



NEWS RELEASE

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MAHEC Awarded \$1.8M to Expand Addiction Treatment Services Across WNC

Federal grant supports new Asheville-based addiction medicine fellowship program

Asheville, NC (July 20, 2020)— The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has awarded Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) \$1.8 million over five years to increase the number of addiction specialists trained in primary care settings.

HRSA awarded [a total of \\$20.3 million](#) to MAHEC and 43 other fellowship programs across the country to expand the addiction workforce in communities with the greatest need like Western North Carolina, where all 18 counties are designated as mental health professional shortage areas. WNC has higher rates of substance use, overdose, suicide, and depression than state and national averages.

“This grant will help us expand treatment services in rural communities where individuals may not have reliable transportation, insurance, or access to a provider who is trained in addiction care,” Carriedelle Fusco explains. Fusco is a family nurse practitioner at MAHEC who instructs addiction medicine fellows and uses evidence-based practices to treat patients with opioid and other substance use disorders.

The program, housed in MAHEC’s Department of Family Medicine, welcomed its first three physician fellows this summer. The five-year grant will support training for up to four fellows each year, providing innovative telehealth services to improve access to care, and developing a network of community-based training sites across WNC where treatment services are needed most.

“We are excited to launch this fellowship,” explains Nathan Mullins, MD, MAHEC’s program director and board-certified addictionologist and ob/gyn. “We’re looking forward to working with local healthcare providers to expand their capacity to treat individuals with substance use disorders.”

Addiction medicine fellows will train at MAHEC’s family medicine, ob/gyn and psychiatry practices as well as Mission Hospital, Charles George VA Hospital, community-based health clinics, and inpatient and outpatient treatment programs. Fellows will have the option of completing a rural rotation. Training will include medical detoxification, pharmacotherapy, psychosocial approaches, harm reduction, 12-step facilitation, and working with peer support specialists as part of an interdisciplinary team.

For more information on MAHEC’s addiction medicine fellowship, please visit www.mahec.net/amf.

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Mountain Area Health Education Center 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 and is one of nine [Area Health Education Centers](#) in North Carolina. MAHEC’s mission is to recruit, train and retain the workforce needed to create a healthy North Carolina with a focus on primary care in rural communities and those with less access to resources. MAHEC’s 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.

Mountain Area Health Education Center

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