

NORTH CAROLINA FIRST LADY KRISTIN COOPER TO VISIT MAHEC

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MAHEC Family Health Center at Newbridge

ASHEVILLE -- North Carolina First Lady Kristin Cooper will visit the MAHEC Family Health Center at Newbridge on Monday, March 20th at 12:00pm to learn more about the Reach Out and Read program.

Reach Out and Read is a national nonprofit that partners with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together, and several MAHEC practices participate in the program. The visit will give the First Lady an opportunity to read aloud to a group of children at the practice, take a site tour, and speak with providers.

"We're ecstatic to host the visit and show the passion and dedication we have to serving our area," says Dr. Lisa Reed, Family Practice Physician at MAHEC Family Health Center at Newbridge. "MAHEC is invested in the healthcare of the Western North

Carolina community, and literacy is an integral part of pediatric care. The Reach Out and Read model has been extremely successful for us, and we highly recommend it to other practices who are considering implementing it as well."

The model involves healthcare providers speaking with parents during regular pediatric checkups about the importance of reading aloud, and children from 6-months through 5 years of age are given a book to take home. Providers can use books as a tool to assess developmental milestones. This year, MAHEC will help 2,300 children build their home libraries, and since joining, has prescribed more than 11,500 books, according to Reach Out and Read Carolinas.

"Building community partnerships like this increases MAHEC's ability to reach as many people as efficiently as we can in our community," says Dr. Ginger Poulton, Family Practice Physician at MAHEC Family Health Center at Newbridge. "We're committed to combatting barriers to better health, and this program is one way that we can increase access to books and knowledge about the importance of reading aloud for developmental growth."

The MAHEC Family Health Center at Newbridge is located at 218 Elkwood Avenue, Asheville, NC 28804.

For more information on Reach Out and Read, please visit reachoutandread.org.

MAHEC was established in 1974 and is a leader in healthcare, education and innovation. Located in Asheville, MAHEC serves a 16-county region in Western North Carolina. It is the largest Area Health Education Center in North Carolina, which evolved to address national and state concerns with the supply, retention and quality of health professionals. 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. For more information on MAHEC, visit mahec.net.