

2010-2023



NCMS Alliance past presidents at the Centennial Celebration Hubbard Luncheon.

In the last two decades of the 2000s--the 2010s and the 2020s--the North Carolina Medical Society Alliance has adapted to a change in volunteering habits and membership trends. With fewer volunteers, the NCMSA has looked for strategic Alliances, such as with the Poe Center for Health Education and the North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics, to make an impact on health issues of the state. Talented members have continued to step forward to lead these efforts, supported by our Executive Director, Vicky Elia.

It is with great pride that the NCMSA celebrates its centennial. It is humbling to think of all the leadership and the volunteer hours invested in the Alliance and its predecessors to support physicians and their families and work to improve the health of North Carolinians. Those of us volunteering with the NCMSA today are following in big footsteps and it is an honor to do so.

Highlights of the 2010s and 2020s include—

2009:The first annual Bid for Better Health online auction was held to raise funds for NCMSA programs. During the 2009 state legislative session, the NCMSA worked to raise awareness regarding efforts by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) to exempt movie studios from the legislation to prohibit smoking in public and workplaces in North Carolina.

2010:The NCMSA developed “How Does Your Meal Measure Up?” portion control placemats, distributing 1000 to the NC General Assembly and making them available to download from the NCMSA website. The Get Fit initiative added a County Challenge to the road race program.

2011: President Racheal Kunesh (Cabarrus) spearheaded a successful fundraiser, Rock with the Docs, a fun evening in Concord featuring 3 local doctor bands. The Gaston, Mecklenburg, Cabarrus and Rowan Alliances collaborated on the event that attracted 230 attendees.

2012:The board of directors, with Pat Udekwa (Wake) as president, modified the mission statement to reflect who we are, what we do and how we do it. This is our mission statement to this day. The NCMSA partnered with the

Wake County Alliance and other local Alliances to stage the 5th Annual Get Fit race which grew to 135 runners and phantom runners and 100 children in the kids' races. The races expanded to include a Great Kids Marathon (kids logged miles over a 2-month period) and a 10k. The online auction, Bid for Better Health and the money made from the Get Fit races funded 11 projects providing PE equipment to NC schools.

2013: Executive Director, Angie Wainwright moved from Raleigh and so had to resign. The board hired a new ED, Tara Keegan. Almost 150 runners including 5K, 10K, Phantom and Kids registered and braved the elements for the 2013 Get Fit Race. \$6565 was donated for physical education equipment to underserved schools.

2014: Charlene Slaughter (Mecklenburg) focused on the Florence Crittenden organization during her year as president. In October, the NCMSA transitioned from a full-time executive director to a management services company, FirstPoint Management Resources, after Tara Keegan moved to Florida. The Hubbard Memorial speaker was Charla Muller, author of 365 Nights: A Memoir of Intimacy.

2015: Acknowledging the mental health needs of our state, the NCMSA joined forces with the North Carolina Chapter of NAMI (National Association for Mental Illness) and participated in the NAMI WALK at Dix Park in Raleigh. The NCMSA also supported The Foundation of Hope for Research and Treatment of Mental Illness and created a team to walk in the annual Foundation of Hope NC in October at the Angus Barn in Raleigh. In November, President Deborah Harrell Meehan (Wake) designated her birthday celebration as a fundraising event for the NCMSA.

2016: Participation in the NAMI Walk continued, with Wake County local and state Alliance members organizing the team. Love and Caring Cards made their debut, featuring artwork from Alliance members or their family members. Sets of four cards were given to donors to the NCMSA Annual Fund.

2017: Continuing the focus on mental health, President Kirby Sheridan (Cabarrus) led an effort to increase awareness of the opioid misuse epidemic effecting so many in North Carolina. Barbara Savage, NCMSA board member, worked with the Poe Center in Raleigh to create a forum for law enforcement, government employees, healthcare workers and the public to better understand what was causing the epidemic and how to reverse it. Events were held in Cary, Raleigh and Greensboro with Sam Quinones, author of Dreamland and The Least of Us as keynote speaker.

2018: The board of directors voted to donate \$10,000 to the Poe Center for Health Education to fund 10 Drugs Uncovered programs to middle schoolers in locations around North Carolina. President Uma Avva (Greater Greensboro) led the board of directors in a strategic planning process to help NCMSA leadership envision how the organization should be shaped for the future. The NAMI Walk team continued to help raise funds for mental health resources.

2019: The NCMSA allocated \$1,000 and raised additional funds for the NCMS Disaster Relief Fund to provide grants to rebuild or repair practices damaged in the fall of 2018 by Hurricane Florence. A call to action encouraged fundraising by Alliance members and allies to help provide financial support to areas impacted by the storm with donations to the Disaster Relief Fund and the Onslow House, a nursing home in Jacksonville, NC.

2020: Facing an unprecedented situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, the NCMSA held its first virtual annual meeting. Barbara Savage (Wake) served a two-year term as president. The opioid epidemic remained the programming focus with information distributed about how to store medications safely and properly dispose of them.

2021: The board of directors, under the leadership of President Gina Becherer (Wake) voted to give \$50,000 to the North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics to fund point of care HbA1C machines used in the diagnosis and screening of diabetes, as well as other supplies for diabetic patients at free clinics in areas where local Alliances existed. This donation reflected the board's emphasis on addressing health care needs of North Carolina's rural citizens.

2022: The annual meeting returns to an in-person format in Greensboro with attendees touring the Spartan Open Pantry for area college students, and the Mustard Seed free medical clinic. Preparations began for the NCMSA Centennial Celebration.

2023: The Centennial Celebration took place on April 27 at the Greensboro History Museum. The annual meeting occurred the following day with North Carolina author Wiley Cash as the Hubbard Memorial lecturer. Among the two-day event attendees were seventeen past presidents. Meeti Nigam served the second year of a two-year term as NCMSA President.

Greensboro Alliance Members at the Centennial Celebration



Author and Hubbard Luncheon speaker, Wiley Cash with 2022-24 President, Meeti Nigam



Ginny McKay, Susan Edens Hammer, Uma Avva, Barbara Savage and Mary Tyrey at the Centennial Celebration.



**NAMI Walks NC
2015 and 2016**



Alliance members at the opioid misuse conference VIP event in Cary in 2017.



Deborah Harrell Meehan and Alliance members and friends celebrating her birthday and raising money for the NCMSA at the Angus Barn in Raleigh in 2015.