

HEALTH FROM EVERY PERSPECTIVE

SERVICES DESIGNED TO RECRUIT, TRAIN AND RETAIN
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS THROUGHOUT OUR REGION.



Wake Forest University
School of Medicine

NORTHWEST AHEC
PART OF NC AHEC

At Northwest AHEC,
we remain committed
to empowering
communities by
bringing more health
care opportunities
and expertise to
all in Northwest
North Carolina.

CONTENTS

Mission, Vision, Values and Method 1

Letter to Stakeholders 3

Core Service 1:
Health Careers and Workforce Development 4

Core Service 2:
Student Services 6

Core Service 3:
Graduate Medical Education
and Patient Services Support 8

Core Service 4:
Continuing Professional Development
Activities and Services 10

Core Service 5:
Practice Support Services 14

Core Service 6:
Library Services and Information Technology 16

Funding Sources and Expenditures..... 18

Partners of Northwest AHEC 20

Artwork by Justin Richardson, Blue Ridge Parkway Price Lake Sunrise.

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.

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.



Students from Alexander Central High School explored health professions through Camp Med this summer.

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.

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 Development
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



Wake Forest University
School of Medicine

NORTHWEST AHEC
PART OF NC AHEC



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

Letter to Stakeholders

I am pleased to welcome you to the 2025-2026 Annual Report for the Northwest Area Health Education Center (Northwest AHEC).

Our theme this year is derived straight from our mission and the resilience required to support such a broad range of health professions throughout our region and state. With a critical shortage of health care workers across North Carolina, especially in rural and underserved communities, it is a monumental challenge. Just as an example, by 2033 — only seven years from now — North Carolina is projected to face a shortfall of at least 12,500 Registered Nurses.

I am proud to report that our team of educators, health care leaders, collaborating institutions, and community partners have continued to rise to the occasion throughout this academic year. We are addressing health care challenges from multiple angles:

- ▶ From recruiting a future health care workforce in areas where they are needed most;
- ▶ To helping educate and guide dedicated professionals in meeting today's community needs;
- ▶ To partnering with practices and providers to more efficiently deliver quality care and improve access to services and resources.

In this report, you will find many examples of how we continue to partner to help provide support and programs throughout our 17-county region. We have highlighted a few examples from Catawba, Watauga and Iredell counties, in particular, to give you a closer look at the specific ways we collaborate and adapt expertise and resources to support efforts in local communities.

There are two examples I'd like to briefly share here. One is in Alexander County. This summer, rising ninth graders from Alexander Central High School explored health care professions through ACHS Camp Med. With no hospitals in Alexander County, campers got to discover different career pathways, as well as get hands-on experience via collaboration with research, nursing care, and hospital facilities in Iredell and Catawba counties. Reaching young people in all our communities helps inspire and empower them to careers in health care, providing a critical starting point for tomorrow's workforce.

The other example is in Catawba County, where Catawba Valley Medical Center and Catawba Valley Community College partnered to create the Clinical Instructor Partnership Program. This program focuses on building our capacity to instruct and improve workforce readiness through better clinical experiences for nursing students as they prepare to transition.

With support from Northwest AHEC, the program has evolved beyond addressing faculty shortages to become a catalyst for strengthening the academic-practice partnership.

These two programs certainly exemplify our mission in action. However, you will find many more examples in this report from the past academic year. We helped launch new opportunities for connecting different health care disciplines. We refined programs to better fit the practical needs of professionals in their communities. We shared more information and expertise online and in person, meeting our learners and partners where our support could make the most impact.

Together with our partnering institutions, fellow AHEC regions, and community leaders, we have continued to take on the challenge of improving health and well-being for all. With many more challenges ahead, we are committed to recruit, train and retain the workforce needed to create a healthy North Carolina.

Michael P. Lischke, EdD, MPH, FCPP

Richard Janeway, MD, Distinguished Director of Northwest AHEC

CORE SERVICE 1

Health Careers and Workforce Development

Northwest NC regional educators are producing 690 RNs and 130 LPNs each year, leaving an annual deficit of 320 nurses and 90 LPNs.

NC Health Talent Alliance 2025
Regional Data

Photo by Justin Richardson, Linn Cove Viaduct in Autumn

Looking out for future health care professionals.

The North Carolina AHEC Scholars Program at Northwest AHEC welcomed 33 college students this past year. The scholars fulfilled 80 hours of local and statewide didactic and clinical modules to gain a deeper understanding of community health issues.

In late February, our Northwest AHEC Scholars joined peers from across the state at the Third Annual NC AHEC Emerging Leaders in Healthcare Conference in Greenville, NC. This powerful three-day experience, hosted by Eastern AHEC and Area L AHEC, was designed to inspire, educate, and equip NC's future health care workforce.

Northwest AHEC was proud to partner with Wake Forest University School of Medicine (WFUSM) on three student-led community health initiatives: Share the Health Fair, Project SEE and Sisters in Science. Together, these programs expose future health professionals and make a meaningful difference by expanding access to preventive care.

Now in its 20th year, the Share the Health Fair is a large annual event held at Downtown Health Plaza, with 300+ medical students, residents, and faculty volunteers providing more than 15 free health screenings, along with navigation and follow-up support. Offered multiple times throughout the year, Project SEE has provided 255 participants with free vision screenings, prescription glasses, and access to ophthalmology expertise since May 2025. Sisters in Science engaged over 80 high school students to women leaders in the medical field.

Northwest AHEC partnered with NC AHEC's statewide Future Health Professionals Week this past March, shining a light on our state's critical shortage of health care workers, especially in rural and underserved communities. Designed to inspire students and families to explore health career pathways, the initiative featured themed daily content, career exploration, and opportunities to engage with professionals. Northwest AHEC extended these opportunities with local programming, career exposure, and hands-on activities tailored to students and families in our region.

Two statewide NC AHEC webinars were key highlights of the week and provided practical next steps for anyone exploring a future in health care.

NORTHWEST AHEC HEALTH CAREERS OUTPUTS			
TOTALS	43 ACTIVITIES	1,225 HOURS	2,337 PARTICIPANTS
Exposure	11	54	1,258
Pipeline (20-40 hrs)	29	851	1,003
Intensive (>40 hrs)	3	320	76

Northwest AHEC Camp Med

Camp Med is designed to spark interest and expand understanding of the health care field while students are still in high school. This year we had students from all 17 counties in the Northwest region. Programs were held throughout the region and virtually.

544

Virtual Camp Med
unique participants

459

In-person Camp Med
unique participants

20+

Hours per
unique participant



Catawba County Students RISE

The RISE (Robust Internship Student Experience) Program in partnership with Catawba Valley Medical Center was developed to allow junior and senior students from all Catawba County high schools to complete observation experiences in a multitude of different health care professions. The program celebrated its eighth cohort of interns in May 2026. Throughout the semester, interns participated in team building activities, educational resource presentations, and hospital tours. Students also completed a 120+ hour internship experience in up to two areas of interest.

Clinical Instructor Partnership Program

Catawba Valley Medical Center (CVMC) and Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC) continue to strengthen the nursing workforce through their Clinical Instructor Partnership (CIP) academic-practice collaboration. Direct-care nurses at CVMC serve as clinical instructors, providing student nurses with hands-on experience in evidence-based care while strengthening the transition from education to practice.

One-year post-implementation, the hospital has seen a positive trend in new graduate recruitment and retention. Throughout the state, 161 participants have completed the NCAHEC Clinical Instructor Partner (CIP) course.

“By expanding clinical instruction opportunities and strengthening mentorship, we are better preparing nursing graduates to enter the workforce with confidence and competence.” - K. Brooke Kistler, PhD, RN, CNE, Nursing Department Head, Catawba Valley Community College

NC Health Talent Alliance

The NC Health Talent Alliance (HTA) continued its mission in 2026 to address health care workforce shortages across North Carolina by bringing together health care employers, educators, workforce partners, and AHECs to strengthen regional talent pipelines.

The year began with a joint meeting of the Northwest AHEC Consortium for Clinical Education Practice (CCEP) and the Northwest AHEC Employer and Educator Collaborative, providing partners with updates on clinical education, workforce development, and emerging health care trends while strengthening connections between employers and educational institutions.

Throughout the spring, a series of regional convenings engaged health care employers, K-12 leaders, community colleges, and universities from Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, and Watauga counties. A key highlight was the Northwest Health Care Workforce Employer and Educator Convening, which brought stakeholders together to formalize a regional network committed to advancing health care career pathways.

In addition, Northwest AHEC in partnership with North Carolina Business Committee for Education (NCBCE) and myFuture NC launched two Healthcare Accelerators as a new regional initiative focused on expanding health care apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships.

These efforts build upon the foundation established through the Health Talent Alliance and Northwest AHEC's Talent Pipeline Management initiative.

CORE SERVICE 2

Student Services

Seeing health care from inside our communities.

Making housing available to students is invaluable to the training and retention of future health care practitioners in all communities. Northwest AHEC was proud to partner with affiliated universities over the past year to provide housing and help reduce student expenses during community-based education activities. This housing partnership is vital to students having a fulfilling and connected experience.

Northwest AHEC helps coordinate with each affiliated university to secure housing for students during rotations. Students were provided single-occupancy bedrooms to preserve personal space within housing they are already sharing with other students.

Providing all students with a better environment for studying and preparing assignments gives them greater opportunity for a more impactful clinical experience.

Housing partnerships hold at 20 schools

Housing numbers showed steady demand and utilization across the board in Academic Year 2026. All of the affiliated colleges and universities from last year signed on again, giving us a total number of 20 schools across the state of North Carolina.

Over 70% of
students rated
their housing
experience as
better than
satisfactory.

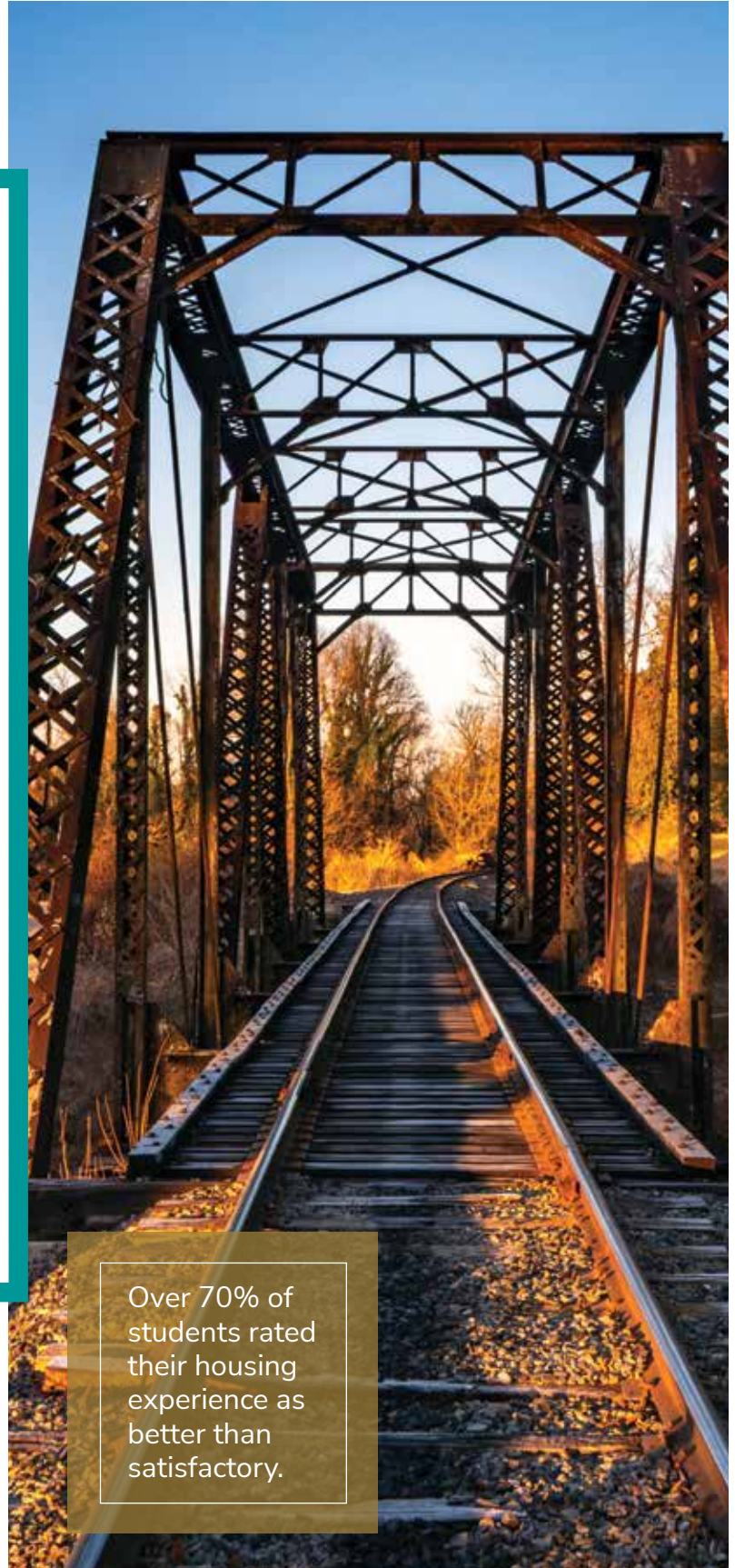


Photo by Laurel Rumph, Timeless Trestle, ©Laurel Rumph Photography.



STUDENT SUPPORT HOUSING OUTPUTS:

5,383

NIGHTS
PROVIDED

131

UNIQUE STUDENTS
HOUSED

30

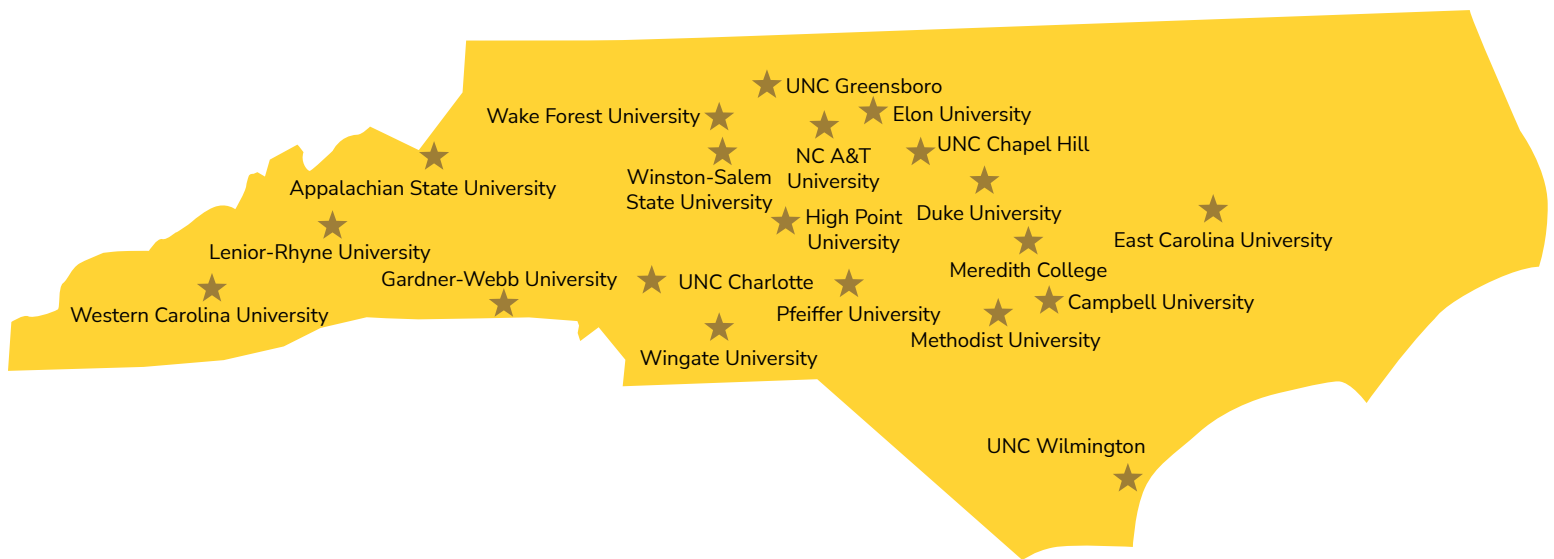
LENGTH OF STAY*
(AVG.)

263

HOUSING
REQUESTS

* Average length of stay is calculated by the number of nights provided divided by the number of stays (180).

HOUSING SUPPORTED COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:



Appalachian
STATE UNIVERSITY

CAMPBELL
UNIVERSITY

Duke
UNIVERSITY

ECU

ELON
UNIVERSITY

GARDNER-WEBB
UNIVERSITY

HIGH POINT
UNIVERSITY

LENOIR-RHYNE
UNIVERSITY

MEREDITH
COLLEGE

METHODIST
UNIVERSITY

NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL
AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE

UNCG

UNCW
UNIVERSITY of
NORTH CAROLINA
WILMINGTON

Pfeiffer
UNIVERSITY

WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY

Western
Carolina
UNIVERSITY

WINGATE
UNIVERSITY

WINSTON-SALEM
STATE UNIVERSITY

CORE SERVICE 3

Graduate Medical Education
and Patient Services Support

Seeing where to make
the greatest impact.

Northwest AHEC supports graduate medical education through cultivating opportunities for training and retention. Our goal is to keep health care professionals thoughtfully and expertly serving communities across North Carolina, filling gaps in care today and for future generations.

The high percentage of resident graduates in North Carolina serving in HRSA-designated Health Profession Shortage Areas (HPSA) or Medically Underserved Areas (MUA) demonstrates how great the need is for health professionals. This also offers an indication of how we are developing a health care workforce committed to care for all.



93% (38 of 41)
of 2026 resident
graduates who
stayed in NC are
serving in HPSAs
or MUAs.

Artwork by Laurel Rumph, Potter's Wheel, ©Laurel Rumph Photography.

Of the Northwest AHEC-supported Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist residents who graduated in AY26: **62%** chose to stay in NC (41 of 66)

Total estimated number of underserved patients served by the residents during AY26: **52,355**

Family and Community Medicine: **15,000**

Internal Medicine: **12,810**

Psychiatry and Behavioral Health: **14,272**

Pediatrics: **10,273**

PRACTICING IN A HEALTH
PROFESSION SHORTAGE AREA (HPSA) OR
MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED AREA (MUA)

	AY26 Graduates Practicing in a HPSA/MUA	Total AY26 Graduates
Psychiatry and Behavioral Health	7 (7 in NC)	8
Family and Community Medicine	7 (5 in NC)	10
Internal Medicine	33 (19 in NC)	34
Pediatrics	6 (6 in NC)	14

Graduate Medical Education and Patient Services Support provide training in under-resourced communities and treatment of underserved populations. Examples of these Academic Year 2026 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.
- ▶ 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 provide care in Title 1 schools.
- ▶ The Community Care Clinic (Centro Clinico) where residents provide general care to an underserved and mainly Latino population.
- ▶ Providing obstetrical care in a rural practice in Wilkesboro.
- ▶ Providing medical care for Winston-Salem State University and UNC School of the Arts.

INTERNAL MEDICINE

- ▶ Residents rotate at the VA Clinic in Kernersville.
- ▶ 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) or Winston East.
- ▶ Strategically located in a health care manpower shortage area, the DHP has a unique attachment to the underserved east Winston-Salem community.
- ▶ The DHP is the largest primary care outpatient department in the Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Health system. Through three large clinics (Pediatrics, Adult Medicine and Ob/Gyn), more than 25,000 patients were offered primary care, acute care and post hospital services.
- ▶ Integrated behavioral health, counseling, legal and food pantry services, and a community garden are available to families served by the DHP.
- ▶ Community health workers and care managers are provided in partnership with Population Health and a Transportation Coordinator.
- ▶ The DHP patient population had a Medicaid enrollment of 9,483 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026), with 5,134 pediatric patients.

PSYCHIATRY AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- ▶ Psychiatry residents, as well as child and adolescent psychiatry fellows complete required community-based training experiences in settings that serve HRSA-designated Health Professional Shortage Areas and Medically Underserved Areas/Populations.

- ▶ 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, the Child and Adolescent Fellowship provides behavioral health services to indigent and underserved children.

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 Maya Angelou Research Center for Healthy Communities (MARCH) and Global Health certificate programs of the Wake Forest University School of Medicine designed to address local and global health needs while training and educating 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 all children, offers expanded resources for legal referrals, conducts refugee health assessments for children, and has a medical-legal partnership available for patients who are victims of human trafficking or domestic violence.
- ▶ The DHP screens children for 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



Northwest AHEC

CPD Participants 37,276

CPD Activities 1,680

Refining training opportunities for all professionals.

Northwest AHEC partnered to offer effective continuing professional development opportunities throughout the region. The number of participants increased, despite a more streamlined number of events overall. Participants rose by 7% and unique participants rose by more than 14% over AY25. This increase in engagement across CPD activities demonstrates the commitment by health care professionals in our region to ongoing development and improvement in the quality of care in all our communities.

Highlighted CPD Activities

INAUGURAL GROWING WELL “MOVING MOUNTAINS AND COMMUNITY” CONFERENCE

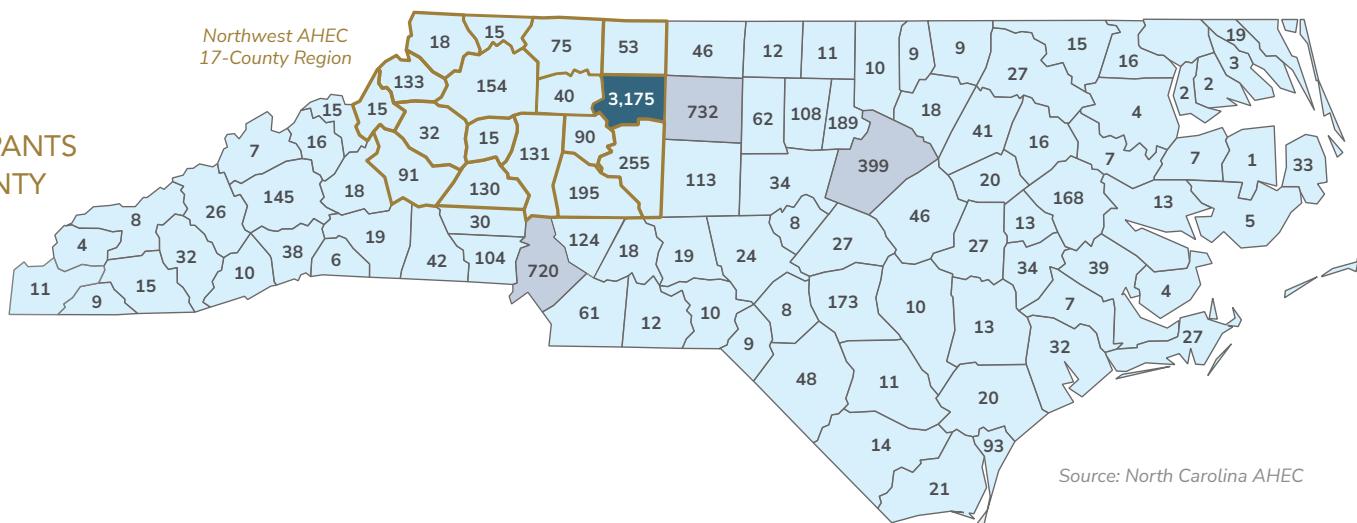
Hosted by Appalachian State University in partnership with Northwest AHEC, the inaugural 2025 Growing Well “Moving Mountains and Community” Conference in October brought together a diverse and passionate group of professionals, caregivers, and advocates to advance care for children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN). The event was held on campus at the Leon Levine Hall of Health Sciences in Boone, NC.

The three-day conference welcomed 64 participants to the pre-conference workshop and 141 attendees at the main sessions, reflecting strong engagement across health care, education, and family support sectors.

The dedicated pre-conference day focused on skill-building and foundational strategies with interactive workshops and training sessions. The main conference featured expert-led lectures, case-based discussions, simulations, and panel conversations. The conference emphasized equitable, coordinated, and family-centered approaches, with a strong focus on addressing social determinants of health such as food insecurity, housing instability, and access to education.

Photo by Justin Richardson, Duggers Creek Falls.

UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS BY COUNTY



CORE SERVICE 4 (continued)

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities and Services



Photo by Justin Richardson, Duggers Creek Falls.



A DECADE OF PERCC: 2015 -2025

The Program to Enhance Relationship Centered Communication (PERCC) was launched in 2015 in response to growing evidence that physician communication is a critical driver of patient experience, quality outcomes and value-based reimbursement. As the program grew, Northwest AHEC became a key partner in supporting PERCC's reach and sustainability by providing accredited continuing education credit and assistance with participant registration.

Through 2025, 2,296 people have completed PERCC training, including 779 attending physicians, 600 leaders and officers, 480 nurse practitioners and physician assistants, 80 registered nurses, and 357 resident physicians.

Today, PERCC continues to contribute meaningfully to patient experience, clinician development, and organizational culture. PERCC stands as a model for how intentional communication training — supported through strong partnerships like Northwest AHEC — can help shape safer, more compassionate care.

2026 IPE EVENT CONNECTS 330+ FUTURE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

In April 2026, an Interprofessional Education (IPE) event attracted a diverse cohort of more than 330 students and 34 facilitators representing multiple institutions and health care disciplines. This year, we introduced two simulated patient cases and hosted two separate sessions on the same day, allowing for even greater participation and engagement. The collaborative experience fostered communication, critical thinking, and team-based problem-solving within realistic clinical scenarios.

This annual event is made possible through a strong partnership among Northwest AHEC, Wake Forest University School of Medicine (WFUSM), and Winston-Salem State University (WSSU). Students from nine different WSSU programs attended, along with students from WFUSM's Physician Assistant Studies program and Forsyth Technical Community College's Nursing program.

We are also grateful for two Northwest AHEC team members, Stephanie Poindexter and Melanee Mills, who served as facilitators.

"All of the students were so professional and knowledgeable. It was a pleasure facilitating this event!!"

– Stephanie Poindexter



NC AHEC RN Refresher Program

For more than 50 years, the NC AHEC RN Refresher Program has helped nurses with expired, lapsed, or encumbered licenses, as well as those returning after time away from clinical practice, successfully reenter the nursing workforce. The program provides comprehensive support, including orientation, enrollment assistance, clinical placement coordination, skills labs, simulation experiences, and training designed to strengthen clinical judgment and confidence. During the past year, Northwest AHEC maintained an average enrollment of 17 students at any given time, reflecting the program's continued contribution to nursing workforce development across the region.

"The NC AHEC RN Refresher program with Northwest AHEC gave me the opportunity to learn the current updates and recommendations for the care of patients with acute and chronic illnesses. Already I have implemented changes in my clinical practice and updated care plans from my learning experience."

– K. Ammons, RN



CORE SERVICE 5
Practice Support Services

Photo by Chris Crump, Owner, Dogwood Farms.

Helping practices realize greater success.

Northwest AHEC Practice Support partnered with 137 health care practices in Academic Year 2026 to provide 2,384 coaching encounters throughout our region. This coaching volume represented an 18% increase in encounters and a 6% increase in the number of practices supported in FY26. The practice support team assisted with a wide range of quality improvement topics, including billing and coding assistance, workflow optimization, NCTracks, and staff training.

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

PROJECTS	
Billing/Coding	489
Collaborative Care Model	424
Practice Management - Financial	270
Payor Contracting Payments and Shared Savings	210
Child Family Specialty Plan	174
EHR Optimization	166
Medicare Quality Payment Program	135
Practice Management - Policies and Procedures	106
Quality Improvement	95
NCTracks	73
Public Health Preparedness	51
Practice Manager Academy	48
AHEC Library Services Assistance	40

ENROLLMENT IN NORTHWEST AHEC PRACTICE SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

	COACHING ENCOUNTERS	PRACTICES
Alexander	12	2
Alleghany	22	1
Ashe	164	7
Avery	45	3
Burke	88	7
Caldwell	68	6
Catawba	267	21
Davidson	158	5
Davie	39	3
Forsyth	617	21
Iredell	248	22
Rowan	101	9
Stokes	19	1
Surry	288	12
Watauga	141	11
Wilkes	76	4
Yadkin	33	2
Total*	2,384	137

* This total does not include encounters outside of the Northwest AHEC 17-county region.

Throughout the year, Northwest AHEC Practice Support Senior Quality Improvement Specialist, Medina Wilson, MBA, MHA, CPC, CPPM, provided in person and virtual assistance to guide clinic quality improvement initiatives. During this period, Medina provided resources and guidance to help the clinic prepare for and successfully navigate the process of a required Medicaid audit. Typical onsite audits with a Medicaid reviewer take 60 to 90 minutes. Grace Clinic satisfied all audit concerns in a 20-minute visit due to the clinic's exceptional level of preparation.

IREDELL HEALTH AND NORTHWEST AHEC TEAMWORK

In October 2025, Northwest AHEC Practice Support Senior Quality Improvement Specialist, Lara Dickerson, MHA, BA, engaged in practice coaching with Iredell Health System Credentialing Specialist, Melody Josey. The pair worked to resolve several outstanding issues related to NCTracks, the multi-payer Medicaid Management Information System for the NC Department of Health and Human Services.

Together, they reviewed approximately 84 providers across 12 PHPs, examining 1,008 affiliation records. Over the course of multiple meetings, Lara and Melody systematically identified discrepancies and resolved 258 missing provider-to-PHP affiliations.

Lara and Melody worked directly with representatives from each PHP to relink providers and initiate claim reprocessing for errantly denied claims. This effort resulted in a large volume of new, properly attributed claims.



Highlighted Projects

GRACE CLINIC OF YADKIN VALLEY

Grace Clinic of Yadkin Valley in Surry County received the State Designated Rural Health Centers (SDRHC) Award of Excellence for SFY 2025–2026. The award was presented at the SDRHC End-of-Year Meeting on June 3, 2026, at the Washington Duke Inn in Durham, NC. Betty Taylor, the Clinic Administrator, was also recognized for her many years of service and dedication to the community.

CORE SERVICE 6

Library Services and Information Technology



Photo by Laurel Rumph, Parked in Paradise, ©Laurel Rumph Photography.

Ensuring clarity of information and access.

Library Services and Information Technology play critical roles in Northwest AHEC’s ability to engage learners. Our evidence-based resources are designed to help students, providers and learners avoid misinformation found through basic internet searches. We continue to make marketing communications more effective and efficient, enhance tools for accessing high-quality information, and creating simple, effective pathways for support.

Statewide LibGuides are being developed specifically for health care professionals to provide streamlined access to evidence-based resources, clinical information, and professional development materials, and have been updated for ADA compliance.

ENGAGEMENT WITH LIBRARY SERVICES

Service
Interactions:
364

Proactive
Alerts¹:
374

Copyrights:
1

LibGuides:
42

Document
Delivery Requests:
491

Interlibrary
Loans:
10

Mediated
Searches:
17

CPD
Programs:
17

¹ Current Literature Awareness Service

Web Activity: Site, Blog, Email and Social Media

Northwest AHEC's approach to technology focuses on meeting learners and providers where they are. With strong growth in engagement, open and click rates, social media follows, and website sessions, we continue to refine how technology helps us reach, engage, train and retain health care professionals in our region and beyond. Working with each of Northwest AHEC's core services, our outreach and content is designed to deliver a more effective, intuitive educational experience.

—

Total emails sent: **1,324,931**

—

Social media follower growth: **+6.8%**

ONLINE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

—

79 courses with active enrollments

—

3,482 enrollments

- Our email campaign tools allow us to keep refining our marketing communication, targeting 307 email campaigns for 1,324,931 emails.
- Our targeted promotional emails continue to show strong readership with open and click-through rates over 34% and 9%, respectively — way above sector averages and continue to increase year over year.
- Learner Relationship Management platform engagement rates remained strong at 38% on average of Northwest AHEC counties, with a high of 62%.
- Among responses to the “How did you hear about this activity” question on registration, 49.2% responded that they heard via email, 10.4% via their regional AHEC website, and 12.6% heard via word of mouth.
- Social media followers grew 6.8% from AY25, finishing with 3,018 total followers across all channels.
- The Northwest AHEC blog continues to drive additional website traffic. The blog attracted 21,021 total views (versus 16,352 in AY25), including a 32% increase in practice support update page views (11,274 versus 8,552 in AY25). The blog is available at nwahec.org/blog.
- Our Healthcare Insights Podcast on Soundcloud garnered 3,699 plays in AY26 — an increase of 27% over AY25 — with 104 people enrolled in the Podcast CE Learning Series. The podcast is available at soundcloud.com/nwahecwebmaster.

ENGAGEMENT RATES:



38% of our contacts in our 17-county region engaged with Northwest AHEC



61% of our contacts overall engaged with Northwest AHEC

Connect with us online



facebook.com/nwahec



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



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



linkedin.com/company/nwahec



nwahec.org/blog



Nwahec.org/practicesupportblog



nwahec.org/podcastce



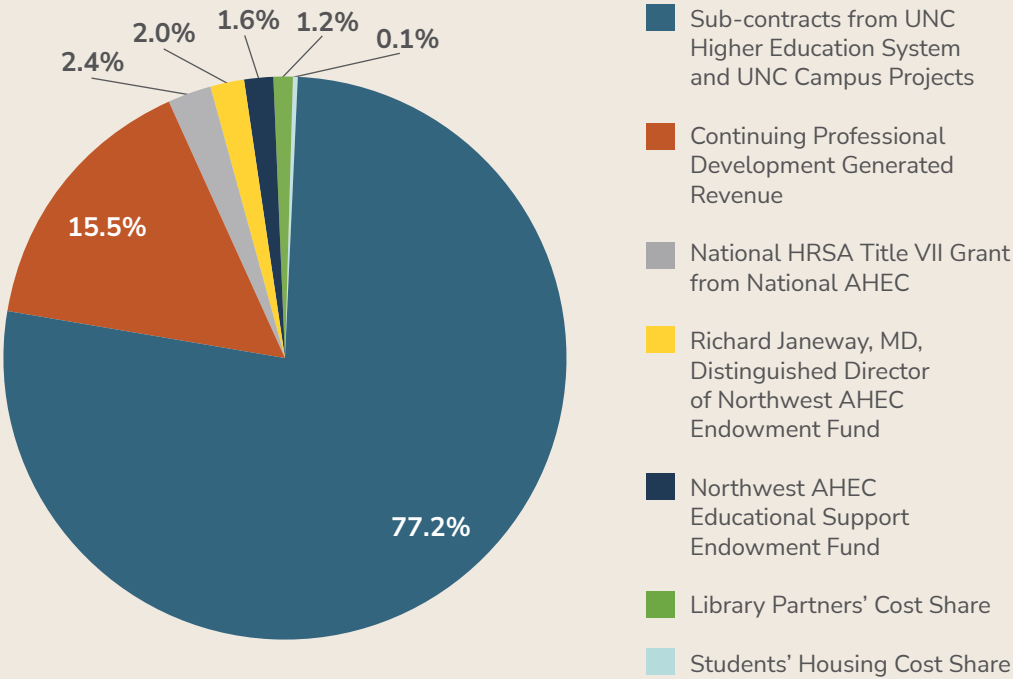
youtube.com/northwestahec



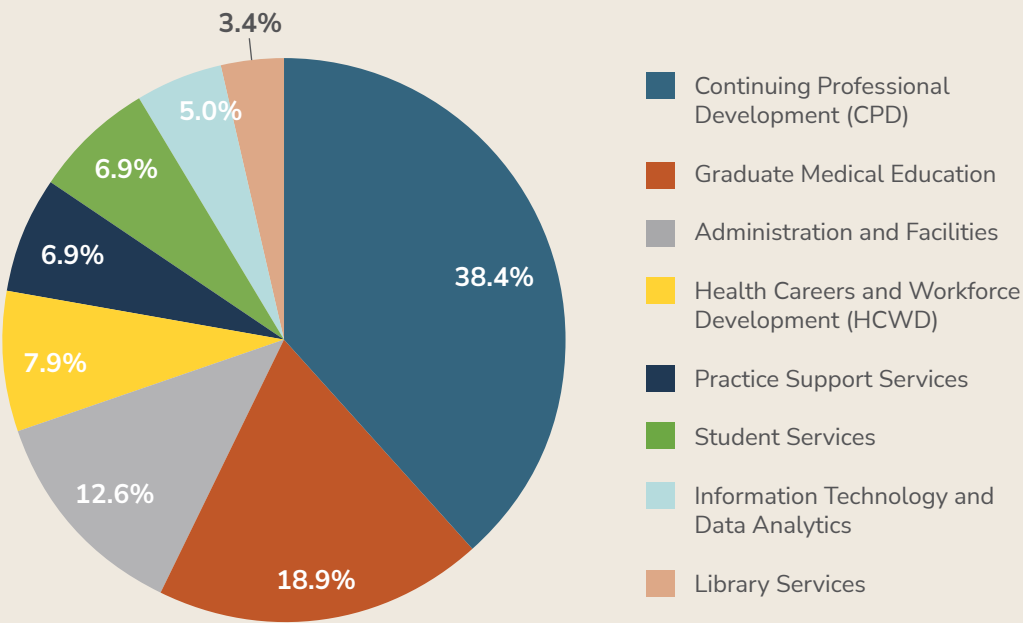
Join our email list at
nwahec.org/email

FUNDING SOURCES AND EXPENDITURES

TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET
OF \$5,933,000



CORE SERVICE ALLOCATION





The Northwest AHEC Team

(L to R) Brooke Kochanski; Stephanie Poindexter; Michael Lischke; Leigh Watkins; Janice Moore; Nedra Edwards Hines; Samantha Garvens; Melanee Mills; Christina Clarke; Michelle Adams; Lisa Thomas; Reed Burger; Lara Dickerson; Lee Howard; Cherelle Blakely; Marie Simos; Andrew Brewer; Medina Wilson; Ellen Zimmerman; Gail Pawlik; Chris Jones; Megan Mills Anderson; Jasmine Mickens

Not pictured: Amy Basham; Alana Dodson; Amanda Pearson; Angela Hodges; Lindsey MacLean; Michael Hulme

Photo taken June 2026 in Hickory, NC

PARTNERS

Northwest AHEC is grateful to have had the opportunity to collaborate with the following organizations, providers and agencies during AY26.

Access Healthcare
Adult Internal Medicine, PA
Advocate Health
Alexander County
Alexander County Schools
Alleghany Chamber of Commerce
Alleghany County
Alleghany County Schools
Alleghany Memorial Hospital
Appalachian Regional Healthcare System
Appalachian State University
Appalachian District Health Department
Appalachian Family Practice PA
Appalachian Regional Healthcare System
Ardmore Family Practice, P.A.
Ashe County
Ashe County Schools
Ashe Memorial Hospital
Atrium Health Behavioral Division; Davidson
Atrium Health Blue Ridge
Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center
Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist
Avery County
Avery County Schools
Bethany Medical Center
Black River Health Services
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina
Blue Ridge Medical Group
Burke County
Burke County Schools
Cabral Internal Medicine
Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute
Caldwell County
Caldwell County Schools

Caldwell UNC Health Care
Campbell University
Care Ring
CareNet. Inc.
Carolina Eye Associates - Winston Salem
Catawba College
Catawba County
Catawba County Department of Social Services
Catawba County Public Health Department
Catawba County Schools
Catawba Pediatric Associates
Catawba Science Center
Catawba Valley Behavioral Healthcare
Catawba Valley Community College
Catawba Valley Medical Center
Cedar Creek Family Medicine
City of Winston-Salem
Clay Comprehensive Health Services
Cleveland Pediatrics
College Foundation of North Carolina
Community Care of North Carolina
Cove Creek School
Crosby Scholars
Davidson College
Davidson County
Davidson County Community College
Davidson County Schools
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
Digestive Health Specialist
Douglas D Pritchard, M.D., P.L.L.C.
Duke Health Lake Norman Hospital
Duke University Medical Center
Duke University School of Medicine
East Carolina University
Elkin City Schools
Elliot Morgan Parsonage, P.A.
Elon University
Evergreen Health Promotion

Forsyth County
Forsyth County Department of Public Health
Forsyth, Stokes, and Davie County Medical Society
Forsyth Technical Community College
Free Clinic of Our Towns
Frye Regional Medical Center
Gardner-Webb University
Good Samaritan Clinic
Grace Clinic of Yadkin Valley
Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry
HealthReach Community Clinic
Hendrick Bryant Nerhood & Sanders, LLP
Hickory Public Schools
High Country Community Health
High Country Family Medicine
High Point University
Hopeway
Housing Authority of the City of High Point
Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital
Integrated Care of Greater Hickory
Iredell County
Iredell Health System
Iredell-Statesville Schools
Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
Kintegra Health
Lee Physician Group
Lenoir-Rhyne University
Lexington City Schools
Lexington Family Physicians, P.A.
Lexington Internal Medicine Clinic, P.A.
Livingstone College
Lyndhurst Gynecologic Associates
March of Dimes of Northwest North Carolina
Mental Health Association in Forsyth County
Meridian Resources, Inc.
Meredith College
Methodist University
Mitchell Community College
Moore Free Care Clinic
Mooresville Graded School District
Mountain Laurel Family Practice
Mountain View Pediatrics, P.A.
Mt. Airy City Schools
North Carolina AHEC
 Area L AHEC
 Duke AHEC Program
 Eastern AHEC

Mountain AHEC
 Piedmont AHEC
 South Piedmont AHEC
 Southern Regional AHEC
 South East AHEC
 Wake AHEC
 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
 North Carolina Medical Group Managers
 Association
 North Carolina Medical Society
 Future Clinical Leaders College
 North Carolina Providers of Abuser Treatment
 North Carolina Respiratory Care Board
 North Carolina State University
 Northern Regional Hospital of Surry County
 Northwest Region School Nurses Association
 of NC
 Novant Health
 Forsyth Medical Center
 Rowan Medical Center
 Thomasville Medical Center
 Old Vineyard Behavioral Health Services
 Pfeiffer University
 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
 Senior Services, Inc.
 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
 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
 Town of Kernersville
 Trellis Supportive 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
 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
 Charlotte Campus
 Clinical and Translational Science Institute
 Delivering Equal Access to Care Clinic
 Family and Community Medicine
 Infectious Disease
 Internal Medicine
 Maya Angelou Research Center for Health
 Pediatrics
 Physician Assistant Studies & Boone Campus
 Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine
 Public Health Sciences
 Share the Health Fair
 Student National Medical Association
 Wake Forest University
 Department of Counseling
 Department of Psychology
 LGBTQ+ Center
 Scholars Office
 WakeMed Cary Hospital
 Watauga County
 Watauga County Schools
 Watauga Medical Center - Appalachian
 Regional Healthcare System
 Watch Healthcare Program
 West Alexander Middle School
 West Caldwell Health Council
 Western Carolina University
 Western Piedmont Community College
 Wilkes Community College
 Wilkes County
 Wilkes County Schools
 Willie Mason & Friends
 Wingate University
 Winston-Salem State University
 Winston-Salem & Kernersville Pediatrics
 Winston-Salem Fellows
 Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools
 Womble Bond Dickinson
 Yadkin County
 Yadkin County Schools



Our service area
encompasses 17 counties in
Northwest North Carolina:



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.



Photo by Deborah Scannell, Lush Sunset.