



## NEWS RELEASE

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### MAHEC Launches Only Addiction Psychiatry Fellowship in North Carolina

*New fellowship will give psychiatrists the skills needed to support long-term recovery*

Asheville, NC, March 2, 2022—Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) is adding an addiction psychiatry fellowship to the list of graduate medical education programs offered at its Asheville-based campus. This fellowship is the only one of its kind in North Carolina and one of fewer than 50 across the United States. The new program comes at a time when accidental opioid overdoses are at their highest across the nation, with more than 100,000 overdose deaths recorded last year. In January alone, [1,081 North Carolinians](#) visited emergency departments for drug-related overdoses and 368 people died of a suspected overdose, an increase of 45 over last year.

Psychiatrists in the yearlong fellowship will receive additional training in the management of substance withdrawal, medications for opioid use disorders, trauma-informed care, and psychotherapeutic approaches to support long-term recovery for a variety of substance use disorders. They'll also gain experience identifying patients with co-occurring disorders and engaging them in substance use treatment.

“Some people with substance use disorders also struggle with mental illness or have mental illness as a result of their substance use problem,” explained Steve Buie, MD, chair of the Department of Psychiatry at MAHEC. “Physicians with training in both psychiatry and addiction are ideally suited to help those people in their recovery.”

It is estimated that [approximately half](#) of individuals who experience a substance use disorder will also experience a mental health disorder in their lifetime.



The new fellowship will be led by Stephen Wyatt, DO, an addiction psychiatrist and medical educator currently in private practice in Charlotte, NC. Dr. Wyatt completed a National Institute of Drug Abuse clinical research fellowship and has specialized in addiction psychiatry for more than 25 years. He is a clinical expert for the Substance Use and Mental Health Administration's Provider Clinical Support System and helped develop the American Society of Addiction Medicine's guidelines for office-based opioid treatment. He is also a cofounder and vice chair of the [Coalition on Physician Education in Substance Use Disorders](#).

“MAHEC is already a leader in office-based opioid treatment in primary care. I'm looking forward to building the organization's expertise in the field of addiction psychiatry,” shared Dr. Wyatt. “I've collaborated with MAHEC faculty over the years, and I've been impressed with their innovative approaches to education and their passion for expanding access to substance use care.”

The new fellowship will augment MAHEC's many other substance use disorder initiatives including an addiction medicine fellowship housed in MAHEC's Department of Family Medicine, continuing professional development programs, and statewide initiatives that include training partnerships with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Psychiatry at the University of North Carolina's School of Medicine.

"This addiction medicine fellowship is the latest addition to an exceptionally diverse array of graduate medical education programs at MAHEC," shared Bill Hathaway, MD, CEO of MAHEC. "Our commitment to developing the healthcare workforce for our region has never been stronger and, unfortunately, the need for providers capable of caring for those with substance use disorders has never been greater. It is a privilege to serve the community in this way."

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education has approved MAHEC to begin training addiction psychiatry fellows in July 2022. In addition to treating patients at MAHEC's Center for Psychiatry and Mental Wellness, fellows will work in a variety of inpatient and outpatient treatment settings including Mission Hospital, Julian F. Keith Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Center, the Behavioral Health Group, and the Charles George VA Medical Center.

For more information about MAHEC's addiction psychiatry fellowship or any of MAHEC's graduate medical programs, please visit [mahec.net/gme](https://mahec.net/gme).

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## **ABOUT MAHEC**

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 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, UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, and UNC Adams School of Dentistry. For more information, please visit [mahec.net](https://mahec.net).