

# touchstone

THE MAGAZINE OF MOUNTAIN AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER

SPRING 2016

## *A Foundation of Education: Building a Healthier WNC*

**Expanding Medical Education in the Next Decade**  
*Students' Passion Fuels New Programs*

**Education for Healthcare Providers, Education for You**  
*Empowering the Community*

**Reaching Out to Business Leaders**  
*Engaging Employees in Their Own Health*





# From our President and CEO, Dr. Jeff Heck

Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

MAHEC has been using education for more than 40 years to change our little area of the world, and it's working. Four hundred sixty-six resident/fellow graduates have trained here, and in the *last year alone*, over 8,800 individuals attended a continuing education program.

Although many changes occurred over the years, education remains a constant and continues to grow. In addition to programs for licensure credits, we recognized the need to offer community events to help you take better care of your own health.

We recently reached out to local business leaders to offer support and guidance in engaging employees to actively participate in their own healthcare. And our role in training healthcare professionals will expand with the addition of new residencies in the coming years.

Through all the changes over the years and those to come in the future, MAHEC remains as committed to education and your health as we were in the beginning.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffery E. Heck". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeffery E. Heck, MD  
President and CEO, MAHEC  
Professor, UNC Chapel Hill



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## Patient Care Provided at:

MAHEC Dental Health Center  
and Center for Advanced Training

MAHEC Family Health Center at Biltmore

MAHEC Family Health Center at Cane Creek

MAHEC Family Health Center at Enka/Candler

MAHEC Family Health Center at Lake Lure

MAHEC Family Health Center at Mill Spring

MAHEC Family Health Center at Newbridge

MAHEC Ob/Gyn Specialists

Hendersonville Family Health Center

Deerfield Retirement Community

Givens Estates

MAHEC's mission  
is to train the next generation  
of healthcare professionals  
for Western North Carolina  
through quality healthcare,  
innovative education  
and best practice models  
that can be replicated nationally.

*We value:*  
*Excellence,*  
*Innovation,*  
*Compassion,*  
*Collaboration.*

To remove your name from the mail list or  
update your address, call 828-771-4203,  
email [debbie.manley@mahec.net](mailto:debbie.manley@mahec.net), or mail the  
enclosed envelope with your request.

# Medical Education in WNC: *The Next Decade*

## *The Urgent Need to Increase the Supply of Rural Physicians*

The vision of people waiting in line outside of Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM) to get medical care was shocking to Brittany Papworth, former Kenan Primary Care Medical Scholar and 2016 UNC School of Medicine Asheville Campus graduate. That image, combined with the relationship she built with an underprivileged patient, is something that will stay with her through her medical career.



“To be able to have that experience, which is extremely unique in medical school, is extremely fulfilling, and something that will help me moving forward,” she says.

With the urgent need to increase the supply of rural physicians in our region, it is residencies and fellowships like these that attract and retain students who then stay in the region to practice. 65% of primary care physicians who complete a MAHEC residency stay in North Carolina to practice.

That’s why the medical education that MAHEC provides, with the help of community partners, is expanding over the next decade – so more students like Brittany find the passion for and reward of practicing rural medicine.

Over 150 MAHEC faculty, community faculty, preceptors, UNC School of Medicine Asheville Campus physician teachers, and Senator Tom Apodaca met on February 25<sup>th</sup> to hear the plans for expansion.



***“We know our students love this place.”***  
- Dr. Julie Byerley, UNC School of Medicine  
Vice Dean for Education

### **New Programs to Recruit More Rural Physicians**

Top: Sen. Apodaca poses with Minority Medical Mentoring Program Intern Vanna Labi who intends to pursue a MD/MPH dual degree.  
Middle: Dr. Blake Fagan, Dr. Jeff Heck and Dr. Mark Hellreich discuss the new programs.  
Bottom: Dr. Julie Byerley speaks with Drs. Benjamin Gilmer and Blake Fagan after the program.

## *What will you see over the next decade?*

### **EXPANSION of the UNC School of Medicine Asheville Campus**

Increased enrollment from 20 to 24 students per year in 2017.

### **NEW General Surgery Residency Program**

By 2022, there will be 20 surgery residents and the first class of four surgeons will graduate.

### **NEW Psychiatry Residency Program**

By 2021, there will be 16 psychiatry residents and the first class of four psychiatrists will graduate.

### **NEW Simulation Lab on the MAHEC Campus**

A simulation lab will be built and equipped at the Mary C. Nesbitt Biltmore Campus for residents and other healthcare professionals.

### **NEW Rural Hubs Being Established in the Region**

Rural hubs will be fully integrated with local practitioners.



# Continuing Education: *Over 40 Years and Still Just as Vital*



**Support for Healthcare Professionals:** MAHEC has provided continuing education since 1974 on the latest topics, such as “Differential Diagnosis in Dizziness and Vertigo.”

## *Education Never Goes Out of Style*

Each time the band squeezes tight around your arm as the nurse takes your blood pressure, or when you open wide for the dentist to peer inside, or as the pharmacist hands over your carefully reviewed prescription, you place trust that each one received top-notch training.

You want the best treatment from every healthcare professional, and you want them to stay on top of the latest recommendations. MAHEC wants the same. That was the main focus when the doors opened in 1974 - to expand medical education by training physicians for rural WNC and to provide continuing education to support those providers. It's something we are still passionate about today.

“They lead to better patient outcomes. It's why we provide these classes - so providers can give better care,” says Frank Castellblanco, RN, DPN, Regional Services Director at MAHEC.

Although MAHEC has expanded (and continues to expand) to not just training but also being the doctors, dentists, and other healthcare professionals you trust, continuing education still plays a vital role in our operation.

Expansion also includes the way we provide programs. In addition to in-person seminars, many are offered online or via webinar or videoconference. It's cost effective education

that's relevant, and meets the needs of rural providers who cannot travel. But one of the biggest changes made to our continuing education programs is including *you*.

We've recognized the need to help educate you on different healthcare topics as well.

“We educate healthcare providers, but we also try to educate community members so they gain responsibility,” says Castellblanco. “So much of how healthcare is set up is that someone gets sick and we fix them. We want to focus more on the preventative side and keeping people healthy. By engaging the community, we empower them to take care of their health.”

*“I believe that this program [RN Refresher] responsibly fills a very important and needed role in the state and field of nursing and does it with efficiency and integrity . . . May that other participants enjoy the fulfillment I feel regarding the program and success I intend to have!”*

*- Mary Anne,  
continuing education attendee*



**Including YOU in Continuing Education:** Community events offer information and resources to the general public. A recent concussion event featured an exhibit of masks created by brain injury survivors.

*“By engaging the community,  
we empower them to take care  
of their health.”*

- Frank Castelblanco, RN, DPN

## Continuing Education Program Disciplines:

Dentistry

Nursing

Pharmacy

Mental Health

Medicine

Public Health

Allied Health

In  
2015

8,895  


unique program  
participants  
from

44  


states  
attended

 896  
programs

## Applying Classwork to Real Life and Teaching Others at the Same Time



**Education to Provide Better Care:** Marilyn uses the skills she learns in continuing education courses to help both her patients and the students she teaches.

Imagine performing your job in front of an audience every day.

That's what Marilyn does as an Adjunct Clinical Instructor at AB Tech Allied Dental Clinic. Not only does she care for patients as a registered dental hygienist, but she trains students through hands-on experiences at the same time.

With groups of future dental professionals watching her every move and learning procedures in real-life settings, Marilyn wants to make sure she's prepared for anything.

“We've had emergencies in our clinic before,” she says. “We have emergency protocols in place, but it's really good to stay abreast of it.”

That's why she attended the “Dental Medical Emergencies” program last year at MAHEC. In fact, Marilyn has been attending continuing education courses at MAHEC since around the time she graduated in 1981. She used to occasionally travel out of the area to maintain her licensure credits, but doesn't have to do much of that anymore with the number and types of courses provided here.

“They've become more varied as years go on to meet the needs of the population in our locality,” she says.

Marilyn just recently completed the “Spanish for the Clinician” program in March. She was excited when her boss told her about it because of the increasing number of both students that she's teaching and patients needing care who speak Spanish.

“As the Hispanic population grows in our area, there's a need for healthcare professionals to communicate with patients,” she says.

With subjects that she needs, or has an interest in, being offered regularly, Marilyn and many of the faculty regularly attend continuing education classes to compare and stay current on information that they are teaching in their didactic classes.

“I really appreciate how MAHEC has grown with the needs of the community.”

*“I really appreciate how  
MAHEC has grown with the  
needs of the community.”*

- Marilyn, RDH



# Why is Employee Health Important?

## 'It Just Makes Good Business Sense'

### *Bringing Down Healthcare Costs Can Be As Simple As Open Dialogue*

"Coming to MAHEC probably saved my life."

Amy struggled with her weight for a long time, but just over one year ago she attended orientation at MAHEC and the very next day went to her first Weight Watchers at Work meeting.

"I didn't know a soul, but I immediately had friends," she says. "I was at the highest weight I had ever been and almost cried. But my supportive coworkers were my cheerleaders - not just the ones in Weight Watchers but others as well. It has been a year and two months, and I have lost 80 pounds."

So what caused the change for Amy that had not happened before? It was not just the Weight Watchers program - it was having Weight Watchers at Work. Amy was ready for change and didn't have to go through the effort of finding meetings. They were conveniently held in the building she worked in, which also housed a constant support network.

Amy is healthier, happier, and other symptoms she had been experiencing are either lessened or gone. But why does this matter to the organization? Not only will healthy employees make a better community for us all, but it also saves businesses (and individuals) money. Preventative care cuts costs in the long run.

"Focusing on it because it's such a high



**Talking 'Good Business Sense':** Dr. Heck welcomes local business members to the inaugural Business Over Breakfast event.

percent of your costs just makes good business sense," says Dr. Jeff Heck.

It's the sharing of ideas like these that brought about 40 business leaders to the inaugural MAHEC Business Over Breakfast on March 2nd. The event was created in an effort for MAHEC to share what we are doing as an employer to reduce healthcare costs, and discuss what other businesses can do to help their own employees.

But not every business can afford to supplement the cost of a program like Weight Watchers or even has the space and resources to have it on-site. What can those businesses do to support and encourage employees in their own healthcare? Have an open dialogue.

"We didn't come to these things on our own. We really engaged our employees," says Tammy Wood, MAHEC Chief Operating Officer.

***"We are both a consumer of healthcare, and we're also a provider of healthcare. It's something we think about a lot - not only for ourselves, but we think about it for the community."***

**- Dr. Jeff Heck**

"We are both a consumer of healthcare, and we're also a provider of healthcare," says Dr. Heck. "It's something we think about a lot - not only for ourselves, but we think about it for the community."

Amy found success because she was in a place where she felt supported.

"I am encouraged to take care of myself while taking care of my work," she says. "In other organizations, it felt like work was all that mattered. At MAHEC, I matter as an individual."

Tammy lists the three key challenges as an employer (the same MAHEC faces as a healthcare provider) as: Engagement, Integrated Care, and a Culture of Support. Engaging employees to share feedback and ideas can do a lot to bring about change. Frank Castelblanco, MAHEC Regional Services Director, says the number one satisfier for employees is having a friend they can talk to at work.

"Help create and support that," he says. "It makes a big difference."

#### **Tips and Strategies to Build Employee Engagement and Community**

**FREE:** Open dialogue

**FREE:** Encourage work friendships

**FREE:** Share resources

*(diabetes programs at YWCA and YMCA)*

**FREE:** Group walks

**FREE:** Stretch breaks together

**\$:** Cost reduction for gym or classes

**\$:** Healthy group lunches  
*(pot luck or paid for by company)*

**\$:** Chamber Challenge 5K

**\$:** Programs at work  
*(like yoga or Weight Watchers)*

**\$:** Wellness points-based system for reduced insurance costs

# Thank You

## For Being Our Valentine All Year Long



**Hearts flutter:** Over 40 donors gathered February 11<sup>th</sup> to celebrate their accomplishments.

### *You Fill the Hearts of So Many in Our Community*

Our hearts went aflutter in February with the thought of all you've accomplished since the MAHEC Development Office started nearly four years ago. We couldn't help but take advantage of the Valentine season of love and throw you a little party to express our gratitude.

Hearts were everywhere, but we hope we touched yours just like you touched Teresa's. You made her smile - something she had not done openly in a long time.

"I used to wear a mask over my face when I went anywhere because I was ashamed. Now I don't have to do that."

She no longer wears a mask because last year you helped her receive her first pair of dentures, and she can't stop smiling. It was not just a set of pearly whites to Teresa - you gifted her self-confidence back.

**Read Teresa's story as well as many of other people you've helped in our *Year in Review*. Find it on our website: [www.mahec.net](http://www.mahec.net) in the "Read Our Stories" section**

## How Would You Like To Be Involved?

### Check Out Our Programs

Continuing Education programs are posted online ([www.mahec.net](http://www.mahec.net)) for registration. In addition to programs for healthcare professionals, we offer some open to the community, such as the upcoming June programs: "Parkinson's Empowerment" and "Autism: Across the Spectrum."

### Share Your MAHEC Story

Maybe you're a patient like Teresa who is now smiling again, or you attended a MAHEC program that helped your career, like Marilyn. Spread the word on how MAHEC has affected your life, and don't forget to tell us about it so we can share it, too!

### Become an Ambassador

Become an ambassador in your own community for a cause important to you (such as women's health, geriatric medicine, global rural health, and student medical education). Conduct tours, lead educational gatherings, round up fellow humanitarians to share in your cause, and more!

### Sign Up for the E-Newsletter

If you don't already receive it, sign up for our quarterly e-newsletter and stay up-to-date on the latest happenings, and read stories on what you've helped accomplish.

### Make a Gift

Consider a one-time gift, gifts in honor or in memory of a loved one, a 3-year pledge, a planned gift or a gift of stock. Options are available online, or return in the enclosed envelope and help provide innovative education and quality healthcare.

### CONTACT THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

For more information on any of the above or to sign up, contact Debbie Manley: [debbie.manley@mahec.net](mailto:debbie.manley@mahec.net) or 828-771-4203



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