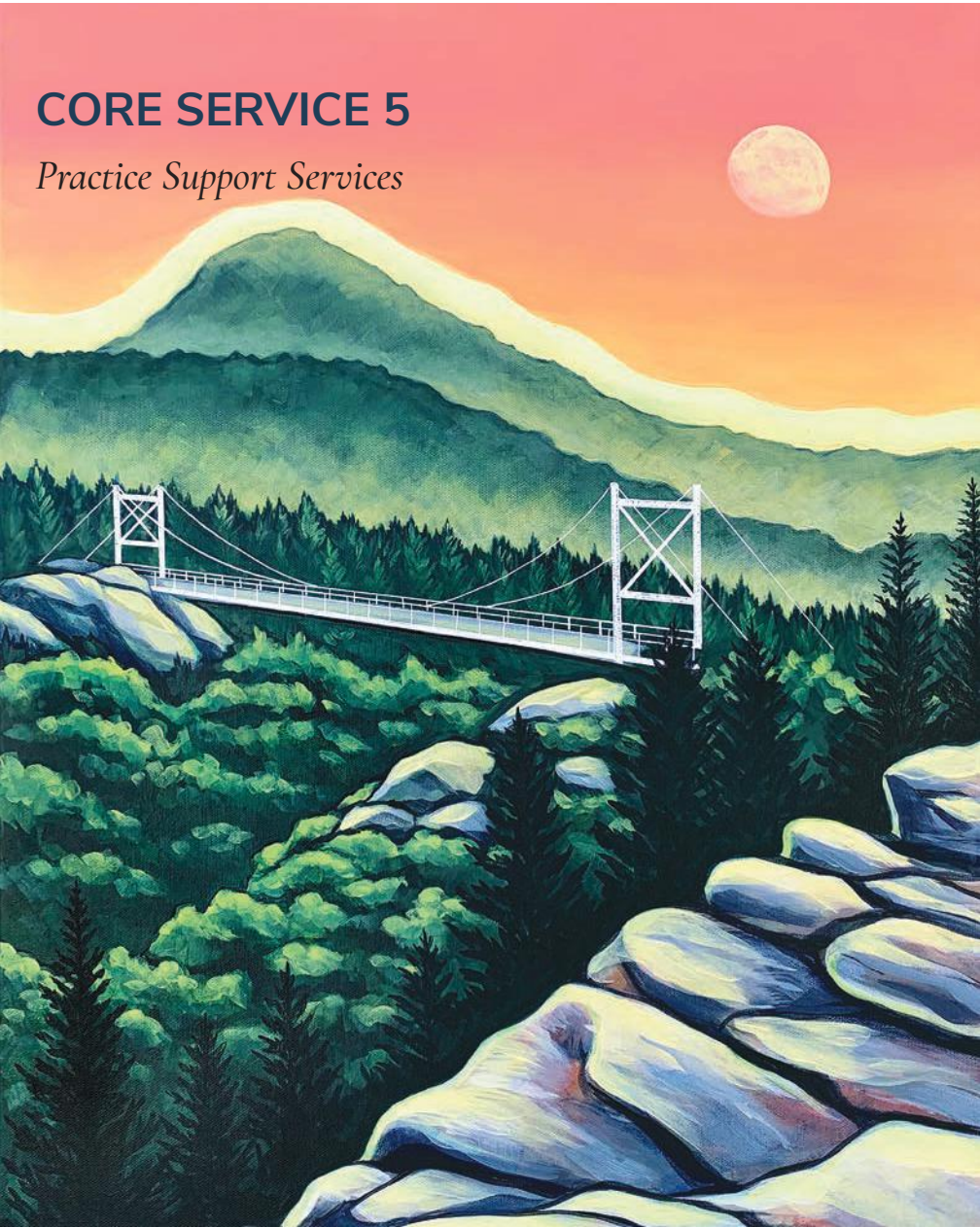
# 1,334

health professionals have completed the online course since its inception in 2004.

Participants represent a wide range of disciplines in North Carolina as well as 26 other states.

#### UNC Chapel Hill School of Nursing RN Refresher Program

In the past three years, over 360 nurses across the country have graduated from the RN Refresher program. Out of all those who desired a job in nursing, 75% started a new position.



CORE SERVICE 5  
*Practice Support Services*

Strengthening the impact  
of support activities.

Northwest AHEC has developed an ongoing commitment to delivering content to support practices and providers throughout the 17-county region. We've added to online modules and increased the number of practices that enroll in support activities, while maintaining invaluable one-on-one practice support coaching relationships. This combined approach has allowed practices to access CPD programs more easily, as well as apply what they learn into their practices with confidence. Improving the effectiveness of our programs helps improve the level and cost of care in each community.

NORTHWEST AHEC PRACTICE SUPPORT  
IS ACTIVE IN ALL 17 COUNTIES

PROJECTS

|                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----|
| Advanced Medical Home                        | 45  |
| Billing and Coding                           | 82  |
| Community Health Worker Project              | 4   |
| Health Information Exchange (HIE)            | 334 |
| Merit-based Incentive Payment Systems (MIPS) | 131 |
| Medicaid Managed Care (MMC)                  | 472 |
| Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH)         | 23  |
| Quality Improvement (QI)                     | 79  |
| Telehealth                                   | 1   |

"Mile High Bridge Moonshine" shows the ingenuity and care it takes to build and maintain strong connections just like our regional partners.

## ENROLLMENT IN NORTHWEST AHEC PRACTICE SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

|              | COACHING<br>ENCOUNTERS | PRACTICES  |
|--------------|------------------------|------------|
| Alexander    | 8                      | 3          |
| Alleghany    | 9                      | 3          |
| Ashe         | 48                     | 7          |
| Avery        | 64                     | 6          |
| Burke        | 59                     | 8          |
| Caldwell     | 64                     | 8          |
| Catawba      | 265                    | 20         |
| Davidson     | 70                     | 5          |
| Davie        | 23                     | 4          |
| Forsyth      | 137                    | 20         |
| Iredell      | 57                     | 9          |
| Rowan        | 136                    | 9          |
| Stokes       | 8                      | 1          |
| Surry        | 105                    | 11         |
| Watauga      | 104                    | 13         |
| Wilkes       | 8                      | 2          |
| Yadkin       | 6                      | 1          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,171</b>           | <b>130</b> |

## Highlighted Practices

### LEXINGTON INTERNAL MEDICINE

Lexington Internal Medicine has been a busy Internal Medicine and Primary Care facility for 45 years. Northwest AHEC worked with the practice for a wide range of Practice Support Services. “Our Northwest AHEC practice coach helps our staff stay up to date on all MIPS needed for quality and maneuvering our EHR System. It is a huge challenge,” says Cindy Fletcher, Practice Manager. “We are grateful for the support in learning how to navigate the changes and complexity of the health care environment.”

### UNIFOUR PEDIATRICS

Unifour Pediatrics is a comprehensive practice serving the health care needs of patients in rural Catawba County. With help from Northwest AHEC Practice Support over the past decade, Unifour has obtained its certification in Patient Center Medical Home (PCMH), continues to effectively navigate COVID-19-related issues, and meets regularly with their practice coach to stay informed. “We are grateful for our practice coach’s support throughout the years in dealing with MIPS and PCMH,” says Susan Huffman, Practice Administrator. “Their expertise and knowledge in these fields has greatly benefited our practice.”

### PIEDMONT ENDOCRINOLOGY

Piedmont Endocrinology is a specialty practice in Hickory. Northwest AHEC works with this practice on a variety of support services to help troubleshoot issues with EHR vendor and set up measure requirements within EHR, research waiver requirements, navigate MIPS attestation requirements, and stay current with reporting deadlines. “Northwest AHEC follows up with me, keeps me on track and has saved me many times to get reporting done in a timely manner,” says Cyndee Barber, Finance Manager. “It’s like having a private consultant without the fees. They are always there to help.”

### CHARLES W. JONES MD PA

In rural Jefferson, Charles W. Jones, MD is an independent general surgical practice and home to one nurse practitioner as well as the only surgeon in the county. After learning about Northwest AHEC a few years ago, the practice credits the relationship for saving them. “Small practices are becoming rare,” says Tena Rhinehart, Practice Manager. “My Northwest AHEC quality improvement coach gives me the confidence and help to keep up. I particularly enjoy the one-on-one sessions in person or via phone.”

## Practice Support Blog

The Northwest AHEC Practice Support team began a weekly blog in AY21 which detailed emerging updates and policy briefs. In AY22, the team added 302 more articles to help practitioners keep up with the changing landscape of health care and strategies for providing excellent care. In addition, the team developed an interactive resource guide with online learning activities for meeting immediate needs of practices. The blog and guide can be accessed at [nwahec.org/practicesupportblog](https://nwahec.org/practicesupportblog).

## Grace Clinic of Yadkin Valley Lands Grant

Northwest AHEC Practice Support would like to celebrate Grace Clinic of Yadkin Valley in Elkin, NC, one of six Free and Charitable Clinics nationally that received funding from grantee Becton, Dickenson and Company to provide multi-year diagnostic testing for Hepatitis C.



## CORE SERVICE 6

### *Library Services and Information Technology*

"Blue Ridge Mountains" offers a broad perspective on how individual peaks, just like our regional partners, combine to create one remarkable view.

## Optimizing the power of information.

Northwest AHEC has been leveraging Library Services and Information Technology for several years to help meet learners where they are throughout the five core service areas. This commitment to adapt and improve access to high-quality information and training helps students and health care professionals in our region maximize their training while minimizing their time away from providing care.

### ENGAGEMENT WITH LIBRARY SERVICES

Interactions: **1,997**

Document delivery requests: **465**

ADL logins by regional health professionals: **2,471\***

Interlibrary loans: **70**

ADL registered users: **736**

Search requests: **44**

Classes/orientations: **30**

Proactive alerts: **203**

\*Excludes logins by Northwest AHEC staff as all are formal employees of WFUSM and therefore are eligible to fully utilize all resources provided by the WFUSM Carpenter Library.

## Web Activity: Site, Blog, Email and Social Media

Northwest AHEC was able to further its commitment to reaching, engaging, training and retaining more health care professionals in AY22. An important factor in our growth was the ongoing enhancement of online resources and the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. These tools also provided Northwest AHEC with more insight and opportunities to refine each channel of online communication.

Web traffic and engagement have far exceeded program goals. However, the real benefit of these tools is in how they allow us to efficiently focus our content and communication, putting the right information and resources in front of those in our community who need it most.

### ONLINE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

**251**  
courses  
**+4%**  
over AY21

**6,342**  
enrollments  
**+3%**  
over AY21

Total emails sent: **1,671,018**

Total session revenue from email: **\$86,658.21**

Social media follower growth: **+16.38%**

- ▶ The email campaign tools implemented during AY21 allowed us to refine our marketing approach, targeting 440 email campaigns for more than 1.67 million emails.
- ▶ Our refined email efforts proved to be effective, with click-through rates (recipient opens and clicks a link within an email) of nearly 16%, exceeding email campaign goals.
- ▶ To retain and foster current learners, we set a goal for AY22 of a 13.25% engagement rate (meaning learners have opened at least one email, viewed a webpage in the last 60 days or registered for an activity). Of the 72,774 contacts in our CRM database, nearly 34,000 have engaged with Northwest AHEC for an engagement rate of 47%. For contacts within the 17-county Northwest AHEC region, that engagement rate is 40%.
- ▶ Another important number to note is that, despite sending nearly 500,000 fewer emails, total session revenue from email increased over 75% from AY21.
- ▶ Social media follower growth exceeded our annual goal by fall of 2021, ultimately finishing AY22 with 2,374 total followers across all channels.
- ▶ Email and social media campaigns together led directly to 23% of Northwest AHEC website traffic. As this percentage increases, Northwest AHEC will be able to better understand how visitors get to our website and how to drive them to the most relevant educational tools.
- ▶ Direct traffic continues to be our main channel for website sessions followed by strong email marketing traffic and colleague referral.
- ▶ The Northwest AHEC blog continued its strong performance in driving additional traffic to the website. The blog attracted 12,674 total views in AY22, including 5,042 practice support update page views. The blog is available at [nwahec.org/blog](https://nwahec.org/blog).

## Connect with us online



[facebook.com/nwahec](https://facebook.com/nwahec)



[@northwestahec](https://twitter.com/northwestahec)



[@northwestahec](https://www.instagram.com/northwestahec)



[linkedin.com/company/nwahec](https://linkedin.com/company/nwahec)



[nwahec.org/blog](https://nwahec.org/blog)



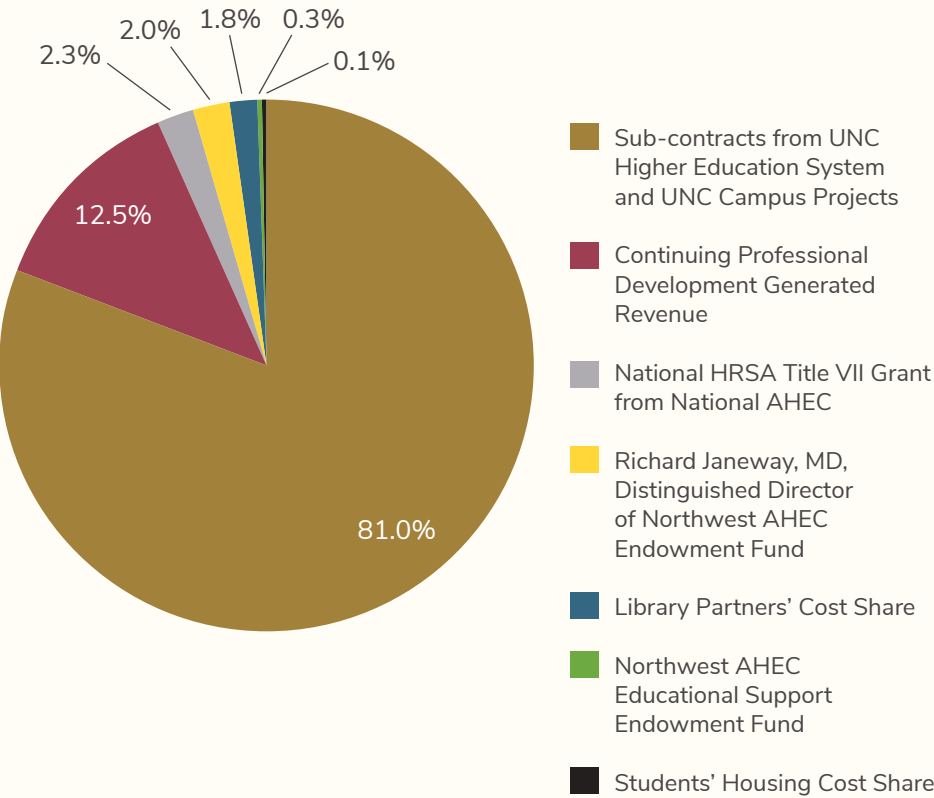
[youtube.com/northwestahec](https://youtube.com/northwestahec)



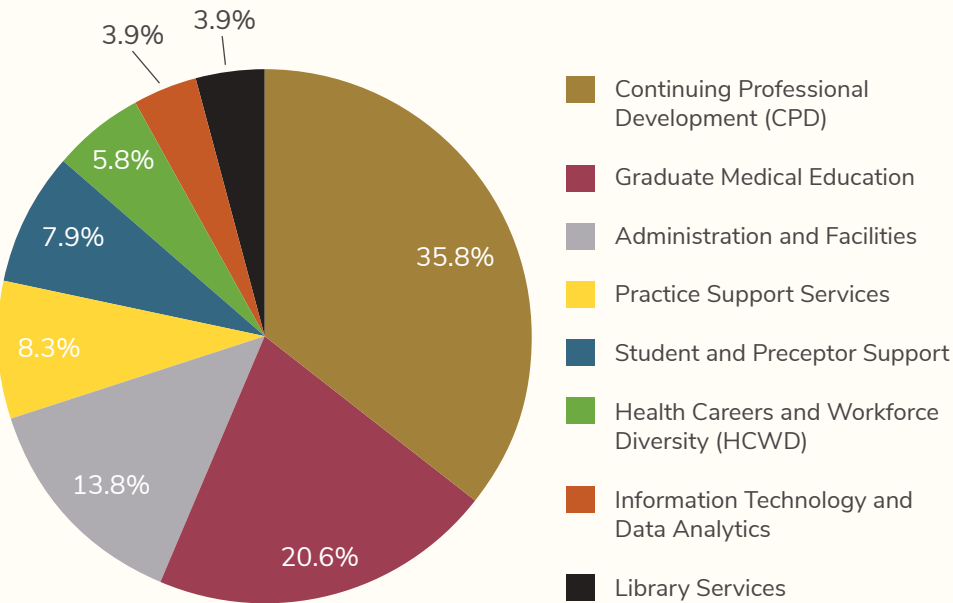
Join our email list at  
[nwahec.org/email](mailto:nwahec.org/email)

## FUNDING SOURCES AND EXPENDITURES

TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET  
OF \$5,474,000



CORE SERVICE ALLOCATION







## The Northwest AHEC Team

The Northwest AHEC team includes: Michelle Adams; Amy Basham; Cherelle Blakely; Andrew Brewer; Reed Burger; Christina Clarke; Lara Dickerson; Alana Dodson; Samantha Garvens; Keya Glover; Nedra Edwards Hines; Meaghan Holloway; Karen Fritz; Angela Hodges; Ellen Hohf; Lee Howard; Chris Jones; Ellen Kesler; Brooke Kochanski; Michael Lischke; Leslie McDowell; Amanda Pearson; Marie Simos; Lisa Thomas; Leigh Watkins; Medina Wilson

Not pictured: Michael Hulme; Mona Brown Ketner; Lindsey MacLean; Melanee Mills; Janice Moore; Gail Pawlik

Photo taken by Cameron Dennis & Lauren Carroll on June 3, 2022 at Historic Bethabara Park Gemeinhaus, Winston-Salem, NC

## PARTNERS

Northwest AHEC is grateful to have had the opportunity to collaborate with the following organizations, providers and agencies during AY22.

A Woman's View  
Access Healthcare  
Advance Family & Sports Medicine Center  
Alexander County  
Alexander County Schools  
Alleghany Chamber of Commerce  
Alleghany County Schools  
Alleghany Family Practice  
Alleghany Memorial Hospital  
Appalachian Regional Healthcare System  
Appalachian State University  
Beaver College of Health Sciences  
Department of Psychology  
Appalachian District Health Department  
Appalachian Regional Healthcare System  
Appalachian Regional Medical Associates  
Ardmore Family Practice, P.A.  
Ashe County Board of Commissioners  
Ashe County Schools  
Ashe Memorial Hospital  
Ashe Pediatrics  
Atrium Health Behavioral Division; Davidson  
Atrium Health Blue Ridge  
Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center  
Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist  
Brenner Children's  
Brenner FIT®  
CareNet Counseling  
Clinical Ethics Committee

Comprehensive Cancer Center  
Downtown Health Plaza  
Office of Inclusion and Diversity  
Avery County Board of Commissioners  
Avery County Schools  
Behavioral Health Solutions, P.A.  
Benson Area Medical Center; Inc.  
Best Clinic, P.L.L.C.  
Bethany Medical Center  
Black River Health Services  
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina  
Blue Ridge Medical Group  
Nephrology & Hypertension Center  
Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine  
Women's Center  
Boone Dermatology Clinic, P.A.  
Broughton Hospital  
Burke County Schools  
Burke Primary Care  
Cabral Internal Medicine  
Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute  
Caldwell County Health Department  
Caldwell County Schools  
Caldwell UNC Health Care  
Campbell University  
Jerry Wallace School of Osteopathic Medicine  
School of Pharmacy  
Cardiology Associates of the Carolinas  
Care Ring  
Caring Community Clinic  
Carolina Foot & Ankle Associates  
Catawba College  
Department of Nursing  
Catawba County Department of Social Services  
Catawba County Public Health Department  
Catawba County Schools  
Catawba Science Center  
Catawba Valley Behavioral Healthcare  
Catawba Valley Community College  
Catawba Valley Medical Center  
Catawba Valley Psychiatry Services  
Catawba Women's Center, P.A.  
Challie Minton, M.D.  
Charles W Jones, M.D., P.A.  
Cherokee Indian Hospital  
Children's Hope Alliance  
City of Winston-Salem Human  
Relations Department

Clark Family Medicine  
Clay Comprehensive Health Services  
CLECO Primary Care Network  
ClubHaven Family Practice  
College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC)  
Collettsville Medical Center  
Community Care Clinic  
Community Care Clinic of High Point  
Community Care Clinic of Highlands-Cashiers  
Community Care Clinic of Rowan County  
Compassionate Care  
Consortium for Southeast Healthcare Quality  
Cove Creek School  
Crisis Control Ministry  
Crossnore School & Children's Home Center for  
Trauma Resilient Communities  
Crossriver Cardiology  
Crossroads Counseling Center, Inc.  
Crossroads Family Medical Care, P.A.  
Crown Health Care, P.A.  
David M. Cline, M.D.  
Davidson College  
Davidson County Community College  
Davidson County Schools  
Career & Technical Education Department  
Davidson Medical Ministries Clinic  
Davidson-Davie Community College  
Davie County Health Department  
Davie County Schools  
Davis Regional Medical Center  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
WB "Bill" Hefner Medical Center Salisbury  
Kernersville Outpatient Clinic  
Winston Salem Outpatient Clinic  
Desantis Family Practice  
Douglas D Pritchard, M.D., P.L.L.C.  
Duke University Medical Center  
Duke University  
School of Medicine  
East Carolina University  
Brody School of Medicine  
ECHO Clinic  
Elkin City Schools  
Elkin Pediatric & Adult Medicine  
Elliot Morgan Parsonage, P.A.  
Elon University  
Evergreen Health Promotion  
Faegre Baker Daniels Consulting

Fairgrove Primary Health  
Family Care Center, P.A.  
Family Healthcare Practice  
Fifth Street Ministries  
First Horizon Bank  
Forsyth County Department of Public Health  
Forsyth, Stokes, and Davie County Medical Society  
Forsyth Technical Community College  
Career Center  
Free Clinic of Our Towns  
Frye Regional Medical Center  
Full Circle Community Wellness  
Garner-Webb University  
Gastroenterology Associates of the Piedmont  
Grace Clinic of Yadkin Valley  
Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry  
Green Tree Peer Center  
Guilford Technical Community College  
Hardee Family Medicine  
Hart Family Practice  
HealthReach Community Clinic  
Helping Hands Clinic of Caldwell  
Hickory Chest, P.L.L.C.  
Hickory Public Schools  
High Country Community Health  
High Country Family Medicine  
High Point University  
Congdon School of Health Sciences  
Fred Wilson School of Pharmacy  
Workman School of Dental Medicine &  
Oral Health  
Hospice and Palliative Care of Iredell County  
Housing Authority of the City of High Point  
Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital  
Iredell County Health Department  
Iredell Health System  
Iredell Physician Network  
Iredell-Statesville Schools  
John F. Kennedy High School  
Kaleideum Science Center  
Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust  
Kernersville Primary Care  
Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP  
Lake Norman Community Health Clinic  
Lake Norman Regional Medical Center  
Lee Physician Group  
Lenoir-Rhyne University  
Lexington City Schools

Lexington Internal Medicine Clinic, P.A.  
 LifeBrite Community Hospital of Stokes  
 Lincoln County Board of Commissioners  
 Livingstone College  
 LliBott Consultorios Medicos  
 March of Dimes of Northwest North Carolina  
 Marshall C. Murrey, M.D. dba Greenway Medical  
 Mental Health Association in Forsyth County  
 Meridian Resources; Inc.  
 Meredith College  
 Methodist University  
 Michael C. DeSantis, M.D.  
 Michael R Sigmon, O.D.  
 Mitchell Community College  
 Mooresville Graded School District  
 Morganton Internal Medicine, P.A.  
 Mountain Community Health Partnership  
 Mountain Laurel Family Practice  
 Mountain Laurel Internal Medicine, P.A.  
 Mountain View Pediatrics, P.A.  
 Mt. Airy City Schools  
 National Board of Certified Counselors  
 Nephrology Associates  
 New Options for Violent Actions NOVA  
 Newton Conover Schools  
 Newton Family Physicians, P.A.  
 North Carolina AHEC  
   Area L AHEC  
   Charlotte AHEC  
   Duke Program Office  
   Eastern AHEC  
   Greensboro AHEC  
   Mountain AHEC  
   Southern Regional AHEC  
   Southeast AHEC  
   Wake AHEC  
 North Carolina AIDS Education and Training Center  
 (NC AETC)  
 North Carolina American Indian Health Board  
 (AIHB)  
 North Carolina Association for the Management  
 and Treatment of Sex Offenses (NCAMTSO)  
 North Carolina Association of Free &  
 Charitable Clinics  
 North Carolina Association of  
 Professional Psychologists  
 North Carolina A&T State University  
 North Carolina Board of Nursing

North Carolina Community Health  
 Center Association  
 North Carolina Culture Change Coalition  
 North Carolina Department of Health and Human  
 Services  
 North Carolina Department of Public Instruction/  
 Health Science Education  
 North Carolina Healthcare Association  
 North Carolina HOSA - Future Health Professionals  
 North Carolina Institute for Public Health (NCIPH)  
 North Carolina Medical Group Managers Association  
 North Carolina Medical Society  
   Future Clinical Leaders College  
 North Carolina Providers of Abuser Treatment  
 (NCPAT)  
 North Carolina Respiratory Care Board (NCRCB)  
 North Carolina State University  
 Northern Hospital of Surry County  
 Northlake Pediatric Care  
 Northwest Community Care Network  
 Northwest Region School Nurses Association  
 of NC  
 Novant Health  
   Forsyth Medical Center  
   Rowan Medical Center  
   Thomasville Medical Center  
 Old Vineyard Behavioral Health Services  
 Open Door Clinic of Alamance County  
 Partners Behavioral Health Management  
 Piedmont Endocrinology, P.A.  
 Piedmont Triad Regional Council  
 Promedical Healthcare, P.A.  
 Project Lazarus  
 Promise Resource Network  
 Provide Inc.  
 Randolph Health  
 Reading Connections  
 Reynolda House Museum of American Art  
 Ronald McDonald House of Winston-Salem  
 Rowan Cabarrus Community College  
 Rowan County Department of Social Services  
 Rowan County Health Department  
 Rowan-Salisbury School District  
 Salem Academy & College  
 Salisbury Internal Medicine Associates  
 Salisbury Pediatric Associates  
 Scotland Community Health Center  
 Senior Services, Inc. - Meals-on-Wheels Program

Southside United Health Center  
 St. Peter's Church and World Outreach Center  
 Stokes County Schools  
 Surry Community College  
 Surry County Schools  
 Surry County Health and Nutrition Center  
 Swisher Internal Medicine  
 The Arc Davidson County  
 The Child Health Center  
 The Duke Endowment  
 The Enrichment Center  
 The Salem Center  
 The Salvation Army of Winston-Salem  
 The Shalom Project  
 Thomasville City Schools  
 Thomasville High School  
 Timothy Dailey, M.D.  
 Toe River Health District  
 Trellis Supportive Care  
 Trevett Cristo  
 Trinity Health Care, P.A.  
 Trinity Medical Care  
 UNC Chapel Hill  
   Adams School of Dentistry  
   Department of Health Sciences  
   Eshelman School of Pharmacy  
   Gillings School of Global Public Health  
   School of Medicine  
     Asheville Branch Campus  
     Charlotte Branch Campus  
     Wilmington Branch Campus  
   School of Nursing  
   School of Social Work  
 UNC Charlotte  
 UNC Greensboro  
   School of Nursing  
 UNC Health Care  
 UNC Health Care  
 UNC Wilmington  
 Unifour Family Practice  
 Unifour Pediatrics, P.A.  
 United Health Centers  
 University of Alabama at Birmingham  
   Division of Infectious Diseases  
 University of North Carolina School of the Arts  
 Urban League of Winston-Salem  
 Vaya Health  
 Viewmont Internal Medicine  
 Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine

Wake Forest University School of Medicine  
 Center for Experiential and Applied  
 Learning (CEAL)  
 Clinical and Translational Science Institute  
 DEAC Clinic  
 Family and Community Medicine  
 Infectious Disease  
 Internal Medicine  
 Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity  
 Pediatrics  
 Physician Assistant Studies & Boone Campus  
 Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine  
 Public Health Sciences  
 Share the Health Fair  
 Student National Medical Association  
 Wake Forest University School of Medicine -  
 Charlotte  
 Wake Forest University  
   Department of Counseling  
   Department of Psychology  
   LGBTQ+ Center  
   Scholars Office  
 WakeMed Cary Hospital  
 Watauga County Schools  
 Watauga Medical Center - App. Regional  
 Healthcare System  
 Watch Healthcare Program  
 West Alexander Middle School  
 West Caldwell Health Council  
 Western Carolina University  
 Western Piedmont Community College  
 WHAP - Lyndhurst Gynecologic Associates  
 Wilkes Community College  
 Wilkes County Schools  
 Wingate University  
 Winston-Salem State University (WSSU)  
   School of Health Sciences  
 Winston-Salem Pediatrics Highroad  
 Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools  
 Womble Bond Dickinson  
 Yadkin County Health Department  
 Yatawara Gynecology, Wellness, and Aesthetics



Northwest Area Health Education Center (Northwest AHEC)  
Wake Forest University School of Medicine  
Medical Center Boulevard | Winston-Salem, NC 27157-3311  
336-713-7700 | fax 336-713-7701

Northwest AHEC is a program of Wake Forest University  
School of Medicine and part of the North Carolina AHEC System.

**Our service area  
encompasses 17 counties in  
Northwest North Carolina:**

Alexander  
Alleghany  
Ashe  
Avery  
Burke  
Caldwell  
Catawba  
Davidson  
Davie  
Forsyth  
Iredell  
Rowan  
Stokes  
Surry  
Watauga  
Wilkes  
Yadkin

