



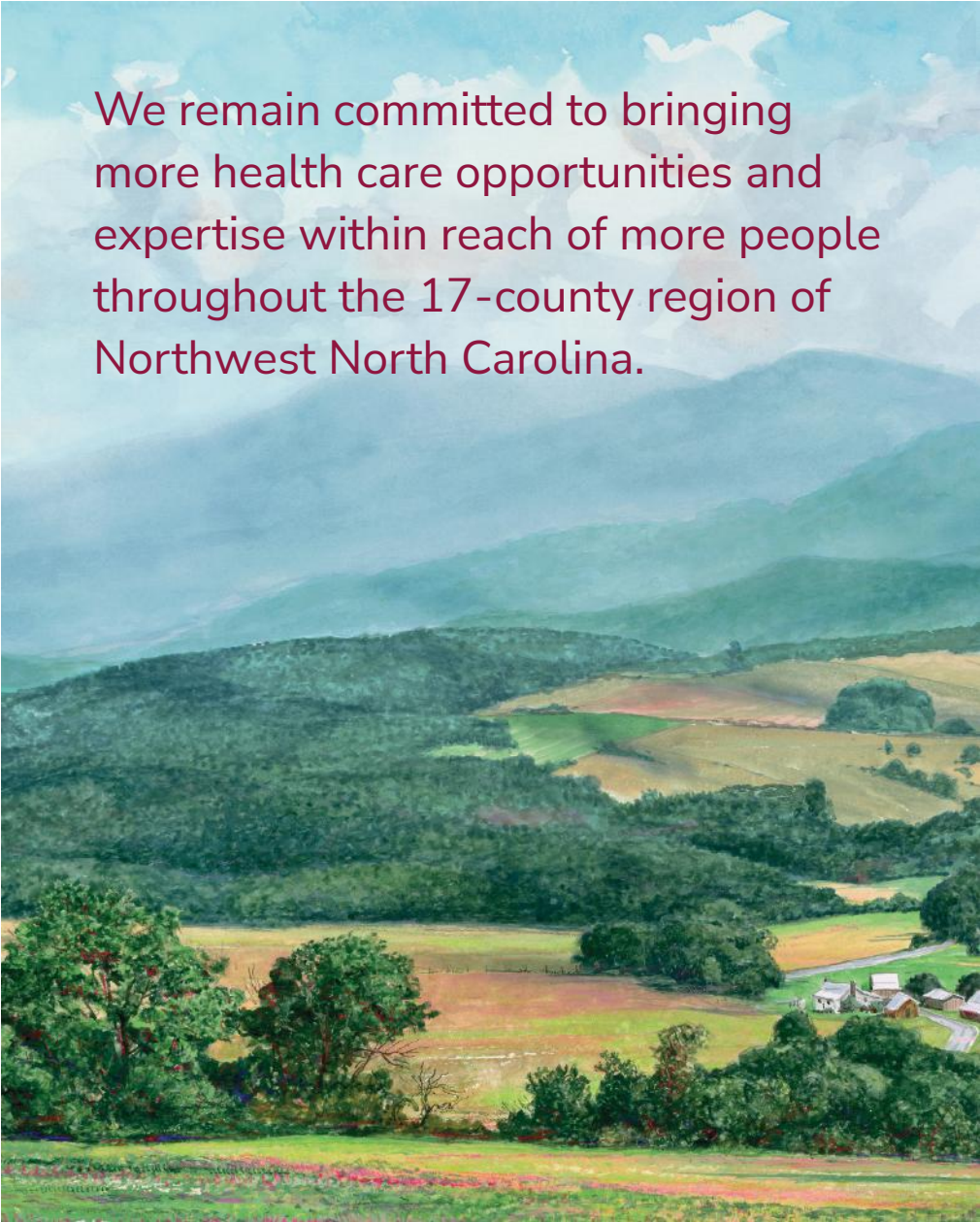
# A BEACON OF EDUCATION, CARE AND SUPPORT

RECRUITING, TRAINING AND RETAINING TO  
IMPROVE CARE FOR ALL IN NORTHWEST  
NORTH CAROLINA



Wake Forest University  
School of Medicine

**NORTHWEST AHEC**  
PART OF NC AHEC



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.

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"Blue Ridge" A soft palette and the restful mountain horizon of the gentle Blue Ridge Mountains compose this dreamy landscape.

## 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.



## NORTH CAROLINA AHEC 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The North Carolina AHEC 50th Anniversary Celebration was held as part of the annual statewide

meeting in Winston-Salem in December 2022, hosted by Northwest AHEC. Thank you to all attendees for your support of the 2022 NC AHEC Statewide Meeting and for doing your part in making the meeting a success and NC AHEC's 50th year memorable. For more information about the event and presentation, visit [nwahec.org/ncahec50](http://nwahec.org/ncahec50).

The statewide meeting also coincided with the unveiling of the new Northwest AHEC logo — reflecting a more consistent look with our state and fellow regional AHECs — as well as a refreshed logo for Wake Forest University School of Medicine.



## 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 Services
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

Welcome to the Northwest Area Health Education Center (Northwest AHEC) Annual Report for 2022-2023. This has been a meaningful year for our organization, both at the regional and state level.

Northwest AHEC was fortunate to host the North Carolina AHEC Statewide Meeting and celebration of the organization's 50th anniversary last December. We were pleased to welcome friends from all the other regional AHECs across the state for a three-day conference here in Winston-Salem. This was the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic that we gathered in person for a statewide meeting and served as a wonderful reminder of the inspiring and enlightening value of coming together to learn from each other.

The meeting was also an opportunity to reflect on our collective mission and how we stand together to be a beacon of education, care and support for the wellbeing of all North Carolinians through a highly trained health care workforce.

Northwest AHEC stands as resolute and steadfast as ever in our commitment to communities throughout our region, from the most remote small towns to our largest cities and everywhere in between.

As Northwest AHEC's 50th anniversary approaches next year, we only need to look back over the last few years for examples of how we have continued to deliver on our goals to recruit, train and retain health professionals while adapting our programs and offerings to more effectively reach those we serve.

As the COVID-19 pandemic emerged and waned, we combined the best practices of virtual, hybrid and in-person learning. The results have been more than positive, with an overall increase in participants and a larger, broader audience. For example:

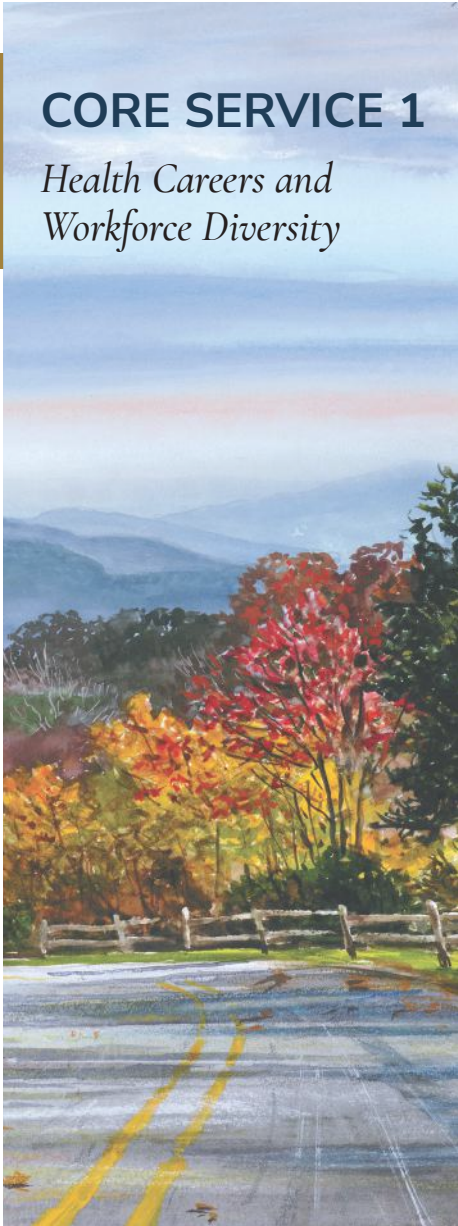
- More people are participating in our Continuing Professional Development programs from across the state with both in-person and virtual options, allowing those in remote, rural areas to attend without leaving their communities or incurring travel expenses.
- After moving Camp Med to a virtual format in 2020, we saw a huge influx of high school students and it has continued to be popular even as in-person camps returned in 2022.
- Our Practice Support team has been able to connect and support our practices in the new virtual setting, allowing for greater collaboration and better access to our resources.

By always looking for ways to better engage with learners and health care professionals, we were prepared to adapt to the changing demands brought on by the pandemic. We readily shifted programs online, created new programs around emerging health care challenges, and evolved what it meant to support people and practices — all to improve and refine how we help recruit, train and retain the health care workforce our communities need for a healthy North Carolina.

We are committed to being a guiding light in the development of current and future health care professionals for many years to come. We are here to be a constant source of support, leadership, collaboration, resilience and integrity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Lischke". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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



**CORE SERVICE 1**  
*Health Careers and Workforce Diversity*

**Lighting the way.**

The North Carolina AHEC Scholars Program at Northwest AHEC engaged its fifth cohort. The program continues to be effective in recruiting and retaining students from Wake Forest University (WFU), Winston-Salem State University (WSSU), and from a new partner, Salem College. A diverse group of 31 students received 80 hours of clinical and didactic programming.

The Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) partnered with our Camp Med program and we supported two HOSA regional meetings, for which 700+ middle and high school students registered for State Leadership Conferences in 2023. We also worked with the Office of Student Inclusion and Diversity of Wake Forest University School of Medicine (WFUSM) for two summer camps focused on minority middle and high school students interested in fields of health.

Wake Forest University School of Medicine medical students led the Share the Health Fair in partnership with Northwest AHEC, local colleges, health providers and community agencies to provide services to a record number of participants.

We partnered with WSSU’s School of Health Sciences annual Healthcare Legends of East Winston event last September to honor those who have made a profound impact on the health and wellness of residents. Honorees included: The Winston-Salem Black Panther Party, for their free ambulance program; Ms. Quilla Montgomery Smith, for 37 years of service in Maternal Child Health and Public Health; Mrs. Randon Blackmon Pender, who served as VP of the Student Nurses Association; and WSSU students Caleb Bauguess, Angelyn Nguyen and Kaitlyn Wall, who each received \$2,500 to fund health care-related projects on campus and in East Winston.

Our partnership with High Point University grew as college health science students gave back through student-lead projects, no-cost flu shots, hearing screenings and unused medicine takeback opportunities.

Through a new partnership with Petree Elementary STEM Academy, we helped educate and engage pre-K through fifth graders with hands-on experiences in medicine.

*“Autumn Glow” In autumn the mountains are alive with crimson reds, burnt siennas and raw umbers which captivate visitors to the Blue Ridge Parkway.*

**NORTHWEST AHEC HEALTH CAREERS OUTPUTS**

TOTALS	38 ACTIVITIES	758 HOURS	1,435 PARTICIPANTS
Exposure	12	30	1,009
Pipeline (20-40 hrs)	22	514	310
Intensive (>40 hrs)	4	214	116

**Northwest AHEC Camp Med 2023**

*Camp Med activities saw an increase in in-person participation with students representing all 17 counties in the Northwest Region. Programs were held in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Davie, Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, Iredell, Rowan, Stokes, Surry, Watauga and Wilkes counties, as well as our Virtual Camp Med program.*

**58** Virtual Camp Med unique participants

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

**≥20** Hours per unique participant

**59** “Meet the Health Professionals” unique participants



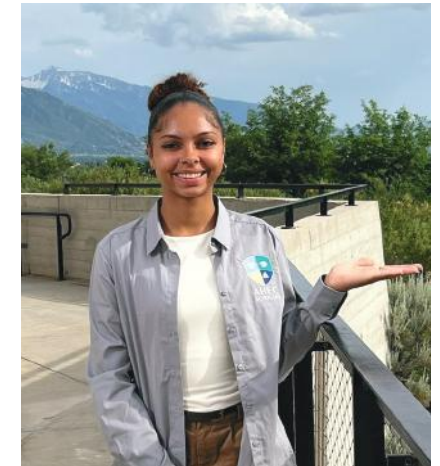
*Iredell Memorial Hospital Camp Med Participants*

## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

For 50 years, our work has focused on recruiting, training and retaining health care professionals who reflect the communities they serve. Accomplishing this requires continued intentionality and persistence. In Academic Year 2023, Northwest AHEC held activities and developed resources to inform, support and nurture Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in the health care workforce. Our efforts and programs for the year included:

- ▶ Two presentations each quarter
  - Quarter 1 — Recognizing and Challenging Ageism, Video and Discussion; Delivering Equal Access to Care (DEAC) Clinic, Larry Zhou
  - Quarter 2 — The Color of Care Documentary, Viewing and Debrief; Council for Black Health, Melicia Whitt-Glover, PhD, FACS, Executive Director
  - Quarter 3 — Human Trafficking, Unseen Virtual Simulation; Rural Health, Tina Beasley, Executive Director of the Northern Hospital Foundation
  - Quarter 4 — Global Health at Home, Kimberly Montez, MD, MPH, Pediatrics, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist; Sharing Personal Stories of Inheriting Strength
- ▶ In June 2023, staff assessed previous DEI team meetings and provided suggestions for future topics.
- ▶ Continued to expand an optional team forum to discuss JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion) issues and current events.
- ▶ 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.

## My Experience with Northwest AHEC



*Our region's North Carolina AHEC Scholar, A'nya Buckner, attended the 2023 National AHEC Organization (NAO) Biennial Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. Read A'nya's story at [nwahec.org/anya](https://nwahec.org/anya).*

"I was honored to represent North Carolina AHEC and Northwest AHEC at the conference. To my surprise, there are (AHEC) scholars all around the nation... doing incredible work to improve the health and well-being of others. During the conference, I joined with other scholars in serving the homeless community by handing out hygiene supplies, food and water. Doing so impacted us (future health professionals) to listen to what people had to say regarding their health care. My goal is to become a Medical Doctor, and I am immensely grateful for the opportunities the North Carolina AHEC Scholars program provides."

*– A'nya Buckner*

**25%** OF AY23 OPEN REGIONAL EVENTS INCLUDED A TARGETED OBJECTIVE\*

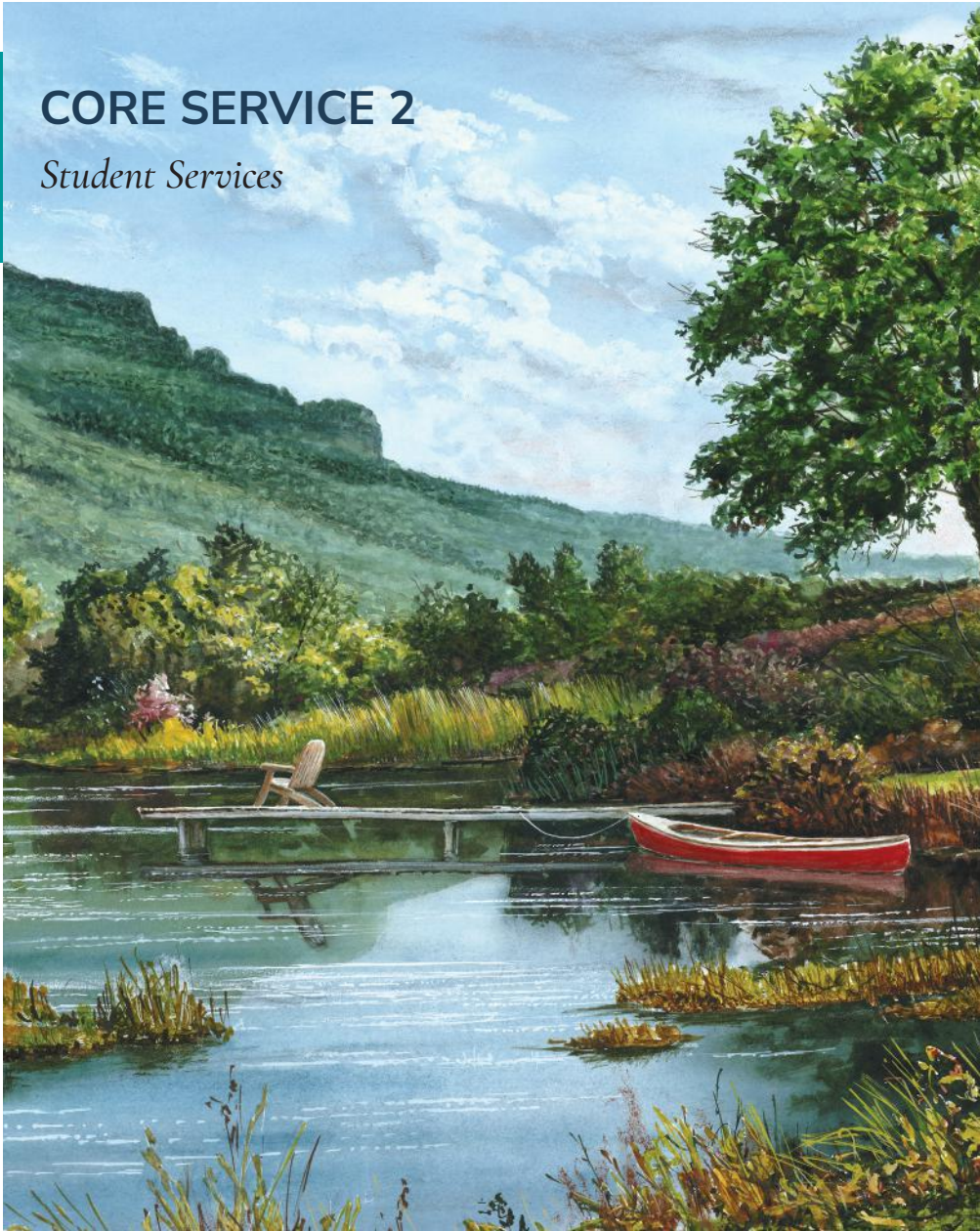
**40** open regional events  
including a targeted objective

**161** total open  
regional 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 Services*



"Renewed Spirits" Grandfather Mountain provides the perfect backdrop for this mountain retreat, an ideal place to rest & renew.

## Guiding support into communities.

Community-based education activities for students are invaluable for training and retaining future health care practitioners in communities where they are needed most. Northwest AHEC helps coordinate with each affiliated university to secure housing for students during rotations.

Making housing available to rotating students helps reduce their expenses while encouraging them to live in the communities and become more familiar with the people they are there to serve.

### Housing more students

Housing numbers from Academic Year 2023 reveal that, despite preceptor payments ending during Academic Year 2022, student involvement and the number of partnering universities increased. Appalachian State University, Lenoir-Rhyne University and Pfeiffer University joined the affiliation, boosting the number of schools to 19. The number of students housed saw a 15% increase (from 180 in AY22 to 207 in AY23), also representing a higher percentage of housing requests over the previous academic year.

### Evolving preceptor support

Although changing health care and health education needs meant shifting preceptor resources to other initiatives, Northwest AHEC along with the other regional AHECs, were able to identify and deploy alternative approaches to support and recognize community-based preceptors. For instance, in May 2023, we launched Advanced Preceptor Development: A Toolkit for Teaching Strategies. In addition, North Carolina AHEC committed to supporting preceptors through expanding the Consortium for Clinical Education and Practice (CCEP) over the next two-to-three years.



STUDENT SUPPORT HOUSING TOTALS:

**5,740**  
NIGHTS  
PROVIDED

**207**  
STUDENTS  
HOUSED

**28**  
NIGHTS PER  
STUDENT (AVG.)

**276**  
HOUSING  
REQUESTS

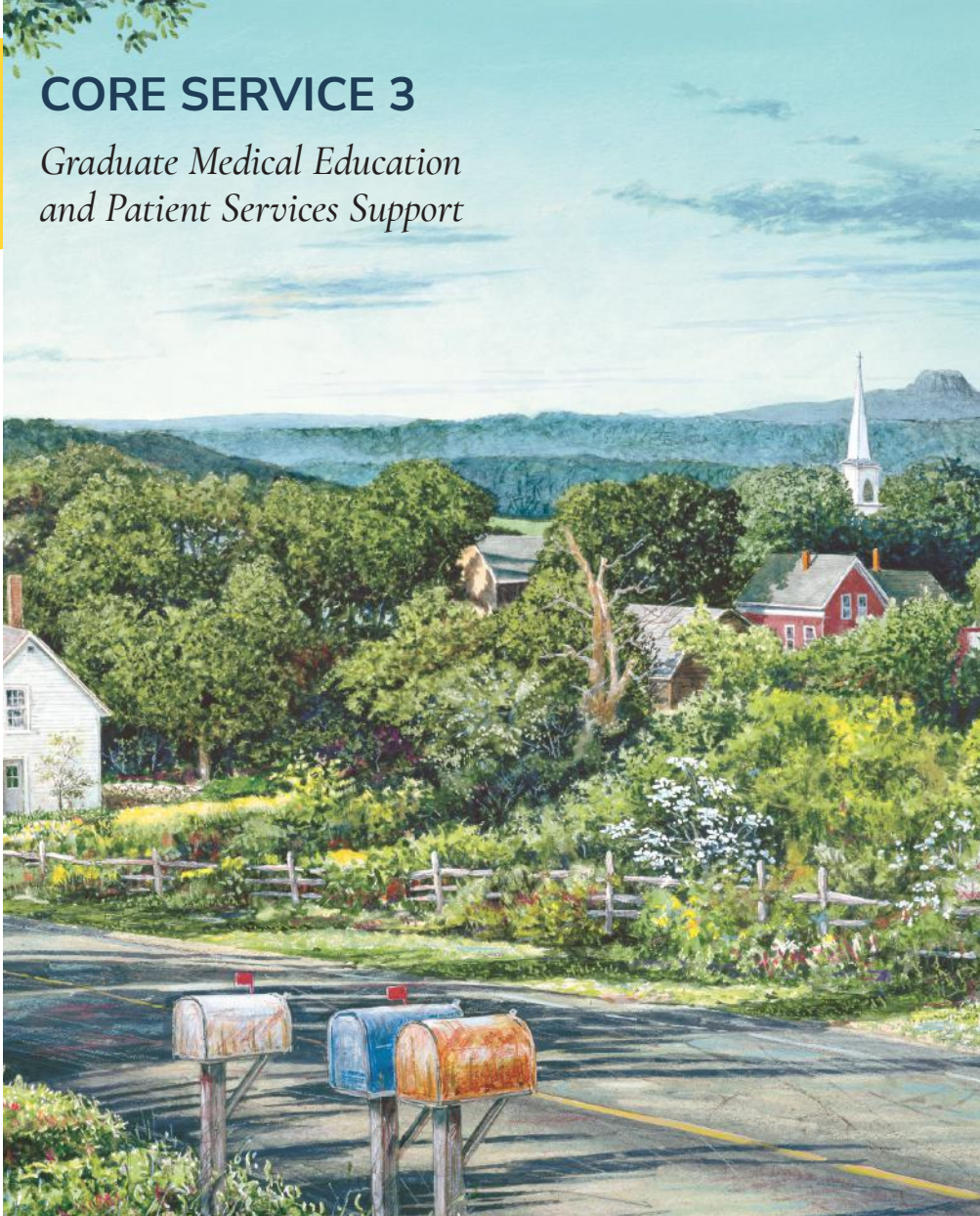
**11**  
MANAGED  
HOUSING  
LOCATIONS

HOUSING SUPPORTED COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:



## CORE SERVICE 3

*Graduate Medical Education  
and Patient Services Support*



"Southern Impressions" This scene is a nice reminder of a simpler time, and a place as lovely as the reference.

## Inspiring experiences serving others.

Northwest AHEC helps residents and medical students recognize the needs of uninsured, underinsured and underserved people in our communities and how to best provide care. Through our support of graduate medical education at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist, we create opportunities to train and retain health care professionals for making a difference in the lives of diverse populations across North Carolina today and well into the future.

Of the Northwest AHEC-supported Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist residents who graduated in AY23:

**59%**  
chose to stay in NC (38 of 64)

Total estimated number of indigent/underserved patients served by the residents during AY23

**52,849**

Family and Community Medicine

**15,000**

Internal Medicine

**14,600**

Psychiatry and Behavioral Health

**13,270**

Pediatrics

**9,979**

## This core service provides training in under-resourced communities and treatment of vulnerable populations. Examples of these Academic Year 2023 community-based rotation initiatives included:

### FAMILY AND COMMUNITY MEDICINE

- ▶ OB rotation at the Stokes County Health Department providing prenatal care in a rural community.
- ▶ Providing general outpatient care at the Bethesda Center for the homeless population.
- ▶ Elective rotation providing outpatient medical and behavioral health care to underserved patients at the Highland Avenue clinic.
- ▶ Providing obstetrical, gynecological and general care at four Federally Qualified Health Centers and surrounding communities.
- ▶ Providing care to Winston-Salem State University student-athletes during sports medicine rotations.
- ▶ Refugee clinic at United Health Center, Peters Creek, where residents assist a family medicine faculty member in providing care to the area's Syrian refugee population.
- ▶ School-based health alliance allowing residents to deliver care in Title 1 schools.
- ▶ The Community Care Clinic (Centro Clinico) where residents provide general care to an underserved and mainly Latino population.
- ▶ Providing care at Dragonfly House, a clinic for pediatric victims of abuse.
- ▶ Providing obstetrical care in a rural practice in Wilkesboro.
- ▶ Providing medical care for students at the UNC School of the Arts.
- ▶ 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, the University Internal Medicine clinic, and Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist High Point Medical Center.
- ▶ Residents and faculty provide continuity clinics and urgent care visits for underserved populations in the Outpatient Department and Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist 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 patients 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 on-site case managers to patients in pediatrics and internal medicine.
- ▶ Some residents on elective months choose 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 in Lexington as well as Wilkes and Davie counties.
- ▶ Opioid group therapy and treatment are offered through Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Behavioral Health.
- ▶ Behavioral health consultations are provided through a specialized outpatient clinic at the Downtown Health Plaza.
- ▶ 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.

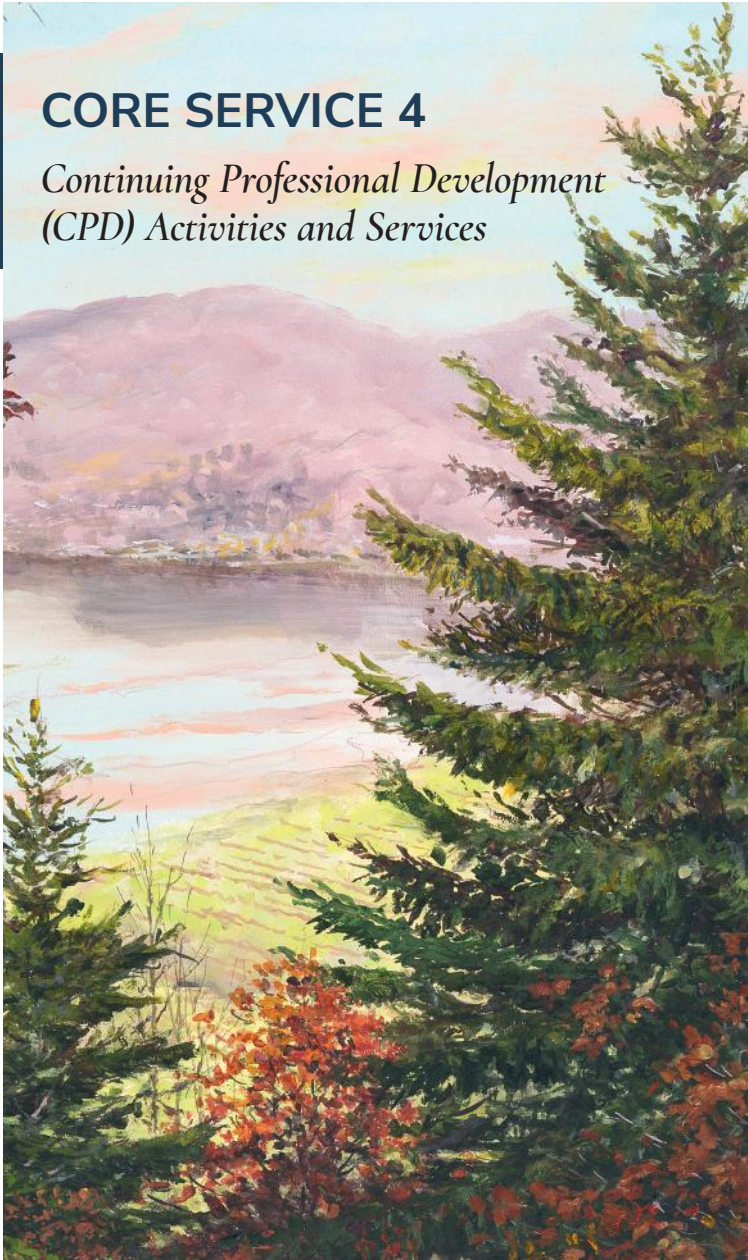
- ▶ Funded through the United Way, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry provides behavioral health services to indigent children.
- ▶ The academic program delivered lectures on Social Determinants of Health and Mental Health Equity.

### PEDIATRICS

- ▶ Pediatric residents and medical students have been involved 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, offers expanded resources for legal referrals, conducts refugee health assessments for children, and has a medical-legal partnership available for immigrant patients who are victims of human trafficking or domestic violence.
- ▶ The DHP screens children for SDOH, including determining assistance for food insecurity, transportation, basic needs, legal assistance, housing, caregiver depression or substance use.
- ▶ On-site and co-located specialists and programs are available through the DHP, Imprint Cares, Inc., and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).
- ▶ 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.

## CORE SERVICE 4

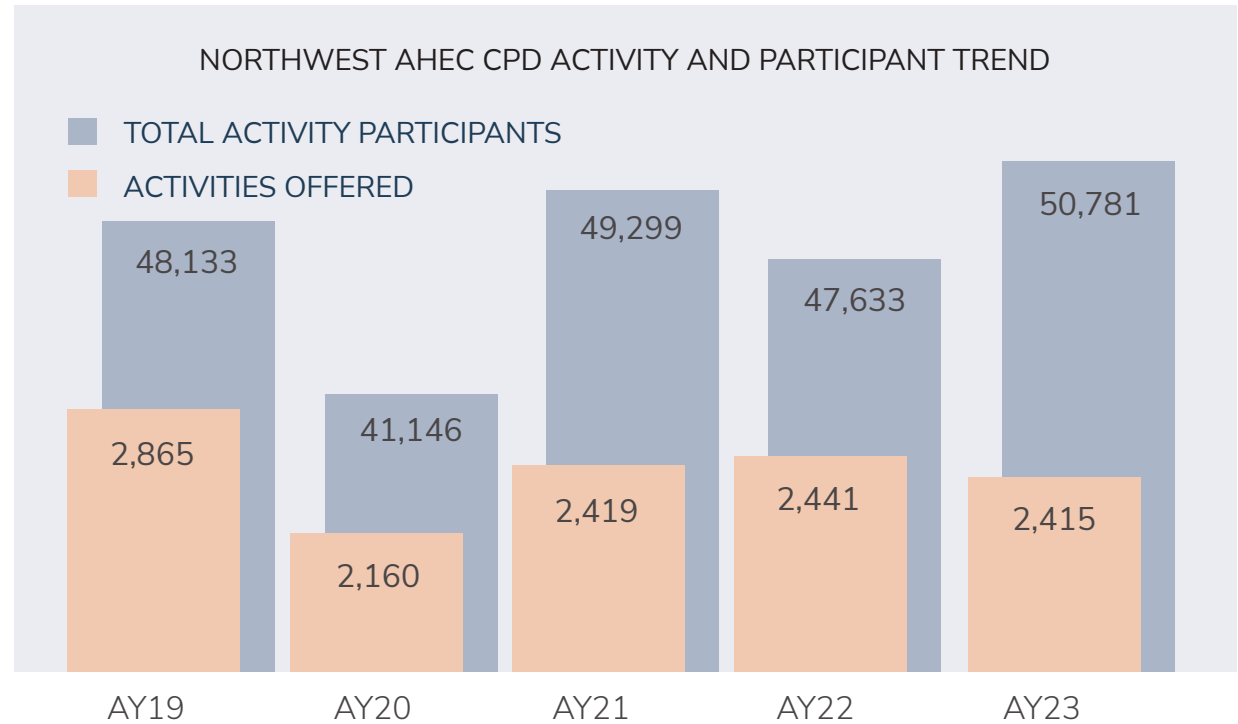
### *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities and Services*



"Riverbend" This bird's-eye view is a marvelous way to appreciate this spectacular vista.

## Honing our efforts to reach more professionals.

Northwest AHEC further refined continuing professional development offerings to provide a broader selection of professional topics. Many annual conferences returned to in-person formatting in Academic Year 2023 for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic. However, virtual events continued to provide easily accessible training throughout the region, state and country. The combination of events contributed to nearly 40% of participants (4,549 of 11,381) being new to Northwest AHEC CPD activities.





## CORE SERVICE 4

(continued)

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



Highlighted CPD Activities (cont.)

#### 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BREASTFEEDING FORUM

In May 2023, Northwest AHEC and Mountain AHEC hosted the 11th Annual Breastfeeding Forum at the Mission Health A-B Tech Conference Center in Asheville. After two years of being held virtually, the Breastfeeding Forum, attended by more than 80 participants, delved into a range of techniques aimed at supporting women through the breastfeeding journey.

A diverse group of providers attended the event, including lactation consultants, peer counselors, nurses, registered dietitians, WIC staff, and health educators. The conference also provided updates on the latest breastfeeding care practices to enable providers to offer the best possible support to mothers.

#### 2023 GERIATRICS CONFERENCE

Also in May 2023, geriatric care professionals from across the region attended the 2023 Geriatrics Conference hosted by Northwest AHEC at the Village Inn Event Center in Clemmons. Attendees were able to meet face-to-face for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year's conference focused on behavioral health but was impactful for many areas of care including nurse practitioners/nurses, social workers, psychologists and other health care professionals that are working with older adults in our communities. Topics included narrative gerontology, vaccine hesitancy in older African Americans, facing death without fear, and mental health in the elderly population.

The unique insights and experiences shared by our diverse lineup of speakers helped attendees understand how life stories from our aging population can be used to better care for their needs as well as the needs of their families and friends.

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper also officially declared May as "Older Americans Month" this year, making this Geriatrics Conference a particularly timely and meaningful event.

*"I found the conference to be very informative and educational to my nursing profession. The speakers made their topics interesting and I thoroughly enjoyed them."*

– 2023 Geriatrics Conference Attendee

#### 2023 ACADEMIC PROGRESSION CONFERENCE

The latest edition of this annual live webinar was held in February 2023 and was hosted by the North Carolina AHEC Nurse Council and the North Carolina Community College System, bringing together academic leaders from all levels of nursing education. The conference welcomed 168 attendees, 41 of whom were from the Northwest N.C. region.

Content experts provided new nursing education strategies for leaders and nurse educators in didactic and clinical settings. Ellen Zimmerman, MSN, RN, Nurse Educator from Northwest AHEC serves on the planning committee with Northwest AHEC providing the credit hours.

## HEALTH COACHING AND MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Northwest AHEC partnered with Mountain AHEC for a DHHS-grant-funded series of courses and activities centered around health coaching and healthy behavior change. Four asynchronous courses available in both English and Spanish were created for Community Health Workers to enhance well-being coaching and motivational interviewing skills.

Over 1,000 learners have completed the online courses to increase medication adherence, health condition monitoring, nutrition and fitness. Subject Matter Experts from Northwest AHEC presented at the December 2022 Community Health Worker Summit and delivered a live program in March 2023 focusing on small group applied coaching practice.

Northwest AHEC is poised to deliver more programming and activities for healthy behavior change as health and well-being coaching continues to grow, with more practices providing coaching services for enhancing the well-being of their patients.

## 24<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DIABETES MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

The 24th Annual Diabetes Management Conference was held in November 2022, in-person at Wake Forest Bridger Field House. With over 120 attendees, the conference highlighted key areas of diabetes care management including the use of technology, disordered eating, kidney disease management in the diabetic patient, and best practices, among others.

The conference brings many health care professionals together, including dietitians, family physicians, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, nurses, and others to help promote interprofessional care collaboration. The next Diabetes Management Conference is scheduled for November 2023.

## 17<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL NEUROSCIENCE CONFERENCE

The 17th Annual Neuroscience Conference was held at the DoubleTree Inn in November 2022. This conference focuses on the latest advancements in stroke care in hopes of maximizing acute care and recovery. Over 80 interprofessional participants enjoyed a day of education and collaboration. Topics included nursing innovations for telestroke and collaboration. Topics included nursing innovations for telestroke and teleneurology, hypertension following a stroke, intracerebral hemorrhaging, thrombectomy outcomes and more.

The next Neuroscience Conference is set for November 2023 at the Statesville Civic Center.

## Northwest AHEC Receives NCNA Reaccreditation



Northwest AHEC has been recognized as an Approved Provider by the North Carolina Nurses Association (NCNA) for over 25 years. The NCNA Accredited Approver Unit has re-approved Northwest AHEC as an Approved Provider of nursing continuing professional development for another three years.

## UNC Chapel Hill School of Nursing RN Refresher Program

From April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023, 102 nurses graduated from the RN Refresher program, and 88% of total graduates (choosing to work and not lost to follow up) have rejoined the nursing workforce.

### STRENGTHENING THE NURSING WORKFORCE

Academic Progression  
Conference Attendees

**168**

**41**

Attendees from Northwest  
North Carolina region

## CORE SERVICE 5

### *Practice Support Services*



*"Laurelmor" Captures nature's display at its peak. Its colors explode onto the scene, while time-worn rocks provide the perfect perch to enjoy the view of the Blue Ridge Mountains.*

## Setting the course for practices throughout the region.

Northwest AHEC built on its commitment to developing activities and coaching to support the ongoing and changing demands of practices and providers throughout the 17-county region. We added activities and content leading to a 130% increase in coaching encounters in Academic Year 2023 (2,695 vs 1,171 in AY22) covering 23 different topics. With both online modules and in-person, one-on-one practice support coaching relationships, more practices are turning to Northwest AHEC to help improve health outcomes and reduce the cost of care in their communities.

### NORTHWEST AHEC PRACTICE SUPPORT IS ACTIVE IN ALL 17 COUNTIES

#### PROJECTS

Advanced Medical Home	88
Billing and Coding	335
Community Health Worker Project	57
Health Information Exchange (HIE)	11
Merit-based Incentive Payment Systems (MIPS)	99
Medicaid Managed Care (MMC)	969
Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH)	28
Quality Improvement (QI)	8
Care Management Agency Technical Assistance	714
Practice Management Operations	184
Tailored Plan	128



## ENROLLMENT IN NORTHWEST AHEC PRACTICE SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

	COACHING ENCOUNTERS	PRACTICES
Alexander	16	2
Alleghany	31	1
Ashe	145	7
Avery	138	6
Burke	203	8
Caldwell	157	7
Catawba	538	31
Davidson	113	5
Davie	59	5
Forsyth	435	22
Iredell	197	26
Rowan	176	7
Stokes	29	1
Surry	245	11
Watauga	150	12
Wilkes	35	2
Yadkin	28	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,695</b>	<b>154</b>

## Highlighted Projects

### NEWTON FAMILY PHYSICIANS: MANAGING DIFFICULT PATIENT SITUATIONS

During a regular support visit at Newton Family Physicians P.A., in Catawba County, Northwest AHEC Practice Support Coaches learned that the practice needed coaching and resources to assist providers and staff when difficult patient situations arise. Unfortunately, many practice settings are experiencing angry, hostile and even aggressive behavior from patients, parents, caregivers and others.

Lara Dickerson and Medina Wilson (Practice Support Coaches), along with Leslie McDowell (Quality Improvement Curriculum Coordinator) teamed up to create a comprehensive staff training and resource guide for providers and staff at Newton Family Physicians. The training focuses on developing the ability of staff to recognize how their own individual behaviors impact a crisis; how to identify and respond to challenging patient behaviors; and how to develop safety intervention strategies to minimize harm.

Newton Family Physicians learned how to handle difficult situations professionally and safely for patients and staff. Plus, the training materials are being updated and will be available through Northwest AHEC for all practices to use.

### TELEHEALTH PATIENT HOME MONITORING GRANT UPDATE

In order to improve physician skills and experience with Telehealth, Northwest AHEC and Wake Forest University School of Medicine Internal Residency were awarded a grant to produce online learning for physicians and distribute medical supplies to patients for self-monitoring of their chronic health condition. Funding allowed telehealth technology capabilities to be fully integrated in two clinics.

Since the proposal was awarded in 2021, Northwest AHEC created two interactive online learning activities for residents: “Adapting the Four Habits Model for Virtual Visit Success,” and “Working with Interpreters in Telehealth.” In addition, blood pressure cuffs, scales, glucometers and pill minders were dispensed to patients meeting selection criteria.

The effort resulted in 72.5% of residents reporting feeling comfortable using telehealth with 94% believing telehealth is an important skill; 71% of patients met their personal goals; and telehealth training is now embedded into the orientation process for interns and an interpreter training module now part of the health equity curriculum for medical students at WFUSM Internal Medicine Residency.

The project was led by Nancy Denizard-Thompson, MD, Associate Professor, and Jessica Valente, MD, MPH, Associate Program Director, and facilitated by Leslie McDowell, DNP, of the Northwest AHEC Practice Support Team.

*“Big shout out to Northwest AHEC. Their team delivered valuable training and tactics for how to handle uncomfortable situations while maintaining professionalism and continuing to care for our patients and most important, our staff.”*

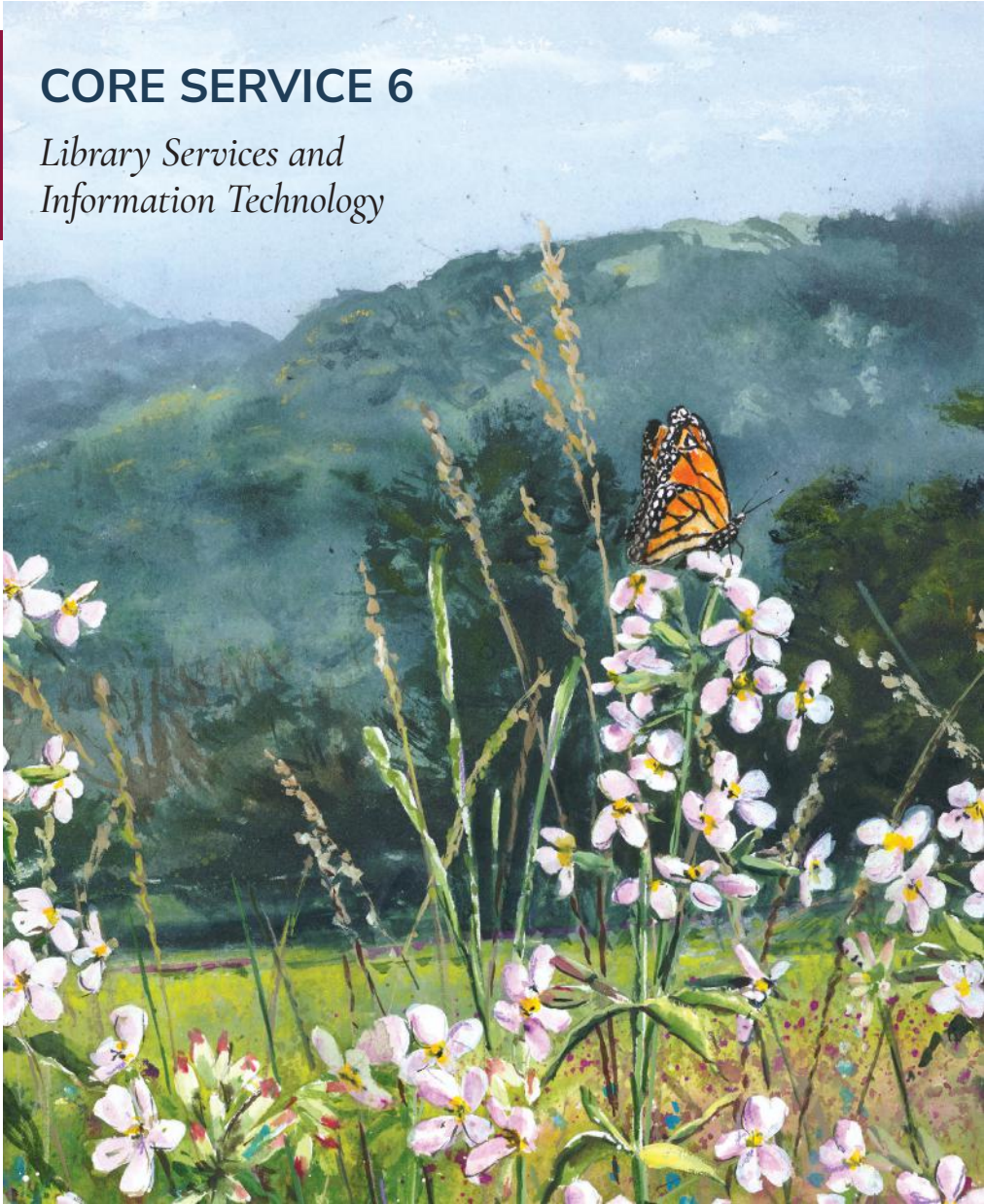
– Melissa H. White,  
Practice Administrator,  
Newon Family Physicians, P.A.

### Practice Support Blog

The Practice Support team produces a weekly blog detailing emerging updates and policy briefs. In Academic Year 2023, the team added 115 articles to help practitioners keep up with the changing landscape of health care and strategies for providing excellent care. A variety of concise, engaging, interactive guides are also available featuring online learning activities for meeting immediate needs of practices. Access the blog at [nwahec.org/practicesupportblog](http://nwahec.org/practicesupportblog).

## CORE SERVICE 6

### *Library Services and Information Technology*



*"Butterfly Mountain" Butterflies dance among the wildflowers adding beauty and grace to the many flower-strewn meadows nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains.*

## Illuminating access to information.

Northwest AHEC's Library Services and Information Technology helps learners engage with the training and programs they need throughout the other five core service areas. This commitment makes it vital that we always look for ways to adapt and improve how we share information, whether it means making our marketing communication more efficient and focused, or making it easier to access high-quality information and guidance. Our goal is to help students and health care professionals in our region maximize their training while minimizing their time away from providing care.

### ENGAGEMENT WITH LIBRARY SERVICES

Interactions: **485**

Document delivery requests: **207**

ADL logins by regional health professionals: **1,347\***

Interlibrary loans: **70**

ADL registered users: **192**

Search requests: **20**

Classes/orientations: **17**

Proactive alerts: **136**

*\*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

Technology is essential to delivering on our commitment to reaching, engaging, training and retaining more health care professionals. Enhanced online resources, our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, and other tools provided Northwest AHEC with insight into making our online marketing and content more targeted, relevant and efficient.

Web traffic and engagement have exceeded program goals. Northwest AHEC is effectively meeting learners where they are, continuing to guide future and existing health care professionals to the information that will help them serve their communities.

### ONLINE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

**231**

courses

**8%**

less than prior year

**6,770**

enrollments

**7%**

more than prior year

Total emails sent: **1,198,235**

Social media follower growth: **+8.42%**

- ▶ Our email campaign tools allow us to keep refining our marketing communication, targeting 286 email campaigns for 1,198,235 emails.
- ▶ Click-through rates on emails fell to just under 14% in AY23 (from under 16% in AY22). (Click-through rates are when a recipient opens an email and clicks a link.)
- ▶ Greater efficiency was achieved in online learning. The number of online courses declined. However, the number of enrollments went up from AY22.
- ▶ Yet, engagement rate rose dramatically (meaning learners opened at least one email, viewed a webpage in the last 60 days or registered for an activity). Of the 84,371 contacts in our CRM database, 41,108 have engaged with Northwest AHEC for an engagement rate of 49%.
- ▶ Social media followers grew over 8% from AY22, as well, finishing AY23 with 2,574 total followers across all channels.
- ▶ Email and social media campaigns together led directly to 16.5% of Northwest AHEC website traffic. Northwest AHEC is gaining a better understanding of how visitors get to our website and how to drive them to the most relevant educational tools with each campaign.
- ▶ Direct traffic continues to be our main channel for website sessions followed by strong email marketing traffic and organic search.
- ▶ The Northwest AHEC blog enjoyed stronger performance in driving additional website traffic. The blog attracted 17,385 total views in AY23 (37% higher than AY22), including 8,592 practice support update page views. The blog is available at [nwahec.org/blog](http://nwahec.org/blog).
- ▶ Our Healthcare Insights Podcast on Soundcloud garnered 1,680 plays over the past year, as well. The podcast is available at [soundcloud.com/nwahecwebmaster](http://soundcloud.com/nwahecwebmaster).

## ENGAGEMENT RATES IN AY23:

**37%** of our contacts in our 17-county region engaged with Northwest AHEC

**49%** of our contacts overall engaged with Northwest AHEC

### 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](http://nwahec.org/blog)



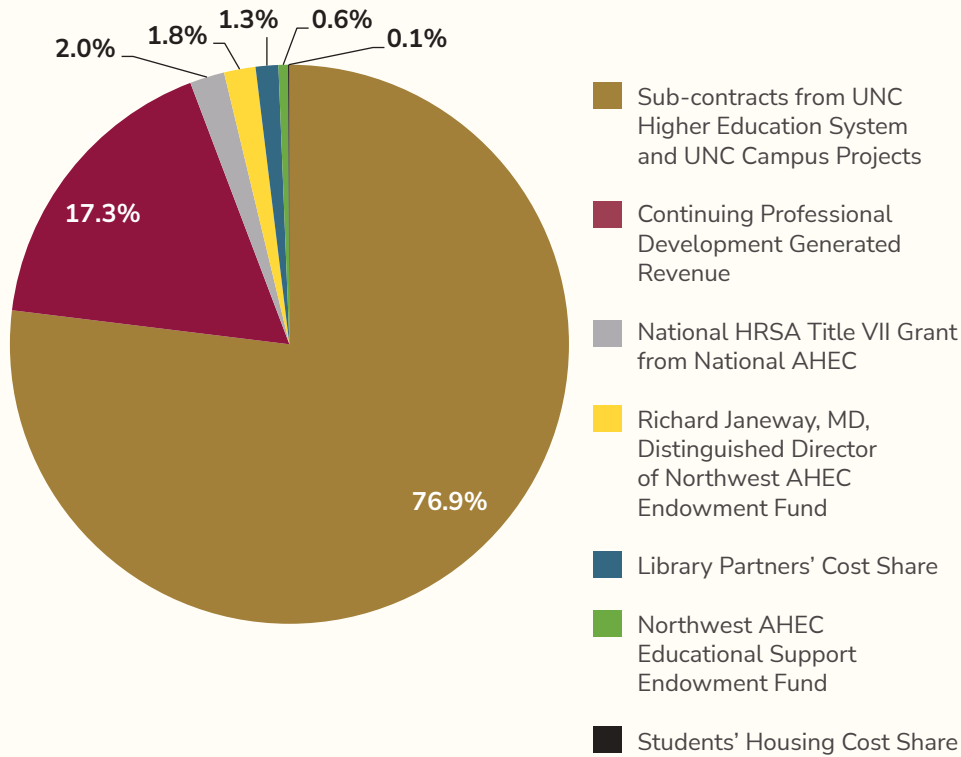
[youtube.com/northwestahec](https://youtube.com/northwestahec)



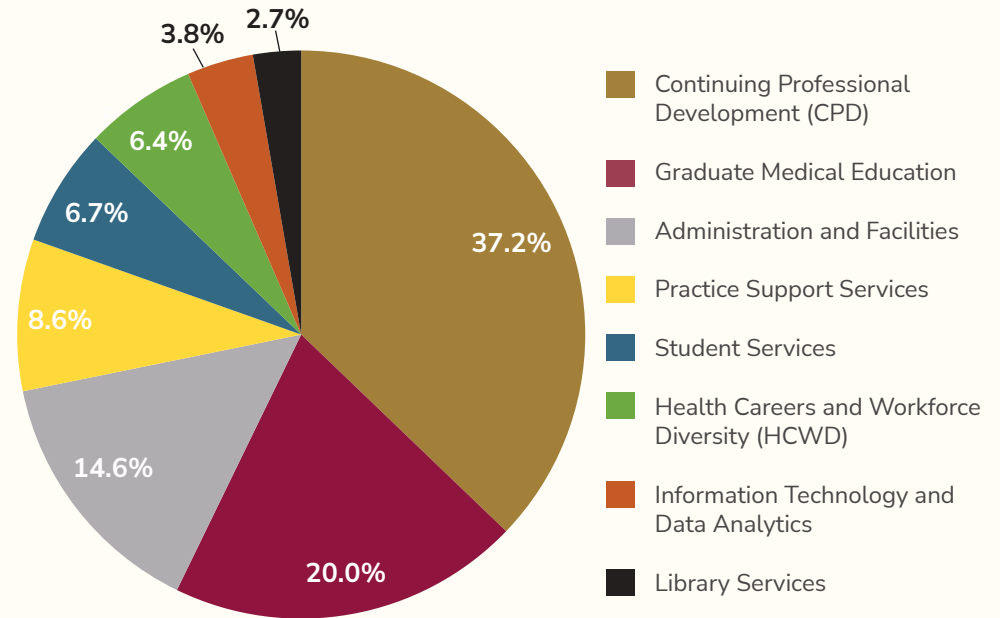
Join our email list at  
[nwahec.org/email](mailto:nwahec.org/email)

## FUNDING SOURCES AND EXPENDITURES

TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET  
OF \$5,861,000



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; Lee Howard; Chris Jones; Ellen Kesler; Brooke Kochanski; Michael Lischke; Leslie McDowell; Janice Moore; Gail Pawlik; Amanda Pearson; Marie Simos; Lisa Thomas; Leigh Watkins; Medina Wilson; Stephanie Yoder; Ellen Zimmerman*

Not pictured: *Immanuel Bryant; Angela Hodges; Michael Hulme; Lindsey MacLean; Melanee Mills*

Photo taken on June 27, 2023 at Salem Lake, Winston-Salem, NC

## PARTNERS

Northwest AHEC is grateful to have had the opportunity to collaborate with the following organizations, providers and agencies during AY23.

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 Family Practice PA  
 Appalachian Regional Healthcare System  
 Appalachian Regional Medical Associates  
 Ardmore Family Practice, P.A.  
 Ashe County  
 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  
 Avery County Schools  
 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  
 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  
 Cardinal Innovations Healthcare Solutions (MCO)  
 Cardiology Associates of the Carolinas  
 Care Ring  
 Caring Community Clinic  
 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)  
 Community Care Clinic  
 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  
 Davidson County Community College  
 Davidson County Schools  
     Career & Technical Education Department  
 Davidson Medical Ministries Clinic  
 Davidson-Davie Community College  
 Davie County  
 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  
 Forsyth County  
 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  
 Good Samaritan Clinic  
 Grace Clinic of Yadkin Valley  
 Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry  
 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  
 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

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  
 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  
 Duke Program Office  
 Eastern AHEC  
 Mountain AHEC  
 Piedmont AHEC  
 South Piedmont 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  
 Pfeiffer University  
 Piedmont Endocrinology, P.A.  
 Primedical 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  
 Rowan County Health Department  
 Rowan Medical Center  
 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  
 Stokes County Schools

Surry Community College  
 Surry County  
 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 Open Door Clinic of Urban Ministries  
 of Wake County  
 The Salem Center  
 The Salvation Army of Winston-Salem  
 The Shalom Project  
 Thomasville City Schools  
 Thomasville High School  
 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 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  
 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  
 Wilkes County Schools  
 Wingate University  
 Winston-Salem State University (WSSU)  
 School of Health Sciences  
 Winston-Salem & Kernersville Pediatrics  
 Winston-Salem Fellows  
 Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools  
 Womble Bond Dickinson  
 Yadkin County  
 Yadkin County Schools  
 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

