

# COUNCIL MEMBERS MEET WITH MAHEC

*Mountain Xpress*, January 9, 2019



*Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer shares some of the city's priorities in a discussion that included Asheville City Council members Julie Mayfield and Vijay Kapoor (to the right of Manheimer), MAHEC's Marie Gannon, LCAS, LCSW (far left), and MAHEC leadership.*

Asheville, NC—The Mountain Area Health Education Center says it hopes to enhance its partnership with local governments to foster a unified, collaborative approach to improve health in Western North Carolina.

On Dec. 11, while parts of the ground remained obscured after a major snowstorm that ended the day before, MAHEC representatives met with Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer and Asheville City Council members Julie Mayfield and Vijay Kapoor. Buncombe County commissioners also were invited, but none attended (as offices were closed due to the storm).

The collaboration would include local businesses, nonprofits and government institutions and would foster women's health to promote healthy pregnancies, leading to healthy children and families and, ultimately, success in school.

MAHEC President Daniel Frayne told leaders that the time is right to pursue this initiative, citing as positive factors the strength of the region's healthcare system, the opportunities presented by the Dogwood Health Trust — the foundation that would be created as the result of the sale of Mission Health to HCA Healthcare, if the transaction is approved by N.C. Attorney General Josh Stein — and the success of health programs across the region.

Mayfield said many nonprofits that received funding from the city operate on small budgets; those groups could benefit from MAHEC's leadership and organizational capacity, she said.

"That's the whole idea, to connect those kinds of groups to the backbone to give them the kind of support they need to be successful and plug them in to the piece of the puzzle where they fit," Frayne said.

Jennifer Maurer, the external communications manager for MAHEC, said the initiative has not yet reached the proposal stage. Instead the meeting in December was envisioned as a way to get the conversation started, she said.

###

The Mountain Area Health Education Center (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.

The Biltmore campus is also home to UNC Health Sciences at MAHEC, an academic health center in partnership with UNC-Chapel Hill that includes programs from the UNC School of Medicine, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, and UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy.

For more information, visit [www.mahec.net](http://www.mahec.net).