Caring for Western North Carolina:

HOPE AFTER HELENE



MAHEC

Impact Report 2025


“In the darkness, we found light—in generosity, compassion, and unwavering support.”
— STEPHANIE CALL, MD, MSPH
MAHEC INTERNAL MEDICINE RESIDENCY PROGRAM DIRECTOR



We Stood Strong
BECAUSE OF YOU

For more than 50 years, MAHEC has been a trusted, community-driven nonprofit dedicated to providing primary care in rural communities and those with less access to resources at every stage of life. When disaster struck, we did what we've always done: **We showed up. And because of your support, we could act immediately.**

Beyond the physical destruction, the storm caused many to lose access to essential medical care. MAHEC was there—staffing emergency shelters, caring for mothers and babies, providing mental health counseling, and restoring healthcare services in the hardest-hit communities.

Inside this report, you'll find stories of our people, partnerships, and the impact of your generosity in helping us respond to and heal our community. Every gift reflects our shared commitment to caring for one another. Now more than ever, our mountain region needs MAHEC, and I am truly grateful for your support in making our work possible.

With appreciation,

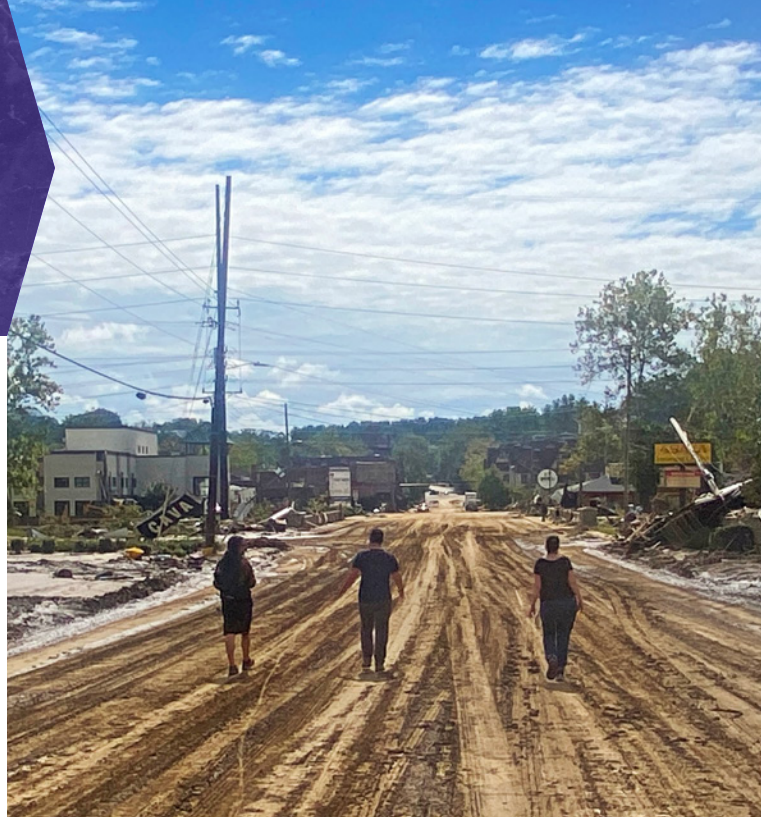
William R. Hathaway, MD

William R. Hathaway, MD
Chief Executive Officer
Mountain Area Health Education Center

The names of certain individuals within this document have been changed to protect their privacy and are indicated with an asterisk.

A Storm's Devastation

NO ONE PREDICTED



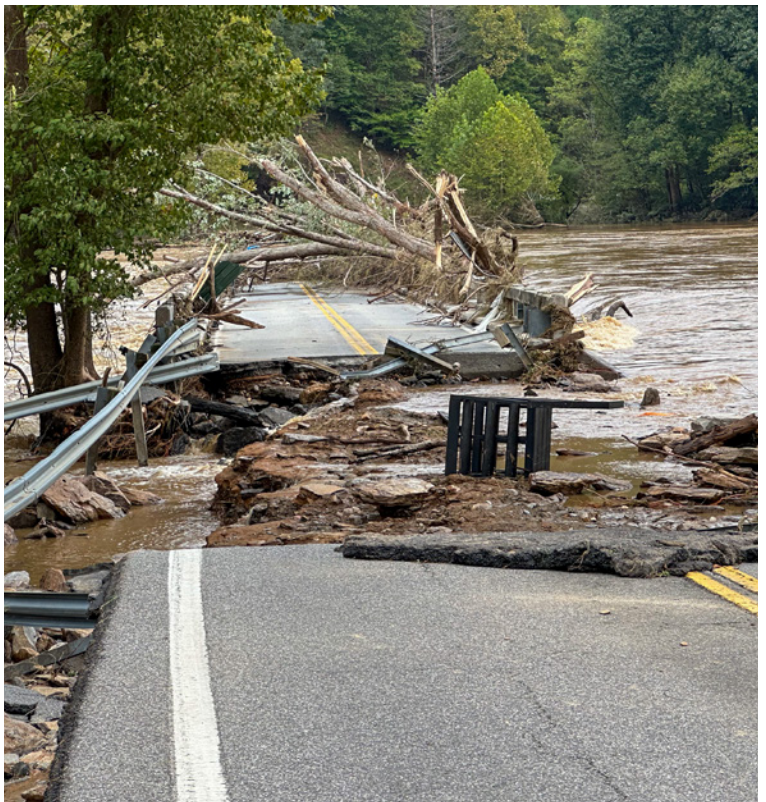
SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

Western North Carolina

Hurricane Helene was one of the most destructive natural disasters in recent U.S. history. It left Western North Carolina with impassable roads, landslides, and widespread power, water, and communication outages. **More than 100 lives were lost in WNC alone** (second deadliest hurricane this century after Hurricane Katrina in 2005) and many more were stripped of their homes and livelihoods.

Yet, in the face of extreme devastation, something extraordinary happened:
Our community came together.







Turning Mission INTO ACTION

> *"When we in Buncombe County government called Dr. Hathaway and he said, 'We've got this,' it was a huge relief. We knew we didn't have to worry because of the skill, capacity, and quality MAHEC brings to any situation, including COVID. We are so grateful for that."*

— AVRIL PINDER, MBA
BUNCOMBE COUNTY MANAGER
AND MAHEC BOARD MEMBER

In this recording, MAHEC CEO Dr. William R. Hathaway and Avril Pinder discuss their first conversation after the storm about urgent medical care needs for displaced residents at A-B Tech's Ferguson Center.

CLICK HERE
TO WATCH
THE VIDEO

> *"We relied on emergency generators, paper charts, and rationed food supplies. Despite the overwhelming challenges, MAHEC's residents and staff delivered extraordinary care."*

— KACEY SCOTT, MD
MAHEC INTERNAL MEDICINE RESIDENT

Within 72 hours following the storm, MAHEC was already helping to staff emergency shelters.

Within 4 days, MAHEC had a fully functioning walk-in clinic providing care to the community.

1,031 patients from 12 different counties were seen at our walk-in Enka/Candler office during the first two weeks following the storm.

Nearly 10% of our staff were significantly impacted by the disaster and all received emergency financial assistance from MAHEC within weeks.

More than 1,000 patients were treated at pop-up clinics at Lake Lure, Black Mountain, and Swannanoa, staffed in part by MAHEC providers.

> *"I was impressed with how MAHEC adapted ... MAHEC never missed a beat in very unusual circumstances."*

— MAHEC PATIENT

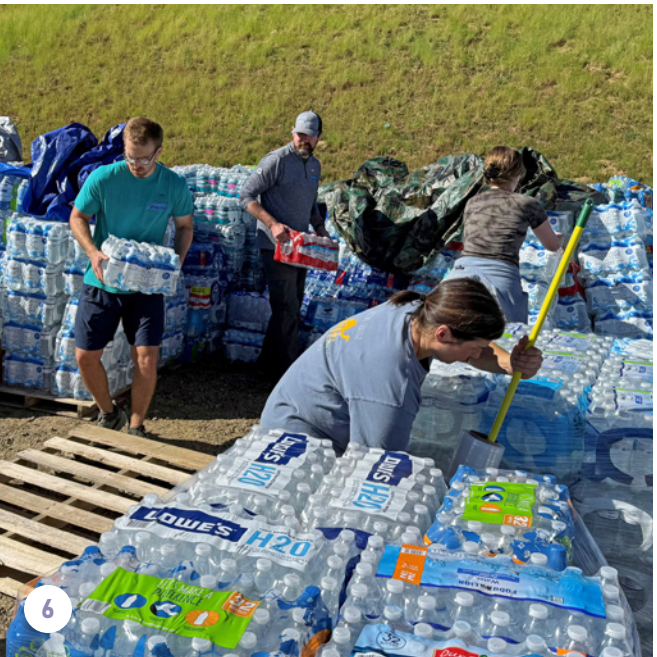
A Collaborative Response to a
CRITICAL NEED FOR AID



SWANNANOA, NC

Within days after the storm, what began as a single medical tent in a Swannanoa parking lot quickly became a community-based pop-up clinic. MAHEC physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and counselors mobilized alongside partners from UNC Pardee, Mission Health, AdventHealth, and others, **providing urgent medical care to hundreds of storm survivors** when and where they needed it most.

For lifelong Swannanoa resident Lilly*, who lost both her home and the oxygen machine she relied on to breathe, MAHEC's rapid response was lifesaving. Working quickly with her supplier, MAHEC ensured she had a replacement device—restoring not just her oxygen, but her hope.





MAHEC Alumni Benjamin Gilmer '09, MD, and Olivia Caron '21, PharmD, mobilized medical teams to provide care and lifesaving medications at a pop-up clinic in the heart of Swannanoa.





HOUSE CALLS

MAHEC teams sought out those most in need—patients with chronic conditions, mobility challenges, or blocked roads. **We went door to door** providing medications for heart conditions and inhalers for asthma, FEMA assistance, tetanus vaccines, and treatment for wounds from chainsaw injuries.

On the heels of widespread disaster, this was more than medical care—it was humanity at its best, **neighbor helping neighbor.**

Swannanoa by the Numbers: Care, Medication, Vaccines, & Supplies

578 patients seen at the community-based medical pop-up clinic

132 patients seen in their homes

Common Medications Provided



Inhalers for asthma

Insulin for diabetes

Medications for high blood pressure and heart failure

Treatment for bee stings, poison ivy, skin irritation, allergic reactions, and other incidents caused by a surge in bee activity and poison ivy exposure from fallen trees and debris removal

Caring for Mothers & Babies in
THE AFTERMATH



DELIVERING HOPE

For expectant mothers, the crisis of power outages, water shortages, and clinic closures left them wondering where and how they would safely deliver their babies. MAHEC's maternal health team sprang into action, working around the clock to **coordinate emergency transfers—even across state lines**—ensuring safe deliveries and uninterrupted postpartum care.

Four months pregnant, Elena* was stranded at home, surrounded by floodwater and debris. With no power, water, or way to call for help, she tried to wait it out. But when cramping and bleeding started, she knew she had to act fast. After walking miles through treacherous terrain to reach Swannanoa, Elena was quickly transported to the MAHEC office in Enka/Candler. Severely dehydrated after days without food or water, she received critical care and nourishment by MAHEC providers. Today, Elena has a healthy baby.

Amidst the devastation, **MAHEC remained a lifeline** and proved that no storm can shake our commitment to mothers and children.

In the month after the storm...

45 babies were safely delivered by MAHEC providers.

2,214 expectant mothers received care across MAHEC's Asheville, Franklin, and Brevard offices.

19 high-risk pregnancies were managed in MAHEC's Maternal-Fetal Medicine unit, the region's only provider of this specialized care.



ENSURING SAFE FEEDING

Aware that disasters increase the risk of both illness and malnutrition for infants, MAHEC Certified Lactation Consultant Brandi Harrison mobilized volunteers to assemble and deliver safe feeding supplies to stranded families. Despite impassable roads and countless obstacles, **they hiked on foot** to ensure babies and young children were nourished.

These efforts were recognized nationally on NBC's *Today* show. To learn more about how local healthcare professionals and volunteers brought aid to families, read the full story.

CLICK HERE TO READ THE FULL STORY

READ MORE ONLINE AT NBC TODAY

> *"During disasters, infants and young children are at the highest risk for illness and infection. Without power and clean water, those risks only grow. We knew we had to act fast."*
>
> **— BRANDI HARRISON**
> MAHEC CERTIFIED LACTATION CONSULTANT



Safeguarding Lifesaving Treatment for SUBSTANCE USE

ACCESS TO MEDICATIONS

Opioid-related deaths have surged, with Southern Appalachia facing overdose rates twice the national average. When pharmacy closures and medication shortages threatened access to treatment, MAHEC's Dr. Blake Fagan took action.

Partnering with opioid treatment programs, he ensured **patients with opioid use disorder continued receiving life-saving medications** like buprenorphine. This swift response eased suffering and highlighted the urgent need for policy reforms to protect essential care in future crises.

Healing Minds & Hearts in OUR SCHOOLS



Healing goes beyond rebuilding—it means **restoring well-being.** As WNC communities recovered, MAHEC's school-based therapists provided critical mental health support to students, families, and educators facing profound loss.

> *"During the remnants of Hurricane Helene, Max, a MAHEC school-based therapist, called to check on us as soon as cell service returned. He made sure the kids were seen that very first week back at school. We're so thankful someone was there for them."*
>
> **— PARENT OF A BUNCOMBE COUNTY STUDENT**

Despite school closures, our therapists continued supporting students across **50 schools in WNC** through rapid telehealth expansion and phone counseling, ensuring no child was left without help during an already isolating time.

Immediately after the storm and throughout the following weeks, MAHEC provided critical support:

2,255 patients seen by MAHEC psychiatrists & licensed therapists

4,887 sessions conducted for counseling and psychiatric needs

SUPPORTING EDUCATORS & COMMUNITIES

When the storm took the lives of students in three Buncombe County schools, MAHEC's school-based therapists provided **immediate crisis support to grieving school administrators and staff.** Drop-in group sessions offered a safe space for educators to process grief, navigate uncertainty, and regain the strength to support their students and move towards recovery.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, **MAHEC remains a pillar of strength** for our schools, ensuring that no student, teacher, or family faces tragedy alone.

"We witnessed firsthand how MAHEC's team rose to the challenge as a critical responder to our community's medical needs. Even while facing their own hardships, their dedication to caring for others never wavered—it was truly inspiring.

Supporting MAHEC's team was an easy decision because they are always there for our community's health and well-being."

— TOM & NANCY MAHER
PISGAH INVESTMENTS FOUNDATION

MAHEC Employee Assistance: A LIFELINE IN THE STORM

With incredible support from **Pisgah Investments Foundation**, MAHEC established an emergency relief fund to assist **82 MAHEC employees** affected by the storm.

Thanks to the Foundation's generosity and contributions from **more than 150 donors nationwide**, this fund provided immediate aid to staff who lost homes, vehicles, and more. Now, it will continue as a permanent Employee Assistance Fund, ensuring MAHEC employees always have support during times of personal hardship.

"This means more to me and my family than you could ever imagine, so thank you from the bottom of our hearts!"

— MAHEC EMPLOYEE



We Wish to Extend Our DEEPEST GRATITUDE

The following list of donors generously supported MAHEC's mission during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. These gifts include contributions made in support of our endowment, MAHEC Annual Fund, Hurricane Helene relief, and initiatives that advance access to care, health professions education, and community health. MAHEC is grateful to all our donors for prioritizing the nonprofit as part of their philanthropy.

1974 SOCIETY

$1 Million and Above

Dogwood Health Trust

William R. Kenan, Jr., Charitable Trust

$500,000–$999,999

Direct Relief

$250,000–$499,999

Gilead Sciences, Inc.

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The Leon Levine Foundation

$100,000–$249,999

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Impact Health

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The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina - Ramble Charitable Fund

The Pew Charitable Trusts

$50,000–$99,999

First Citizens Bank

RYSE Construction

The Cannon Foundation

The Duke Endowment

$25,000–$49,999

American Medical Society of Sports Medicine

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Blue Cross & Blue Shield of NC Foundation

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Global Relief Brother's Brother Foundation

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Drs. William McKenna & Suzanne Landis

Lisa LaVallee, MD

Lori & Ron A. Paulus, MD

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing

$10,000–$24,999

Aetna Better Health Foundation

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Matt Ransom, PharmD

John & Martha Sensenbrenner

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CLICK HERE TO LEARN ABOUT OUR GIVING COMMUNITIES

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

$1,000–$4,999

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Heather Wingert
Aimee Zaas, MD
Marirose Ziebarth

Aid to an FQHC in the Storm's Path

Global Relief Brother's Brother Foundation and **Direct Relief** provided emergency financial aid to MAHEC, recognizing its role as a Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alike in the storm's path, ensuring care for the hardest-hit areas and fulfilling its commitment to healthcare for all.

FRIENDS

MAHEC has earned Candid's highest rating. This exceptional nonprofit designation sets us apart and demonstrates our trustworthiness.

Platinum Transparency 2025
Candid.

Up to $999

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Leading with Compassion & Action

Immediately after the disaster struck, **The Leon Levine Foundation** generously awarded MAHEC a $260,000 unrestricted grant, enabling swift mobilization of clinical teams, access to lifesaving medical and behavioral health services and emergency medications, and support for displaced families. Their leadership was pivotal in MAHEC's storm response for the region.

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Providing Care in Crisis

With transformational support from **Dogwood Health Trust**, MAHEC staffed a temporary emergency medical shelter at A-B Tech just hours after the storm, and provided care at the WNC Ag Center, the Red Cross in Hendersonville, and our Enka-Candler office.

An Extraordinary Act of Solidarity

Feeling the weight of the storm over 200 miles away, **Duke University's School of Medicine** made MAHEC the beneficiary of its annual fundraising campaign. Dozens of Duke medical professionals donated to ensure our employees and learners could rebuild, recover, and continue providing care.

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MAHEC

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