

Tarheel Tandem



Volume 75 | Fall 2021

2021-2022 Board of Directors

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President's Message

By Gina Becherer, NCMS Alliance President; gmbecherer@gmail.com



There are some phrases that creep into our language that, for whatever reason, “rub me the wrong way” ... like that one. Others include “status quo” or “it is what it is”. The latest one I have added to my list is “the new normal”. That phrase has become almost synonymous with the COVID-19 pandemic. I have grown weary of the conflict and the debate. If this is the “new normal” then I pass. Instead, I want to channel my efforts and the efforts of the NCMSA into raising awareness about the access-to-care issues for our most vulnerable North Carolinians.

In June 2020, I became NCMSA President-Elect. Our president at that time was Barbara Savage. She and I met several times to coordinate a strategy to address access to care for our most rural counties. We recognized that this could not be a one-year or even a two-year strategy. This was big. We needed to think outside the box. And we were ready!! But COVID-19 had other plans.

The pandemic consumed the healthcare community with struggles to deliver care, the shortage of supplies and the strain on caregivers. The fragility of our healthcare system was on full display. Our strategy to focus on access to care for all North Carolinians was derailed. But we persist.

The NCMSA Board is again setting its sights on improving access to healthcare in our rural counties. We have laid the groundwork to create community partnerships that will help us broaden our reach and use our collective resources to focus attention on health issues facing North Carolina. One such partnership is with the North Carolina Association for Free and Charitable Clinics (NCAFCC). In the coming months you will hear more about our efforts to help NCAFCC improve access to care for the uninsured and underinsured in our state.

We are excited about the many opportunities we have in front of us—partnering with other organizations to materially impact the health and wellbeing of our communities. There are many ways for you to support our efforts. We would love to have you participate as a volunteer or serve on a committee; contact us at admin@ncmsalliance.org. If you prefer to support us from “behind the scenes”, consider a donation. Giving Tuesday is just around the corner.

Please know that your membership is critically important to our mission. We are grateful for your ongoing support.

NCMSA Commits \$50,000 to Charitable Clinics Across the State

By Kirby Sheridan, Vice President of Program Development;
kirbypsheridan@gmail.com

The North Carolina Medical Society Alliance works to improve the health of North Carolinians. Specifically, we are focused on improving access to health care, especially in rural areas of the state. With that focus in mind, the NCMSA Board of Directors voted in October to support the North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics with a donation of \$50,000. This donation will purchase point of care HbA1C machines used in the diagnosis and screening of diabetes and prediabetes as well as to monitor blood sugar levels. These funds will also purchase supplies needed to run these tests.

With this commitment, the NCMSA can reach patients in all parts of the state who struggle with access to health care. The North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (NCAFCC) is a nonprofit organization of 72 member clinics and 88 clinic sites throughout North Carolina. These clinics treated 76,900 patients in 2020 alone. The NCMSA looks forward to expanding our partnership with the NCAFCC.

How can you help? Some of our medical Alliances around the state have a long history of serving at their local free medical clinics. Other Alliance members or Alliances themselves may not have ventured into a project with a free and charitable medical clinic in the past. We encourage our members to join us in supporting the NCAFCC and working to improve access to health care for North Carolinians. **Please use this link to the interactive map on the NCAFCC website to find the clinics closest to you where you can volunteer as an individual or as a group.** We also encourage you to donate to the Health Education Opportunity Fund on the NCMSA website to help us continue to support the efforts of free and charitable clinics around the state as they offer health care services to people who, otherwise, could not afford health care.

to **Joan Kennedy**, Wake County Medical Society Alliance and **Lorry Allen**, Cape Fear Medical Alliance!

They each won a \$50 Amazon gift card prize drawing from the names of members who paid their NCMSA dues by August 2, 2021.

Watch for details on the 2022 Contest – you could be a winner!

Thanks for joining, Joan and Lorry!

Help Keep Our State Alliance Successful!

By Susan Edens Hammer, NCMSA Membership Development Committee Member; sjehammer@att.net

If you have already submitted your dues for the 2021-2022 year, THANK YOU for your support. We look forward to a rewarding year.

If you have not yet renewed or are considering joining as a new member, allow us to introduce you to the benefits of membership.

You are the foundation of physician families. The medical community consists of many wonderful, motivated people with accomplishments on personal, professional and communal levels. We need your positive outlook and participation in the Alliance. You and your family have made many sacrifices and helped build a healthy association through various community activities and philanthropy. The NCMS Alliance values and supports its own members in addition to our external mission, especially in times like this. Let your Alliance membership add value to your day-to-day life.

Words our Members use in describing their association with the Alliance:

Share Ideas
Friends
Support Group
Fulfillment
Help the Community

Work Together
Learn
Fun
Raise Awareness
Diverse Group

Individual members or county Alliances can apply for Health Promotion Grants to help in the development of community programs to address local health issues or challenges. Our Grant Application can be found on our website: <https://www.ncmsalliance.org/Grants>.

Please show your support for the NCMS Alliance by joining or renewing your membership today! Remember, your spouse can show support and join as well. If membership is not your 'thing', our Health Education Opportunity Fund is another way to support NCMS Alliance works across the state. You can make an online donation at <https://www.ncmsalliance.org/Donate>.

To pay membership dues:

- If you were a member last year and have not renewed, you received a dues renewal notice by postal mail in September.
 - You can return your check by postal mail, or
 - Go to our website www.ncmsalliance.org to pay online.
- New members can join online as a New User at <https://www.ncmsalliance.org/page-1075598>.
- Questions about online access? Contact Vicky Elia at 919-573-1316 or velia@firstpointresources.com.

Help keep the Alliance successful with your donation of membership dues, Health Education Opportunity Fund contributions and/or by sharing your talents.

If you have questions about membership, contact President-elect Meeti Nigam at nigammeeti@gmail.com or 434-228-0220.

NC Medicaid Managed Care Launched Statewide

By Gina Becherer, NCMS Alliance President; gmbecherer@gmail.com

Starting July 1, 2021, nearly 1.6 million of North Carolina's more than 2.5 million Medicaid beneficiaries began receiving Medicaid services as part of the Medicaid transformation. About 1.2 million of those people are children under the age of 21. The remaining people—primarily people with mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, people with traumatic brain injuries and other beneficiaries who need more intensive services, will be moved to managed care in 2022.

“Medicaid transformation” changes how Medicaid services for adults and children are delivered into a managed care model. Under managed care, the state contracts with insurance companies' health plans to coordinate and provide health care services. The North Carolina DHHS will pay a set rate for each beneficiary and the health plan will have to manage beneficiary health care costs within that provided amount.

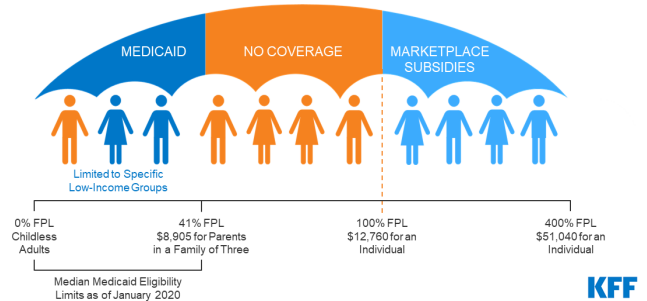
Beneficiaries will select or be assigned to a health plan. Beneficiaries will access health care services from the company's network of providers. All health plans offer the same basic benefits and services.

Features of the state's Medicaid Managed Care program include payment structures that reward better health outcomes and integrated care management of medical and behavioral health needs. More importantly, this transformation acknowledges and invests in the social and environmental factors known to influence health, all in an effort to reduce costs and improve the health of Medicaid beneficiaries.

However, North Carolina remains one of the twelve states that have not expanded Medicaid, leaving more than 400,000 people in the “coverage gap”. The coverage gap refers to individuals and families

whose incomes are above Medicaid eligibility limits but below the lower limit for Marketplace premium tax credit (Kaiser Family Foundation), thereby making affordable insurance unattainable.

Gap in Coverage for Adults in States that Do Not Expand Medicaid Under the ACA



<https://www.kff.org/policy-watch/taking-a-closer-look-at-characteristics-of-people-in-the-coverage-gap/>

https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/98467/the_implications_of_medicaid_expansion_2001838_2.pdf

<https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/the-coverage-gap-uninsured-poor-adults-in-states-that-do-not-expand-medicaid/>

<https://www.ncchca.org/community-resources/policy-advocacy/nc-insurance-gap/>

GIVING TUESDAY

NOVEMBER 30, 2021

GivingTuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Over the past nine years, this idea has grown into a global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give to nonprofit organizations working to improve our world, our country and our communities.

With so much attention given to what divides us, generosity brings people together across races, faiths, and political views. Even in times of economic uncertainty, we each have a deep reserve of generosity. There are so many ways to make a difference.

Grassroots generosity and community action are powerful forces, especially now in the turbulent times we live in.

Please consider donating to the NCMSA Health Education Opportunity Fund so that we may continue to support the health of our NC communities. Look for the Giving Tuesday 2021 donation button on the NCMSA website.

North Carolina Medical Society Alliance Has Moved

The North Carolina Medical Society Alliance has a new address! On November 22, our executive director, Vicky Elia, will relocate to:

3739 National Drive, Suite 202
Raleigh, NC 27612

Please note, the NCMSA mailing address is changing also! As of November 1, our new mailing address is:

North Carolina Medical Society Alliance
PO Box 30939
Raleigh, NC 27622

Our phone and fax numbers will remain the same.

County News

Cabarrus County Medical Society Alliance

By Kirby Sheridan, CCMSA Vision Screening Chair;
kirbypsheridan@gmail.com

The CCMSA has postponed an in-person gathering due to the rise of COVID-19 infections in the area. We hope to gather in person in the spring. Meanwhile, we were able to award another joint scholarship, along with the Cabarrus County Medical Society, to a student at the Cabarrus College of Health Sciences. This year's scholarship, valued at \$2500, was awarded to Kristy Davis, a BSN student.

Our long-running vision screening project, which has taken place in area elementary schools for over 35 years, was postponed last year due to COVID-19. We are anxious to get back into the schools to perform these screenings which are mandated by state law. Proceeds from our "Swing for the Kids" golf tournament purchased a spot screener that allows vision screening from a distance, one student at a time. The plan now is to enter schools in January and use the spot screener to screen second and fifth graders and those exhibiting vision issues in the classroom. Instead of the usual 8-12 volunteers that vision screening normally requires, we will use 2-3 volunteers at each screening and move to the students instead of asking them to come to a central location within the school. We hope these steps, under the guidance of the Cabarrus Health Alliance, our local health department, will allow us to continue to perform this much-needed service.

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Greater Greensboro Society of Medicine Alliance

By Swati Patel, GGSM Co-President; swatijay@gmail.com

Our Mini Medics started off this year with an ice cream social for our members on August 26. We had a good time meeting and chatting with new and returning members. Children enjoyed an ice cream treat while also getting an opportunity to play on the turf. It was a fall outing to J Razz and Tazz farm in Gibsonville, NC, where children enjoyed the Corn Maze and Burgess Grove.



Each year our chapter has worked with organizations in the community that need extra support. This past month, on October 1 and 2, we collaborated with the Children's Home Society of North Carolina in their drive for collecting essential items needed for

Strong Able Youth Speaking Out (SaySo). For Make A Difference Day 2021 their goal is to collect 5000 of each item from their wish list by October 30, 2021. We were able to collect several hygiene products for their organization. Our members either dropped off the items



from their wish list or were able to purchase and directly mail the items to SaySo.

Due to recent COVID-19 fluctuations, our annual New Physician Social, in conjunction with the Medical Society, has been postponed to spring 2022. Our next Mini Medics event took place on October 17.

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Healthy Charlotte Alliance

By Erin Edwards, Healthy Charlotte Alliance Executive Director;
eedwards@healthycharlottealliance.org

Healthy Charlotte Alliance has continued to provide robust programming virtually during the pandemic, such as our September 9 gathering, "Mental Wellness in a COVID Weary World" with behavioral health experts, Dr. Javier Santos-Cubina and Dr. Luis Betancourt. On October 21, Healthy Charlotte Alliance ventured back to an in-person gathering as we welcomed 85 members, medical and healthcare professionals and community partners for our annual signature program, the Community Health Classroom.

Participants heard from four brilliant and accomplished presenters on the topic, The Future of Medicine.

Dr. Graça Almeida-Porada, a Professor of Regenerative Medicine and Director of the Fetal Research and Therapy Program at Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine, presented her research on gene therapy for treating genetic disorders.

Dr. Robyn Stacy-Humphries, a partner at Charlotte Radiology, shared her personal story of how participating in a cell therapy clinical trial saved her life.



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County News *continued from page 4*

Colleen Hole, Vice President, Atrium Health Hospital at Home Administrator and Chief Nurse Executive, Atrium Health Medical Group presented on the hospital of the future. Developed at the onset of the pandemic, Hospital @ Home, delivers comprehensive, holistic, tech-enabled care for patients in the comfort and safety of their home environment, thereby reducing unnecessary acute care utilization, improving inpatient bed capacity and improving outcomes.

Dr. Eric Eskioglu, EVP and chief medical and scientific officer for Novant Health, presented on the utilization of artificial intelligence and innovative technology to provide enhanced personalized clinical care for patients, as well as streamlined operational solutions across the healthcare system.

Additionally, in celebration of Healthy Charlotte Alliance's 80th anniversary, 2021 grant recipients were acknowledged. Matthews Free Medical Clinic was awarded \$52,000 and Teen Health Connection was awarded \$28,000, totaling \$80,000 invested in the community, celebrating 80 years of impact!

The Alliance also recognized the 2021 Genie Hayes Distinguished Service Award recipient and 43-year member, Joni MacDonald, and the 2021 James Gray Cannon Award recipient, Jane Llewellyn, for her exceptional volunteer leadership toward the advancement of health in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community.

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Wake County Medical Society Alliance

By Paige McLaurin, WCMSA President; paigemclaurin@gmail.com

Wake County Medical Society Alliance is looking forward to a great year. We will kick off our season with Java Jumpstart, hosted by WCMSA Treasurer, Marilu Thordsen, M.D., on November 4 at 9:30 am. Java Jumpstart is a coffee klatch where members get to catch up on the summer's events and bring interested new members.

We will resume Ladies Night Out once a month. We try to frequent locally owned establishments in an outdoor setting, such as Midtown

Grill, Barcelona, Jolie and Academy St. Bistro among others. It is a fun excuse to get dressed, step out and see one another without the worry of masking up!

We are planning an outing—something new for the WCMSA—a bike ride, led by past president, Dorothy Nance. Dorothy and her husband enjoy cycling on a regular basis! We hope to entice new members with a fun and dynamic activity for all skill levels.

Our annual fall picnic with the Wake County Medical Society was postponed until spring due to the COVID-19 delta variant. Even though the party is an outdoor event, we took this step in an abundance of caution. Other upcoming events include a Christmas/Hanukkah party and our annual Quail Ridge book event on November 30 by Zoom.

Our book club met October 13 at 10:00am at WCMSA President Paige McLaurin's house. The talk was led by member Karen Coates, M.D. about the compelling book *American Dirt*. We enjoyed a lively and enlightening discussion outdoors while enjoying lovely fall weather.

WCMSA supports our Community Health Fund in several ways. Members are encouraged to write grants, tell their favorite charities about the fund and, we hope, raise more funds and awareness about the fund. We are optimistic we can have a fundraiser this year despite variants looming.



Save the Date for AMA Alliance 100th Anniversary Celebration

For almost 100 years the American Medical Association Alliance has worked to address national and local health issues while advocating for and supporting physician families. From creating programs to address violence and bullying to producing education materials on AIDS, nutrition, exercise, vaccine awareness and many other topics, the AMA Alliance has bolstered national, state and local initiatives to address many health issues our nation faces. Let's celebrate the 100th birthday of the AMA Alliance!

Mark June 12, 2022, on your calendars as the date of the AMA Alliance Centennial Celebration. We will celebrate a century of making a difference!



Boarding the Big Red Bus

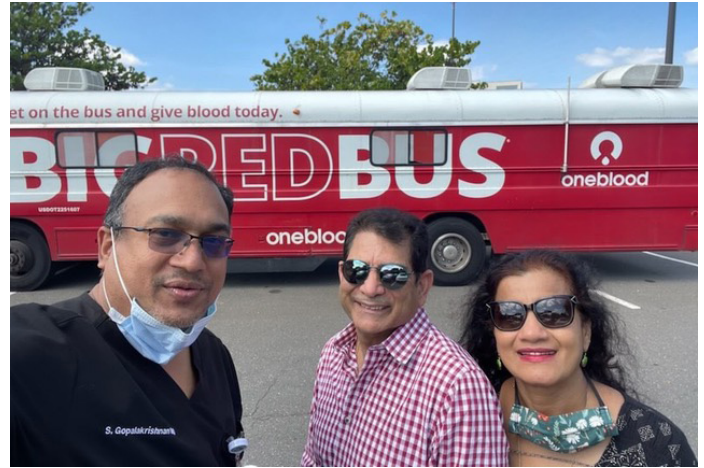
By Meeti Nigam, NCMS Alliance President-elect; nigammeeti@gmail.com

During this pandemic, it is more critical than ever to donate blood as there is a shortage of blood currently. Giving blood is a way for people to help other people to improve their health or save a life. One person's blood can benefit three people.

On Saturday, October 2, 2021, from 9am to 2pm, local members of the North Carolina Medical Society Alliance organized a blood drive at the Atrium Pineville hospital in Pineville, NC. This event was co-

sponsored by the NCMSA and the CCAPI. Donors could register ahead of time or show up during the event to donate. Each donor received a t-shirt, a gift card and a wellness checkup including a blood pressure check, iron count, a temperature check and a cholesterol screening.

My husband donated blood in honor of his father. It was gratifying to be of service to the Charlotte community in this way. We look forward to organizing another blood drive.



98th Annual Fund Recognitions

Donations

by IBM Employee Services
by Leigh Brunner

In honor of Sue Ann Greco
In honor of Susan Edens Hammer
In honor of Anne Kahn
In honor of Barbara Savage
by Racheal Kunesh

In memory of Dr. Russell Sacco
by Pamela Sacco

In memory of Cynthia Rosetta Strickland-Washington
In memory of Wilma (Jackie) Maney
In memory of Leslye Ann Edinburg
In memory of Eva Mae Thompson
by Patricia Udekwu



PO Box 30939, Raleigh, NC 27622

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Contact Information

Prefix First Name Last Name Male Female M.D. Medical Specialty

Spouse/Partner First Name Last Name Male Female M.D. Medical Specialty

Address City State Zip

*Mobile Phone Home Phone Email Address

May NCMSA contact you using the NCMSA *text message system? (Rates may apply) Yes No

County of Residence County Alliance Name*

*If there is no County Alliance in your area, are you interested in forming or reactivating a County Alliance? Yes No

Annual Membership Type & Dues

Individual Membership

- Regular Member or Spouse/Partner - \$50
- Medical Student Member or Spouse/Partner - \$10
- Resident Physician Member or Spouse/Partner - \$10

Couples Membership

- Regular Member Couple - \$100
- Medical Student Couple - \$20
- Resident Physician Couple - \$20

Donation to NCMSA
 Added to my due's payment is my tax-deductible donation of \$_____ to the Health Education Opportunity Fund which will support Alliance programs.

Add County Membership

_____ \$ _____
County Alliance Name

Add AMAA Membership

- AMAA Dues - \$65

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Check # _____

Credit Card Visa MasterCard

Name on Card: _____

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____ CVV: _____

Please visit our website to join or renew online <https://www.ncmsalliance.org/Member-Benefits>

NCMS Alliance is a 501 c3 charitable organization.

Information

Share your talents and interests:

- Areas of Talents/Expertise: _____
- Interests/Hobbies: _____

Indicate your interest in serving with a group of other Alliance members in the following areas. Some meetings are via Zoom.

- Membership Development
- Program Development



PO Box 30939
Raleigh, NC 27622

This is a CALL to ACTION!

Act Now to Reverse Medicare Cuts

Without action from Washington, a 9.75% Medicare physician payment cut will go into effect on January 1, 2022. Take action to reverse these cuts and protect access to care.

TAKE ACTION

As Congress continues to fight over reconciliation, infrastructure and raising the debt ceiling there is a looming Medicare payment crisis that, if not addressed, could have devastating consequences for Medicare patients and our health care system.

On January 1, 2022, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will drastically reduce payments for certain health care providers. If Congress does not act to stop these cuts, it will further strain practices that are still struggling to keep their doors open during the ongoing pandemic.

Tell Congress to cancel Medicare cuts today!

Now is the time to build on that momentum and demand that Congress take action to address these devastating Medicare cuts before it's too late.

Please take a moment and contact your Senators and Representative to tell them to cancel the cuts!

(scroll down on this link to the messaging for appeal to your Senators and representatives.