

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Office of Rural Health

NC Office of Rural Health Quarterly Newsletter

June 2025

Welcome to the Service Area Teams' Quarterly Newsletter from the North Carolina Office of Rural Health (ORH).

ORH uses Service Area Teams (SATs) to facilitate collaboration across programs and provide strategic support to grantees and partners across the state.

SATs are comprised of members from all programs within ORH including Community Health, Medication Assistance, Rural Hospital Assistance, Rural Health Operations, Farmworker Health, Placement Services, Health Information Technology and Telehealth, Analytics & Innovations, and Business and Contracts. We would love to hear from you! If you have a news story, comments, or questions for the upcoming Spring newsletter contact **Leslie Wolcott** or **Justin Kearley**.

Welcome New ORH Staff!

Meet new staff members at the Office of Rural Health!

Angel Christou is a Community Development Specialist Intern with the North Carolina Farmworker Health Program. She is also a Master of Public Health Student at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, with a concentration in Applied Epidemiology. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Her research interests include nutrition, cardiovascular health, sustainable agriculture, farmworker health, and maternal and child health.



Jordan Taylor is an Intern with the Rural

ORH News and Deadlines

State Designated Rural Health Center End of Year Meeting and Awardees

We had a fabulous morning with our SFY 2025 SDRHC Grantees in New Bern on June 4, 2025. We did some kinesthetic thinking about what can affect a person's health, learned from AHEC Practice Support Coaches about templates that are available to make impactful clinical changes, and listened to an engaging keynote from Scotland Health's David Pope about improving NC Rural Health from the inside (and the local) out.

Four organizations and one individual received recognition for their outstanding work this year—awardee photos are below. The panel of awardees shared insight on how they did their excellent work, and we talked about Big Hairy Audacious Goals—what are yours???

Hospital Program and is pursuing her Master's in Public Health at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, where she is a Gillings Merit Scholar. After spending her childhood in rural Virginia, she received her BSc in Psychology from the University of Alabama. Prior to her graduate studies at UNC, she was a research project coordinator at Dartmouth College, where she worked on projects related to variation in neonatal and pediatric care. Her main research interests include healthcare quality and access for women and children, particularly in rural and other resource-limited areas. When not working, Jordan enjoys attending the Carrboro Farmers Market, brewing kombucha, and (unfortunately) losing at bar trivia.



Four organizations and one individual received recognition for their outstanding work this year—awardee photos are below. The panel of awardees shared insights on how they did their excellent work, and we talked about *Big Hairy Audacious Goals*—What are yours?



**Excellence in Clinical Quality:
Community Care Clinic of Franklin**

Regional News and Highlights

Western SAT News and Highlights:

**Save the date for National Rural Health Day and the Western Regional Meeting!
Nov 20, 2025, MAHEC, Asheville, NC.**

Vecinos, Inc. Opens Community Hub in Franklin

By Jose Sandoval, Lilly Knoepp from Blue Ridge Public Radio News

"Vecinos, a non-profit free clinic and rural health center dedicated to serving uninsured and underinsured residents, has opened a new permanent location in Franklin.

The new Macon County community health hub will serve residents of Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Jackson, and Swain counties in Western North Carolina.

Marianne Martinez, CEO of Vecinos, said the new facility has been four years in the making.

"This space is more than just a building," Martinez said. "It's a promise. A promise that no one's income, no one's background, no one's health insurance status should



Excellence in Primary Care Access Plan (PCAP): Mt. Olive Family Medicine



Excellence in Behavioral Access Plan (BHAP) Management: Scotland Health

ever stand in the way of their health or their wellbeing. It's a promise that we are here not only to treat illness, but to build wellness together."

The 16,000-square-foot facility will offer primary care, dental and behavioral health services. It will also house Pisgah Legal, Centro Comunitario of Macon County, WNC Alliance, and Mountain Projects to provide legal service, tax preparation services, health insurance enrollment assistance and more."

Read more at: <https://www.bpr.org/bpr-news/2025-05-08/vecinos-opens-permanent-health-hub-in-franklin>

Community Care Clinic of Franklin Opens New Location from Macon Sense

"Community Care Clinic of Franklin recently moved to a new location at 121 Riverview Street in Franklin. Since 2010, the clinic has provided free primary, preventive, and acute healthcare to the low-income, uninsured residents of Macon and surrounding counties. The new location provides space to expand services and better attend to needs of patients. Added at the new location is a behavioral health program, which is available both in-person and through telehealth. Clinic hours have expanded as well to five daytime clinics and two evening clinics each week, allowing staff to see more patients and offer limited walk-in availability. In addition to continuing no-cost care for eligible patients, Community Care Clinic will begin accepting N.C Medicaid and Healthy Blue plans due to the shortage of Medicaid providers in the area."

Read more at: <https://maconsense.org/2025/05/08/nonprofits-address-areas-medical-needs-community-clinic-moves-to-a-new-location/>

South Central News and Highlights

2025 ORH Regional Meetings

Save the date! Regional meeting for Medicaid Regions 3 & 5-- South Central Region-- will be at Campbell University August 19. [Sign up here!](#)

FirstHealth of the Carolinas – Million Hearts Initiative

FirstHealth of the Carolinas is a current Community Health Grant (CHG) Year 3 Grantee, operating in Montgomery and Richmond counties. Their primary focus is education on blood pressure and cholesterol management.

They Installed permanent BP and glucose testing stations, offer nutrition and cooking



MVP Award: Shannon Hayes Peaden, AHEC Coach Extraordinaire



State Designated Rural Health Center of the Year: Surry Medical Ministries



Congratulations to the SFY 2026 State Designated Rural Health Center Grantees!

Western

1. Hugh Chatham Hospital
2. Hot Springs Health Program
3. Community Care Clinic of Franklin
4. Surry Medical Ministries
5. Chatuge Family Practice
6. Grace Clinic of Yadkin Valley
7. Murphy Medical Center

South Central

1. Scotland Physician Network
2. Richmond County Healthy

classes with support from funded health coaches, provide stress management sessions led by a certified Zen instructor, secured two AEDs and provided training on AED use and hands-only CPR. They have also worked on community Integration by developing strong partnerships with local officials (mayor, town council) and by laying the foundation for sustainability beyond current funding.

Moore Free and Charitable Clinic – Implementing an Integrated Care Model

The Moore Free and Charitable Clinic, located in Moore County, has implemented a true integrated healthcare model focusing on whole-person care.

Key Services they offer include

- Physical therapy, full dental services (including on site dental implants), and podiatry.
- Extensive behavioral health support.
- Staff include patient navigator and referral coordinator to streamline access.
- Vision and Impact:

This integration project aims for cost savings, improved patient satisfaction, and reduced care fragmentation. They have also ensured sustainability of this strategy via sponsorships, private donors, and ORH funding.

CARE Clinic in Fayetteville received the following review on Google—Congrats to them!

"An absolute diamond in the rough. The staff is incredibly patient, understanding and compassionate. From walking in to walking out, it took about 2 hours for 4 extractions, most of that time being spent on the staff being super patient with my anxiety and allowing me to be as comfortable as possible. Truly an amazing staff and clinic, thank all of you so much!"

Eastern SAT News and Highlights

The Eastern Service Area Team is scheduled to present at the upcoming 2-day Rural Health Symposium on August 21, 2025. The symposium will take place at Eastern AHEC in Greenville, NC. The team's presentation will highlight key federal and state updates, explore innovative partnerships, and share emerging trends relevant to rural health in Eastern North Carolina.

2025 Regional Meeting East: Save the Date: August 7, 2025

Carolinkians Partnership

Eastern

1. Benson Health
2. Mount Olive Family
3. Duplin Medical Center
4. Columbia Medical Center
5. Metropolitan Community Health - Beaufort Site

Grant Opportunities

Free Communications Tool for Your Clinic

Looking for ready-to-use public health messages, graphics, and templates? Arclet is a new tool available for free to all Rural Health Clinics and SDRHCs in NC. It was built specifically for health communicators to help streamline outreach and save time. You can easily customize materials for your community and stay organized across platforms.

Sign up for free at

<https://www.arclet.com>, select your population size under "pricing," enter coupon code NCLAUNCH, and click "redeem" to get started.

Have questions? Reach out to **Marian@Arclet.com** for support!

UNC Lineberger Offers Cancer Screening Grants

We are excited to announce the next round of training and funding for UNC LCCC COE Community Funding Program! This round focuses on planning or implementing a cancer screening Evidence-Based Intervention.

The UNC Lineberger Office of Community Outreach and Engagement is offering funding of up to \$20,000 to plan and implement evidence-based interventions for cancer screening in your community! We strongly encourage interested applicants to attend this training session to learn more about the opportunity and important proposal writing tips. In addition to funding, awardees will receive technical assistance and training on how to complete their proposed work successfully.

IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION:

Submit intent to apply via email (REQUIRED) by July 31, 2025, to **CPFP@unc.edu**

Training sessions (highly recommended)

Training Opportunities

Register Now! 2025 Independent Rural Health Clinic Institute

You're invited to join Stroudwater Associates and the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) for a four-part Institute focusing on chronic care management for independent Rural Health Clinics (RHCs)!

REGISTER HERE

There is no cost to attend this fantastic opportunity to invest in your professional development!

Who Should Attend?

- All Independent RHC Staff
- State Offices of Rural Health

Course Structure

The Independent RHC Institute will begin on Tuesday, July 8, and will feature four live sessions and "Office Hours."

Part 1: Care Management in the RHC

July 8, 1:00-2:00 pm ET

The session will recap 2024 content, followed by an overview of care management within RHCs, setting the stage for understanding the importance of implementing a care management strategy

Part 2: Using Population Data to Drive Care Management

July 15, 1:00-2:00 pm ET

This session will explore how population health data can be leveraged to inform and guide the strategic development of care management programs within RHCs.

Part 3: Medicare's Chronic Care Management (CCM)

July 22, 1:00-2:00 pm ET

This session will focus on CCM and the principles of Advanced Primary Care Management (APCM) within the Medicare program.

Part 4: Care Planning & Best Practices

July 29, 1:00-2:00 pm ET

Discover how incorporating data-driven goals into care plans can enhance coordination, promote accountability, and enable timely intervention as patient needs evolve.

Office Hours

August 5, 1:00-2:00 pm ET

Join the Stroudwater Associates team for our designated office hours to ask specific questions related to your RHC.

Sweet Success: A Deeper Look at Diabetes in Primary Care

Complete one or both of the interactive, self-paced eLearning modules on your computer or mobile device. Earn free

will be held on July 10 and July 17:
Training registration link

Questions? Email Veronica Carlisle (veronica_carlisle@med.unc.edu) with Community Pilot Program in the subject line.

Office of Rural Health Telehealth Infrastructure Grant Program

The Office of Rural Health will accept applications for Wave 4 of the Telehealth Infrastructure Grant (official date to be announced). This grant provides funding to rural healthcare providers for start-up equipment and related items for telehealth with priority given to independent primary care practices and independent OB-GYN practices that will enhance healthcare access, quality, and outcomes. This includes deploying telehealth technology, developing secure data management systems, and creating comprehensive training initiatives for practice staff and/or patients. This effort will allow patients being served in a primary care or OB-GYN setting to access non-hospital-based telehealth services.

All rural North Carolina-based **primary care** practices, including independent primary care practices and independent OB-GYN practices, are eligible to apply. Applicants must:

- Be located within the state of North Carolina
- Demonstrate the ability to maintain patient safety, ensure patient privacy and continuity of care
- Provide evidence that they have a quantifiable and qualifiable record of healthcare provisioning relative to grantee requirements as detailed in Session Law, SECTION 9B.7A.(a)
- Demonstrate the capacity and capability to implement telehealth infrastructure projects, including technology deployment, system integration, and workforce and patient training.

Projects submitted under this RFA must:

- Provide evidence the service is an equitable healthcare delivery model, including anticipated outcomes related to impact on health care delivery and/or social determinants of health in the primary care and OB-GYN community.
- Indicate which populations are the intended audience (historically underserved, marginalized, or adversely affected groups,

contact hours!

PART 1 - About 1 in 10 Americans has diabetes, with 90-95% of those having Type 2 Diabetes. (CDC) The majority of these people receive health care in the primary care setting (Pilla et. al). Physiologically, diabetes affects multiple organ systems, as well as the emotional well-being of the affected person. Medicine regimens can be complex, especially for an older person with other chronic conditions. To enable the practice staff to support the person with Type 2 Diabetes, this course uses case studies of familiar patients seen in primary care. Practical office-based clinical assessment and patient education concepts are presented. Basic pharmacology of diabetes drugs, laboratory tests used to assess and monitor the disease and common physical exam findings are covered. Register online at www.nwahec.org/75805

PART 2 - Managing diabetes requires much more than taking medicines and visiting the primary care provider's office---lifestyle changes at the heart of a person's very self are needed. People with diabetes are 2-3 times more likely to have depression than those without diabetes (CDC). Typically considered a lifelong chronic condition, Type 2 diabetes requires the affected person to incorporate it into their self-image and work every day on difficult behavior changes. Mood disturbances may also be the result of physiologic changes caused by the illness, or from medication side effects. Building on the foundation of Part 1 of this series, this module focuses on the impact a diagnosis of Type 2 Diabetes can have on the mental health of patients they see in primary care. Register online at www.nwahec.org/75808

Part 2 builds on the case study presented in Part 1, so you are encouraged (but not required) to take both modules. There is no charge for either online course. Course registration is generously supported by the Division of Health Benefits.

Grant Writing 101 For Local Health Departments – open to all

Description: Grant Writing 101 is a beginner level workshop for local health departments staff focusing on the fundamentals of writing grants and other funding proposals.

Date and Time
Thursday, September 4, 2025
9:00am-12:00pm

Faculty

economically disadvantaged communities, rural and underserved communities, etc).

- Develop and document a realistic and achievable project sustainability plan.

For the purposes of this RFA, an originating site is defined as the location of the patient, and a distance site is defined as the telehealth site where the provider/specialist is seeing the patient.

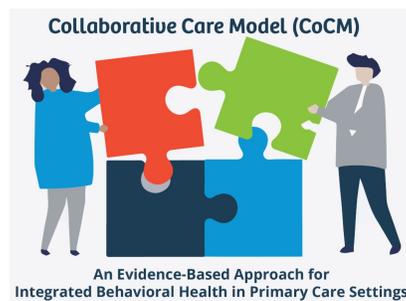
Please visit the website for more details on this grant program:

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/grant-opportunities/rural-health-grant-opportunities/telehealth-infrastructure-grant-program-wave-3>

Please share this far and wide and keep an eye out for the official announcement of Wave 4!

Events

Collaborative Care Model Learning Collaboratives



Collaborative Care Management Capacity Building Fund

Starting April 1, 2025, applications opened for Phase 1 and Phase 2 Practices. The NC General Assembly has earmarked \$5 million for capacity building for Medicaid-enrolled primary care practices across the state to adopt Collaborative Care Management (CoCM). The NCDHHS Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use Services (DMHDDSUS) is contracting with CCNC to manage the program in partnership with NC AHEC's Practice Support coaching. CoCM is an evidence-based behavioral health integration model designed to support primary care clinicians in assessing and treating patients with mild to moderate behavioral health conditions. An evidence-based model shown to be more effective than usual care, CoCM improves patient outcomes, increases satisfaction for both patients and

Dawn Morrison, MPH
John W. Wallace, PhD, MSPH

Webinar Information

This webinar will be broadcast with Zoom. Instructions to join the webinar will be emailed prior to the event. You can test your computer by going to the **Zoom Test Page**.

NC Community Health Centers & Maternal Health and Well-being

Monday, June 23 | 1:00 to 4:30 pm
| **Register**

Attendees are welcome to drop in to the meeting at the times they can attend.

Community health centers are uniquely suited to work with their communities to meet maternal health needs and create the conditions needed for maternal well-being. Join the North Carolina Community Health Center Association on Monday, June 23 from 1:00-4:30 pm for a virtual convening: NC Community Health Centers & Maternal Health and Well-being.

Through educational sessions and interactive discussions, participants will learn about issues affecting maternal health in NC and hear from NC FQHCs about ways they are working to improve maternal health. Participants will also hear about local, state, and national resources that can support FQHCs and NCCHCA as we explore more ways FQHCs can support improved maternal well-being. This convening is the launch of NCCHCA's future work to support maternal health and will help NCCHCA identify future direction and areas of need.

The session is suited for all CHC staff including leaders, clinicians, program managers, development staff, and enabling services staff.

Partners, including public health, health care, human services, philanthropy leaders and all those interested in maternal health are welcome.

NC Medicaid Provider Enrollment NCDHHS-DHB Credentialing Committee Initiative Stakeholder Engagement Session #3

Please join NC AHEC and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), Division of Health Benefits (DHB), for the third stakeholder teleconference on June 25 from 2-3 p.m. to continue the discussion of a new initiative led in tandem with General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT). This initiative will establish a Credentialing

providers, and reduce healthcare costs and the stigma related to mental health and substance use disorders.

The capacity building fund has a maximum award of \$50,000 per practice. A primary care practice entity applying on behalf of multiple primary care practice sites may receive a maximum of three awards per entity. Each clinic site may be eligible to receive awards of \$50,000 to begin a CoCM model in-house.

Additionally, \$30,000 is available for practices to expand an existing in-house CoCM Model, and \$20,000 is available to practice sites meeting Phase 1 eligibility, but planning to outsource staffing to a third-party, turn-key company.

For more information about the funding see <https://www.communitycarenc.org/newsroom/cocm-capacity-building-fund-application/events>.

CCNC's partners in this effort are: NCDHHS Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use Services (DMHDDSUS), NC AHEC

Resources

Get the NC Guide on Prevention and Management of Diabetes:
<https://www.diabetesnc.com/guide>

MEDICAID MANAGED CARE Disaster Preparedness for Members with Chronic Conditions

June 12, past: Slides here:
<https://public.3.basecamp.com/p/pLctdVMYUT7zSHWJvpTeu61K>

July 15 and August 19
NOON-1 p.m.

Please join NC AHEC for a new webinar series focused on disaster preparedness for members with chronic conditions. This series will cover topics such as:

- Overview of Disaster Preparedness in North Carolina
- Understanding At-Risk Medicaid Populations
- General Preparedness for High-Risk Members
- Condition-Specific Considerations
- Sheltering in Place vs. Evacuation
- Special Considerations for Populations with Disabilities
- Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Preparedness
- Building Resiliency and Promoting Equity

Register for this series by clicking here

Committee aimed at maintaining a high-quality, ethical, and competent provider network to support NC Medicaid beneficiaries.

This third forum will offer stakeholders: A collaborative forum to discuss the committee's future role in the provider enrollment and credentialing process to determine compliance of regulatory requirements by NC Medicaid provider applicants.

A deeper dive into the roles of committee members.

Status of committee bylaws.

Review of frequently asked questions and answers pertaining to the development of this project.

These stakeholder engagement sessions will occur monthly, as follows, until the project implementation and are intended to be interactive as the Department values input from partnering stakeholders:

- June 25, 2025
- July 30, 2025
- August 27, 2025
- September 24, 2025

You are encouraged to submit your related questions and comments for targeted open discussion at the meetings to

Medicaid.credcommittee.stakeholders@dohhs.nc.gov. We look forward to connecting with you!

Register here

Messaging about 988 and other helplines

988 is for everyone.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline | NCDHHS

Anyone can call, chat or text 988. Crisis is individual and you can call for any reason. 988 can help you find additional resources that you or your family may need. It is free and confidential.

Peer Warm Line (855-PEERS-NC)

The NC Peer Warmline (1-855-PEERS-NC) is a free, private phone number you can call day or night to talk with someone who understands. You'll be connected to someone who has personal experiences with mental health or substance use disorders. You can call any time you're feeling sad, stressed, lonely or just need to talk. You don't need to be in crisis to call.

NC Peer Warmline: 1-855-PEERS-NC | NCDHHS

NC Recovery Helpline

NC RECOVERY HELPLINE | ADCNC

1-800-688-4232

The Helpline connects individuals to substance use treatment providers and other recovery related resources throughout the state of North Carolina. They support callers by helping them to navigate the behavioral health systems, and providing follow up until the individual is connected to sufficient support. They can education on different levels of care, treatment modalities, Medicaid Expansion, and how to eliminate stigma. The line is free and confidential.

Community Crisis Centers

Community crisis centers are safe places where you can get help without going to the emergency room. They offer immediate help with mental health needs and treatment for alcohol or drugs. Most are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You don't need an appointment. Crisis centers take Medicaid but you don't need insurance to get care at one.

North Carolina Community Crisis Centers | NCDHHS (searchable maps to find the nearest to you)

Somethings.com

This mentoring program is free for all North Carolinians

Somethings connects teens with a Certified Peer Specialist Mentor and clinical providers to help every teen feel their best.

Somethings® - Connecting Teens with Certified Peer Specialist Mentors

[Super cool note: Yesterday at the DSS

Director conference, one of the Directors shared that her daughter used SOMETHINGS and found it truly helpful. She shares it now with all the children in their custody.]

Suicide Prevention Resources
Suicide Prevention Resources |
NCDHHS

About ORH

We would love to hear from you! If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions for specific programs within our office, please feel free to contact the Operations Specialist facilitating your region's SAT below!

ORH Programs

Provider Recruitment and Placement Program provides recruitment efforts for medical, dental and psychiatric health professionals to North Carolina's rural and underserved areas and offers incentives to eligible providers.

Provider Recruitment and Placement Program Profile

Rural Health Operations Program

creates access to primary health care for vulnerable populations by supporting state designated rural health centers.

Rural Health Operations Program Profile

Community Health Program supports the primary care Safety Net system to increase access to primary care for vulnerable populations.

Community Health Program Profile

NC Farmworker Health Program provides medical, dental and enabling services to members of the North Carolina agricultural labor force and their families.

NC Farmworker Health Program Profile

NC Rural Hospital Assistance Program funds projects for the benefit of all critical access hospitals and eligible small rural hospitals in NC.

NC Rural Hospital Program Profile

Medication Assistance Program provides free and low-cost medications donated by pharmaceutical manufacturers to patients who cannot afford them.

Medication Assistance Program Profile

Statewide Telepsychiatry Program supports the psychiatric evaluation of patients through videoconferencing technology in emergency departments.

Statewide Telepsychiatry Program Profile

Analytics and Innovations Program assists ORH programs and grantees with using data and leveraging technologies to improve monitoring, evaluation efforts, and innovative strategies.

Health Professional Shortage Area Program Profile

Community Health Worker Program Profile

Rural Health Information Technology and Telehealth Program works directly with the North Carolina Safety Net to assess needs and provide technical assistance throughout the state to improve the use of Electronic Health Record (EHR) Systems

Rural Health Information Program Profile

SAT Facilitator Contact Information

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[Visit our Website](#)

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