

# ANNUAL REPORT

RECRUIT • TRAIN • RETAIN

NORTH CAROLINA'S HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

## 2019 - 2020



In affiliation with the Duke AHEC Program  
Part of the NC AHEC Program

## Bringing together resources, education and expertise to improve health care and health care access.

Throughout the south central region of North Carolina served by Southern Regional AHEC, there are shining examples of how our education and clinical services are making a difference in the health of our communities.

Particularly in this year of COVID-19, we have blended our core services to offer support, knowledge and resources that bring together best practices and expertise to health care organizations, professional groups and individuals. From Practice Support coaches assisting physicians in the business of health care to health care education leaders hosting virtual conferences on self-care and care of COVID-19 patients, to offering Telehealth services to patients, we have quickly adapted to meet these needs.

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**Sushma Kapoor, MD**  
President/CEO  
Southern Regional AHEC

## Innovation and Adaptability Keys to Pandemic Response

COVID-19 has impacted this year in ways we could have never imagined. Our people have overcome obstacles and challenges by designing new methods to continue our work of improving the quality of health care in the communities of south central North Carolina. This 2019-2020 annual report provides you with a multitude of examples that demonstrate our integral role of serving at the forefront of clinical education and continuing professional development for healthcare professionals, while in the midst of a world-wide health pandemic.

In addition to our people, our partnerships have helped to sustain our mission. Working together, we have been able to bring the resources needed to help health care providers, practices and organizations, health professions students, family medicine residents, and patients, cope with the unexpected. One example is our highly successful Chief Resident Workshop that transitioned to an online format and garnered a record number of participants from residency programs throughout the country. Our program for osteopathic medical students continues to provide rotations and build a recruitment strategy for our family medicine residency.

A testament to the excellent work that Southern Regional AHEC is doing in our community and the future of health care workforce resulted in a special \$4.8 million appropriation from the NC legislature to us in early July to respond to COVID-19 through training, treatment and outreach.

We thank everyone for their contributions to our success this year. While we don't know what the future holds regarding a COVID-19 vaccine or our ability to flatten the curve of infection, we are preparing the health care workforce for positive outcomes in the days ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Kapoor', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

President/CEO  
Southern Regional Area Health Education Center

# Combatting COVID-19 with Clinical and Education Services



## Hurricane-related stress exposure

- ▶ 74% had mold damage to their home
- ▶ 60% lost possessions
- ▶ 68% were exposed to contaminants
- ▶ 21% developed a new health condition
- ▶ 68% developed a new or worsened mental health condition
- ▶ 11% lost their job and 7% reported spouse or partner lost their job
- ▶ 3% were seriously injured and 7% had a loved one suffer a serious injury
- ▶ 18% lost a family pet



A three-part virtual symposium addressing Climate Change and Health offered an overview of managing the impacts on patients

When the pandemic arrived at our doorstep in early March 2020, our health care and education teams quickly went to work to provide the resources needed for health care professionals and patients. The IT staff was instrumental in supporting virtual programming and telecommuting IT needs for personnel across Southern Regional AHEC.

On the right, you will find a sampling of continuing professional development courses offered to physicians and other health care professionals that helped them understand how to combat the virus and protect patients. Programs were also developed to help providers overcome the stresses of their workload. A total of 28 CPD programs were developed.

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 3/16 | CFVHS Hospital Grand Rounds, COVID Update  |
| 3/23 | CFVHS Infectious Disease Grand Rounds  |
| 4/6  | CFVHS Medical Ethics Rounds, COVID19 & Disaster Ethics (3 sessions)                              |
| 4/9  | CFVHS Infectious Disease Grand Rounds  |
| 4/28 | Caring for Older Adults in Difficult Times   |
| 4/29 | CFVHS Hospital Grand Rounds, Geriatric Medicine and COVID  |
| 4/30 | Hydroxychloroquine for COVID-19: What the Data Says  |
| 5/5  | Addressing the Needs of Older Adults with SUD/OD in Challenging Times                            |
| 5/15 | Addressing the Needs of Older Adults with Diabetes in Challenging Times                          |
| 5/20 | How to Keep Sane in an Insane Time of COVID-19: Recognize & Prevent Job Burnout in the Pharmacy  |
| 5/20 | Critical COVID Illness Recovery: Lessons from Post-ICU Syndrome                                  |
| 6/3  | Addressing Health Disparities during a Pandemic: Inaction & Inequity OR Inclusion and Innovation |





Lead LPN, Melissa Mitchell, checks temperatures at the front door of The Family Medicine Center

The Family Medicine Center serves as the hub of clinical services for patients and is a model medical practice for our residents to learn how to care for patients in a clinical environment. It also offers residents a glimpse of the essential business operations side of health care.

As soon as the pandemic forced people to stay at home, limiting in-person office visits, our faculty, residents and staff implemented Telehealth as a means to care for patients, without sacrificing their safety or the safety of our health care heroes. The benefits of using Telehealth for patients include:

- Privacy Assurance
- Convenience
- Less waiting time
- Avoiding unnecessary exposure to viruses like COVID-19

Although the pandemic reduced the number of patients initially coming into the office in March and April, the training of our residents remained consistent and our patient numbers are picking back up.



## Southern Regional AHEC Mission

To deliver quality health care education. Southern Regional AHEC meets its mission of addressing the region's health care workforce needs by:

- *Providing timely information resources, improving access to care through high quality clinical services*
- *Increasing the number and diversity of practicing healthcare professionals*
- *Promoting state of the art health care education; and*
- *Continually seeking innovation in the education experience.*

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## Recruit, Train and Retain: Developing the Workforce for a Healthy North Carolina

The NC AHEC Program provides and supports educational activities and services with a focus on primary care in rural communities and those with less access to resources to recruit, train, and retain the workforce needed to create a healthy North Carolina. Located in Fayetteville, Southern Regional AHEC is one of nine centers in the NC AHEC Program and serves Bladen, Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Moore, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson and Scotland counties.



# Quality Initiatives Improve Patient Safety and Provider Payments

Identifying processes that improve the way care is delivered to patients drives quality programs throughout Southern Regional AHEC. The work led by Quality and Patient Safety Director Jennifer Bigger, supported by Healthcare Data Analyst Christopher Precht enabled our clinic to regain recognition status as a *Patient Centered Medical Home* in 2019-2020. This involved a number of projects that documented improved outcomes for patients. Federal and commercial insurance quality incentive programs provide a way to improve patient outcomes and receive additional revenue for performing well.



**Jennifer Bigger,**  
Director  
Clinical Quality  
Management  
and Patient Safety

## Quality Incentive Program

Five physicians were attested for Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) at the exceptional provider level for the maximum seven percent increase in Medicare incentive payment in 2021.

Overall United Health Care star rating increased to 4.21, a +0.36 percent increase from 2018, adding \$15,970 in quality payments.

Transitioned to the Blue Premier Aledade ACO, including boot camp training and four core areas of implementation, training on the app.

Our *Patient Centered Medical Home* application was submitted; our clinic received PCMH recognition from 03/15/2019 - 03/15/2020.

Christopher Precht automated Healthnet data reports and automated the daily 403B report.

**25%**  
depression  
screening in adults  
(14% increase)

**68%**  
diabetic patients  
improved HbA1c  
control  
(2% increase)

## Root Cause Analysis



**Christopher Precht**  
Healthcare Data  
Analyst

**Needlesticks** – Fall 2019 leading to new processes, equipment and policies; Vaccine Administration training in Spring 2020; EHR; EPSC; Pre-charting function; automated immunization orders and CPTII codes for BMI, BP, A1c.

## Resident Involvement

Participated in the *Clinical Learning Environment Review* (CLER) visit and developed the post-action plan.

Updated QI curriculum and implemented checklist in *New Innovations* – added QI 104 independent study.

Met with residents for journal club presentations.

Met with residents for ICC-QI, producing three QI projects with storyboards:

- HPV Immunization
- Depression Screening
- Pain Management

**45%**  
children on  
Medicaid screened  
for lead  
(15% increase)

**58%**  
patients accessed  
portal  
(18% increase)

## Clinical Quality Improvement

Established the Patient Safety Committee.

CareManager upgraded and clinical staff trained.

Creation of PHP report website as a data warehouse for PCMH, reports, residency reports and residents' data for QI Projects.

Initiated *Patient Advisory Council* and held first meeting January 2020.

**86%**  
electronically  
prescribed  
prescriptions  
(6% increase)



# Practice Support Team Offers Lifeline of Resources to Providers During Pandemic

Three practice support coordinators were hired at the beginning of 2019. Their experience managing medical practices was essential to their work with individual providers throughout the year. The collective expertise of the team was especially helpful as providers transitioned to caring for patients via Telehealth and other COVID-19 related changes.



**Donna Bowen,**  
Director, Practice  
Support

Led by Donna Bowen, along with Felicia Coats and Paula Locklear, this group supported 81 practices and completed 350 practice visits during the 2019-2020 year. Felicia and Paula assisted four practices in achieving *NCQA Patient Centered Medical Home* recognition and completed 52 KDIS (Key Drive Implementation Scale) with 52 practices in the region. They also assisted with 57 Merit Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS)/Meaningful Use (MU) attestations, completed two practice audits for Medicaid, NCHEIA/NC HealthConnex Training in 13 practices, and helped three practices complete PEP Projects. All this was done while updating and recruiting support contracts with 26 practices.

The team also supported grant work in the following areas:

- Practice Assessments for the Office of Rural Health (Felicia)
- NCHIEA – NC HealthConnex Training
- DHB - Medicaid Transformation/COVID-19
- Workflow, Telehealth, Training and Support, Coding and Billing, PPE and Supplies
- ARHQ Grant – for STUN grant on risky drinking
- DMA - MIPS-MU
- PCMH
- NCCARE 360 Project (Paula served as lead)

Other individual accomplishments include:

Felicia received certification in Rural Health and Federally Qualified Health Centers Billing and Coding.

Paula and Felicia served as subject matter experts on the NC AHEC and the Office of Rural Health (ORH) Telehealth eight-part webinar series: NC AHEC and the *Office of Rural Health (ORH) Telehealth Webinar Series*.

Paula worked with NC AHEC Program Office and other practice support to develop tip sheets on Medicaid, Medicare and Commercial Billing Telehealth that was used statewide.

Felicia assisted with development of Telehealth Chronic Care Management (CCM) and Annual Wellness Visits (AWV) toolkits.

Felicia and Paula attended a two-day boot camp for Billing and Coding for Rural Health Centers and Federally Qualified Health Centers.

The team trained as subject matter experts for the NC Health Information Exchange (NCHIE).

Donna Bowen worked with the regional team on NC AHEC KDIS Workgroup project and Customer Relations Management (CRM) Consultant Group; worked with SR-AHEC clinic patient flow committee amid COVID-19 to ensure best practices and safety for our patients.

(\*see page 25)



**Felicia Coats**  
Practice Support Coach

## **Assistance with NC AHEC Outreach and Grants**

The NC AHEC Scholars Program\*, a program that guides and supports college students pursuing a career in healthcare, required new curriculum development. The Practice Support team, in addition to Quality and Patient Safety Director Jennifer Bigger, assisted in the creation of four modules for the program.



**Paula Locklear**  
Practice Support  
Coach



# Paul Nagy Provides Solid Foundation for Behavioral Health through NC EBP Center at SR-AHEC

Those who work with him refer to Paul Nagy as a *gem* in North Carolina's professional mental health arena. And local communities across the state have found him to be a *rock* who pulls together a solid foundation of influential coalitions to heal them from the widespread despair of substance use disorders.

As he has done for the past 30 years, the licensed professional counselor and clinical addiction specialist, is focused on *identifying, intervening and assisting* those struggling with the impact of those disorders. His goal is to connect these individuals back with their families, their communities, and support systems that are integral to recovery.

In addition to serving as an assistant professor at Duke University School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Paul Nagy's work for the past decade has included the development of *FACE IT!* academies in Guilford County. In 2019, he brought his expertise to Cumberland County through Southern Regional AHEC's NC Evidence Based Practices Center and *Community Grants Funds of Cumberland Community Foundation, Inc.* The *FACE IT! (Facing Addiction through Community Education and Intervention Teams)* program is intended to assist community human service providers in recognizing and addressing substance abuse. It uses science-informed approaches to preventing, intervening and helping those with substance use disorders.

When local mental health organizations recognize their need to update training for their staff, they often request Paul Nagy to deliver the evidence-based series of instruction. La-Lisa Hewett Robinson, Administrator for Continuing Professional Development at Southern Regional

AHEC, has worked with him closely as a speaker, trainer and teacher, and understands his popularity. She says Nagy's success with the *FACE IT!* program and his sought-after reputation is built upon his ability to relate to people. "He meets people where they are; his level of concern is genuine," she says definitively. "He cares about each individual person and understands the importance of the family along with community connections, as part of recovery."

The training Paul Nagy provides to mental health professionals throughout the state digs deep, reaching far beyond the surface of presenter-to-learner. He always includes a tool box of screening and communications activities. Their implementation helps local mental health counselors improve treatment, engagement and outcomes for those seeking help.

A clinical researcher, teacher and administrator, the Florida State University graduate holds degrees from Duke University and has also served as an Expert Content Director, overseeing the development of treatment improvement protocols and technical assistance publications for the national organization, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the NC Evidence Based Practices Center.



Paul Nagy, LPC, LCAS, CCS  
Assistant Professor  
Duke School of Medicine  
Dept. of Psychiatry and  
Behavioral Health Services

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Cumberland  
County FACE  
IT! Academy  
participants  
meet with Paul  
Nagy and La-Lisa  
Hewett Robinson  
for introductory  
session

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**COVID-19 FACT:** FACE-IT! Academy was shifted to a digital format with online webinars for participants

# Continuing Professional Development Transferred Multiple Training Opportunities to Online Format

Continuing professional development (CPD) programming is designed for professionals in allied and public health, continuing medical education (CME) for physicians, nursing, behavioral health, and pharmacy. Administrators and directors offer programming based on needs assessed by professionals within the workplace. These are often developed by collaborating with organizations to bring the latest evidence-based programs to them through public and private contracts, grants and traditional regional events

**411**  
programs  
offered

**10,759**  
individuals  
attended

**1,201**  
program hours  
delivered

**27**  
individuals per  
program average

## Programs Continue Despite Interruption

The COVID-19 pandemic paused traditional classroom learning. Beginning in early March, most continuing education programs were reformatted, offered through virtual learning platforms. Many of the CME programs were brought directly to providers through series offerings at regional hospitals and health care facilities.

## IVC Program Collaboration with NCDHHS



**Kate Smith**  
Program Assistant

Noted significant CPD accomplishments during 2019-2020 included the administration of the *Involuntary Commitment Certification* (IVC) Program, in collaboration with the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS).

For the project, Program Assistant for Mental Health CPD Kate Smith, created a process and a system for tracking participants. To date, she has enrolled 355 participants who are in various stages of becoming certified, including 70 who have completed the process. This project began in October 2019 and is ongoing.



**Christi Boahn**  
Program Assistant



**Melanie Wheeler**  
Manager  
CPD Exp/ Enrollment



**Althea Bell**  
Program Assistant

## Contact Tracing Training for Public Health

Program Assistant for Nursing/Allied and Public Health CPD Christi Boahn, and Experience and Enrollment Team Manager Melanie Wheeler, processed over 4,500 registrations for four COVID-19 *Contact Tracing* sessions and other related classes for the NC AHEC Program Office. The registration period started in May and is ongoing.

## Duke AHEC Behavioral Health Webinars

Each month, physicians, mental health providers and all interested health care professionals have the opportunity to attend a one-hour webinar on a variety of behavioral health topics as part of the *Duke Psychiatry Web Conference Series*.

Program Assistant Althea Bell coordinates with Libby Baron at the Duke AHEC Program Office to provide this statewide webinar. It offers one hour credit at no cost.



**Karen Goble**  
Director, CPD

Karen Goble is serving on the leadership of the *Fayetteville Labyrinth Project*, an initiative to create an accessible outdoor labyrinth where we can walk in quiet contemplation as one community and that is dedicated to US service personnel and veterans.  
Go to: <https://abundancenc.org/the-fayetteville-labyrinth-project/>

Bebe Smith and Marvin Swartz were invited to present on *Psychiatric Advance Directives (PADS)* as part of SAMHSA's educational series at the APA Annual Meeting alongside Anita Everett, MD, Director of the Center for Mental Health Services at SAMHSA.



**Bebe Smith**  
Coordinator  
NC EBP Center

The meeting was in April, and unfortunately was cancelled due to COVID-19. Instead of presenting in person, they recorded their presentation as part of the APA On-Demand series, which is available to psychiatrists nationally.

Bertina Parkins was a subject matter expert to support and educate over 270 individuals as contact tracers to help combat COVID-19.

Courtney Masters has volunteered her efforts as a certified *Child Passenger Safety Technician* for nearly two years, helping to educate parents in the community and safely install car seats. Through the organization's continuous support and their members, *Safe Kids Cumberland County Coalition* was recently awarded 2019/2020 Safe Kids NC Coalition of the Year.



**Marvin Swartz, MD**  
Duke AHEC Liaison

#### Accelerated Nurse Refresher Increases Workforce During COVID-19

To increase the number of qualified nurses available during the COVID-19 pandemic, UNC-Chapel Hill waived tuition and fees for their *RN Refresher Program's* self-paced theory course in April, 2020.



**Tonja Teeter**  
Director, Nursing CE  
RN Refresher

This fast-tracking action was an effort to help registered nurses quickly get relicensed and back into the field. Historically, the theory course takes up to nine months to complete. The accelerated program cut the time to complete the course to three months. As a result, 16 nurses from the Southern Regional AHEC region enrolled in the program.

Tonja Teeter, Director of Nursing Continuing Education, has guided them in refreshing and updating their knowledge.



**Bertina Parkins,**  
Director, CPD



**Courtney Masters,**  
Director CPD/CME

**33%**  
traditional regional  
events

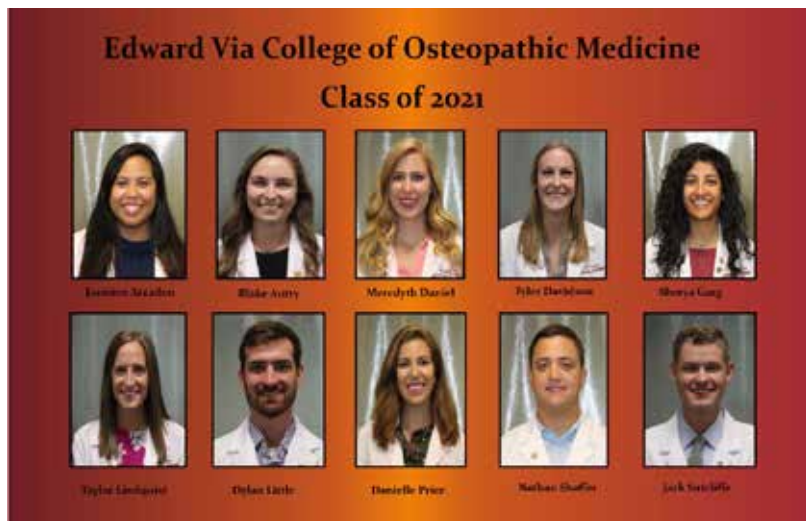
**21%**  
public contracted  
events (CME  
Series, grand  
rounds, etc.)

**45%**  
private contracted  
events

**1%**  
private non-  
contracted (grant  
funded) events



# Growing Number of Medical Students Choose Southern Regional AHEC for Rotations



Many of the medical students from VCOM say they choose Fayetteville for their rotations because of the diversity of patients

Southern Regional AHEC is where many third and fourth year medical students from Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) choose their rotations. Developed in 2010, the program quickly expanded to include fourth year students and has gained a reputation as a place with the best rotations and preceptors.

Adam Santana serves as VCOM site coordinator. His years of experience in customer service offers these students excellent support in their journey toward a career in medicine.



**Adam Santana**  
VCOM Site  
Coordinator

## Office of Regional Primary Care Education (ORPCE) Facilitates Learning for Health Professions Students



ORPCE partners with health science schools and practicing clinicians in the region to provide onsite learning for health professions students. This department coordinates housing for approved community-based training for NC AHEC affiliated schools.

**246**  
students housed  
and processed  
through SR-AHEC  
ORPCE

**8,796**  
nights of student  
housing provided

**640**  
weeks of  
community-based  
rotations



# Library Provides Traditional and Digital Resources, Answers Questions

Southern Regional AHEC's library, also known as the Information Access Center, offers support to family medicine residents and health professional students throughout our nine county region. Library director, Lisa Kilburn offers instructional sessions on topics such as health literacy and evidence based medicine. The library also offers subscription services to the NC AHEC Digital Library housed at UNC-Chapel Hill.



**Lisa Kilburn, Director**  
Information Access  
Center Library Services

In 2019-2020, SR-AHEC's library personnel responded to 1,961 questions ranging from the simple, *How do I access the AHEC Digital Library?* to the complex, *Can a vaccine be given at the same site as a tattoo?*

Regarding the tattoos, the *Canadian Immunization Guide* states, "There is no evidence or theoretical rationale for avoiding injection through a tattoo or superficial birthmark." On the other hand, dermatologists have noted that some vaccines can leave scars, notably smallpox, tuberculosis, tetanus, and hepatitis B.

Lisa Kilburn taught 63 educational sessions on information literacy, health literacy, and evidence based medicine to 169 individuals.

The 1,131 articles and books provided to customers were managed through the library department. Librarians sent 3,230 proactive alerts, mostly through the grant-funded *NC-AGE Geriatrics Research* alert service. There were a total of 11,306 customer transactions during the year.

**5,191**  
reference  
transactions

**1,201**  
program hours  
delivered

## Health Information Management and IT Route and Protect Medical Data

Health Information Management personnel scans information into patient records to ensure that each patient's health information is complete, accurate and protected. Led by manager Brittany McFayden, Terry Delgado and Lisa Morris are also responsible for transferring medical records when requested by the patient.

The Information Technology department supports all electronic and digital platforms within the organization to include computer hardware and software. Led by manager Michael Spexarth, Matthew Moon and Stephen Porter also provide onsite and offsite assistance for technology needs.

**484**  
interlibrary loan  
transactions

**793.5**  
contact hours of  
resident Grand  
Rounds support

**55,539**  
items scanned  
and indexed

**2,368**  
releases of  
information  
processed

**1,021**  
IT  
work orders  
completed

# Recruit, Train, Retain

## Family Medicine Residency Graduates Eight

The Duke/Southern Regional AHEC Family Medicine Residency Program prepares physicians for the wide scope of patient care required of today's family doctor. Accredited by the ACGME with Osteopathic Recognition, the program gives residents the experience of managing patients through The Family Medicine Center as well as multiple rotations in other health care facilities throughout the region. The program's reputation as a team-oriented, diverse, family-centered experience draws physicians from across the US and around the world. Here's a look at 2019-2020.

Eight physicians graduated from the Duke/Southern Regional AHEC Family Medicine Residency Program in late June. These doctors of both allopathic and osteopathic medicine spent three years in the program, completing requirements for board certification. Their graduation brings the total number of program graduates, which started in 1974, to 237.

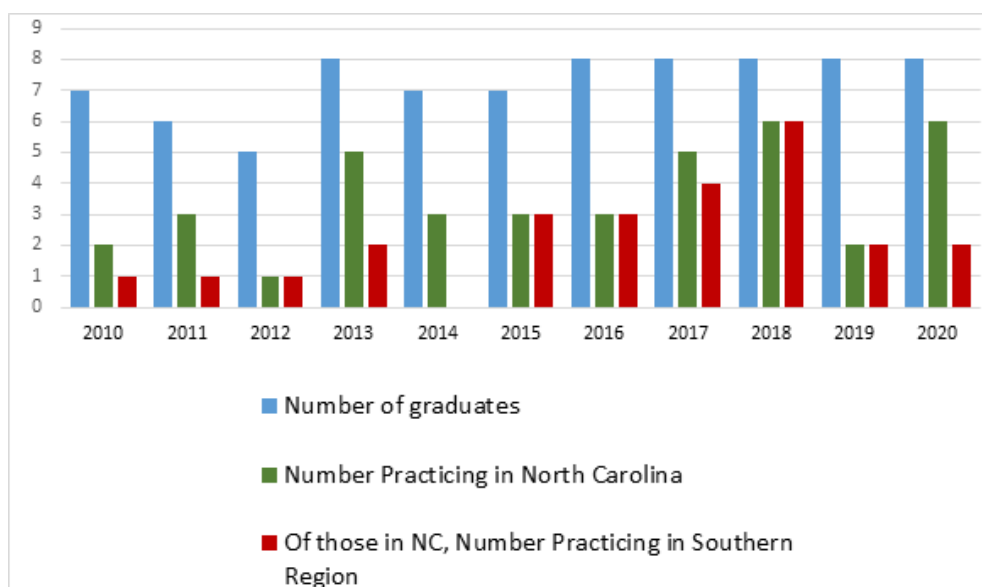
The goal, each year, is to keep graduates in the region, specifically rural, medically underserved areas. This year, graduates staying in the state to practice medicine averages 80 percent. Six of the eight physicians will practice medicine in North Carolina with two of them staying in Southern Regional AHEC's nine county region.

The most recent statistics from the \*Association of Medical Colleges reports that 50 percent of Graduate Medical Education (GME) graduates who attended residency programs in North Carolina, stay to practice in the state.

Below is a chart, outlining how SR-AHEC graduates have added to the state and local health care workforce over the past 10 years, outperforming state's average this year.

Source: AAMC.org/data-reports. Report on physician retention by state and residenc training state

<https://www.aamc.org/data-reports/students-residents/interactive-data/report-residents/2019/table-c6-physician-retention-state-residency-training-state>





Left to Right back row: **Andrew Carney, DO**; **Brad Bennin, DO**; **Roy Seikali, MD**; **Allie Whitley, DO**  
Left to Right front row: **Aixa Navia, MD**; **Jessica May, DO**; **Felicia Ezikpe-Urum, MD**, **Diana Riddley, MD**

After graduation, they will begin their medical careers for these health care organizations:

**Bradley Bennin, DO**

Hospice and Palliative Medicine Fellowship Dignity Health St. Joseph's Hospital & Medical Center Creighton University  
Arizona Health Education Alliance

**Andrew Carney, DO**

Outpatient Primary Care, Central Carolina Sandhills Family Care, Sanford, NC *(staying in North Carolina)*

**Felicia Ezikpe Urum, MD**

Hospitalist, Cape Fear Valley Bladen County Hospital, Elizabethtown, NC *(staying in SR-AHEC region)*

**Jessica May, DO**

Outpatient Primary Care, Duke Primary Care Apex, Apex, NC *(staying in North Carolina)*

**Aixa Navia, MD**

Sports Medicine Fellowship, Dept. of Family Medicine, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, New Brunswick, NJ

**Diana Riddley, MD**

Outpatient Family Medicine, Veterans Administration Health Care Center, Fayetteville, NC *(staying in SR-AHEC region)*

**Roy Seikali, MD,**

Urgent Care, Duke Urgent Care Knightdale, Knightdale, NC *(staying in North Carolina)*

**Allie Whitley, DO,** Outpatient Primary Care,  
McLeod Primary Care Sunset Beach, Sunset Beach, NC  
*(staying in North Carolina)*



## 2020 Interns Reflect Diversity of Family Medicine Residency Program



Eight new residents joined the Duke/Southern Regional AHEC Family Medicine Residency Program at Southern Regional AHEC in June. Following are interns for 2020:

**Benison Mange, DO** graduated from Lincoln-DeBuske School of Osteopathic Medicine.

**Jimmy Pan, DO** is a graduate of West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine.

**Kelly Bullard, DO** is a graduate of the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine. She is from Fayetteville.

**Dorian Bonam, DO** is a graduate of Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine.

**Leah Bryan, MD** graduated from the University of Texas Rio Grande School of Medicine.

**Jason Cooper, MD** is a graduate of Ross University.

**Daisy Kwende, MD** graduated from New York Medical College.

**Zanetta Batts, DO** is a graduate of Liberty University College of Osteopathic Medicine.



## Learning Involves Listening, Leading to Necessary Conversations

In addition to learning how to treat and care for patients, Southern Regional AHEC's residents are also involved in many opportunities to enhance their skills. In Friday afternoon didactics, residents hear from top health care professionals in the region. Continuing Professional Development programs and our connections with the NC AHEC Program and affiliation with the Duke AHEC Program, offers lessons given by the state's leading university faculty.



Sushma Kapoor, MD and Vicki Hardy, DO pause after participating in an online panel discussion

Two faculty members, Sushma Kapoor, MD and Vicki Hardy, DO were panelists for the online workshop, *A Critical Conversation: Listening and Learning Together*, developed as the first of a two-part CME series. The program was comprised of community leaders to facilitate a critical, yet necessary, conversation surrounding race relations, providing an open space for dialogue and bridging gaps at the public sector level, so that communities can listen and learn together.

Featured panelists included:

- Kenyon Railey, MD, Assistant Professor in the Department of Community and Family Medicine, and Assistant Chief Diversity Office in the Duke University School of Medicine Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- Jennifer Green, PhD, MPH, Director of the Cumberland County Dept of Public Health
- Toni King, JD, 12th Judicial District Court Judge
- Gina Hawkins, MS, Chief, City of Fayetteville Police Department

## Chief Resident Leadership Workshop Attracts Record Number of Attendees



Lenny Salzberg, MD  
Faculty

The *8th Annual Chief Resident Leadership Workshop* was held twice, to accommodate the increased number of attendees. The first program attracted a record number of 50 virtual participants.

For the second program, 36 chief residents 'Zoom'ed in. The program is designed to help chief residents improve their working relationships

to be more effective in their role. Dr. Lenny Salzberg introduced *Crucial Conversations*, giving participants increased knowledge and skills to more effectively carry out their leadership duties.

Responses from Attendees:

*It was a great experience! I would highly recommend my program to send chiefs next year.*

*Wow! Lots of very useful information was presented. I was skeptical about a ZOOM conference but this truly was well done.*

*I learned many great skills from this program which I hope to utilize in my year as chief resident. Thank you!*

**COVID-19 FACT:** For this workshop, Melody Hardin became an overnight expert on ZOOM, and taught all faculty involved in the training how to move attendees around groups

# Diabetes and Obesity Medicine Fellowship Designed for Collaborative Care of Diabetic Patient

With its third graduate, the Southern Regional AHEC *Diabetes and Obesity Medicine Fellowship* fosters indepth knowledge to manage patients with these conditions. Addressing the shortage of endocrinologists across the country, the program offers the Fellow an opportunity to gain the experience to become an expert diabetologist.

An ever-growing number of patients with prediabetes, diabetes or diabetic symptoms are coming into The Family Medicine Center. With increasing difficulty in finding endocrinologists to care for these patients with the complications of the disease, the formation of a one-year *Diabetes and Obesity Medicine Fellowship* at Southern Regional AHEC became a reality in 2016.



**Kelsey Simmons, DO**  
2019  
Diabetes and Obesity  
Medicine Fellow

Residents graduating from the family medicine residency program have filled the position, including last year's fellow, Kelsey Simmons, DO. She is a 2019 family medicine residency graduate. She effortlessly transitioned from graduate as the third Fellow for the program.

Primary duties of the fellowship include caring for diabetic patients in The Family Medicine

Center. As a unique approach for her patients to deal with the challenges of diabetes, Dr. Simmons introduced *US Diabetes Conversations Maps*, developed by *Health Interactions*, with assistance from *The American Diabetes Association*. They became part of weekly group diabetes meetings for patients.

"The *Conversation Maps* offered a combination of visual learning with active dialogue to provide information to patients on a personal level," she said, commenting on the value they offered her patients. "It gives these patients a proactive approach to becoming active partners in their own care."

Dr. Simmons applied what she learned by teaching a diabetes elective for interested residents. She also worked with Courtney Masters, Director of SR-AHEC Continuing Medical Education, to offer a *Diabetes Provider Update* to regional health care professionals in November, 2019.

Faculty physician Lenny Salzberg, MD, leads the *Diabetes and Obesity Medicine Fellowship* and was impressed with what Dr. Simmons accomplished. "She did an outstanding job as Fellow, and was able to quickly assimilate a huge amount of information and incorporate it into her practice," he said. "Dr. Simmons was also an excellent teacher and mentor for the many residents that chose to do a diabetes elective. He said that she plans to sit for her Obesity Medicine Boards in 2021.

Dr. Salzberg reports that the six existing Diabetes Fellowships in the country met in San Francisco to collaborate on a publication to establish standards for future fellowships. The directors will continue (virtually) meet monthly to work towards creating a Diabetes Medicine Board.

## DIABETIC PATIENTS

Let's work together to keep you healthy!  
Be an active partner in your own care with  
**Conversation Maps®**



It's worth your time and effort to learn more about how to stay healthy  
Join us on Friday afternoons from 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.  
**Use Conversation Maps to understand more about diabetes, such as:**

- The relationship between diabetes and healthy eating
- The value of monitoring and using the results
- The natural course of diabetes
- Continuing your journey with diabetes

Call 678-0100 to enroll. Say that you want a Group Diabetes appointment.  
You can start at any time and it is covered by insurance.  
All you pay is your regular co-pay.



Southern Regional  
**AHEC**  
The Family Medicine Center

# Developing Clinical Skills Begins with Committed and Experienced Faculty

Our relationship with medical schools like Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) and Campbell University School of Osteopathic Medicine (CUSOM) provides excellent opportunities for their medical students to learn from practicing professionals in real-world situations. Our dedication to those students is reflected in the work done to prepare them. Here are some of the SR-AHEC professionals who helped them be successful in 2019-2020.



Dr. Lester advises intern on use of providing patient notes in Electronic Health Records

James Lester, DO has served as director of student medical education since June 2017 and director of osteopathic education since February 2018. In this leadership role, he helped advance the use of Telehealth during 2019-2020 and served on the *COVID-19 Task Force* for the organization.

Dr. Lester also re-established the *Clinical Services Committee* that meets to identify improvement processes for The Family Medicine Center and Specialty Medicine Center. In August he became Southern Regional AHEC's clinical medical director.

VCOM Coordinator Adam Santana helped to recruit 10 third-year medical school students from Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM). He was able to add FirstHealth to rotations for these students. (see page 10)

Heather O'Brien, PharmD joined SR-AHEC faculty in Fall 2019 and has been instrumental in building a thriving pharmacy clinic with Dr. Ghassemi. They will be welcoming UNC pharmacy students this academic year.



Heather O'Brien,  
PharmD.



Emily Ghassemi,  
PharmD

Adding to her success this year, Dr. O'Brien obtained her certification and became credentialed with Medicaid, offering medication management and education visits for clinic patients. She also chairs the *Patient Safety Committee* and serves as co-chair with Dr. Mike Shapiro of the newly formed *Wellness Committee*.



# Maintenance Personnel Contribute to Safe, Healthy, Happy Workplace



**Gary McMillan**  
Facilities Manager

Maintaining a new building takes everyone in the organization, but those responsible for daily repairs and custodial duties always have plenty of work to do. Especially this year, the facility and custodial staff worked extra hard to ensure that cleaning and disinfecting each day met COVID-19 CDC guidelines.

In addition to maintenance and processing purchase orders, responding to 55 safety and incident reports, Facilities Manager Gary McMillan also contacted a variety of local food trucks, scheduling them to stop in during lunch hour. It was a special treat that everyone enjoyed.

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*HIV clinic retention care coordinator Jovan McLean orders a burger with all the fixings from the **RBurger** food truck. Mmmm...good!*

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*Employees appreciate the variety of offerings from local food truck each week, including real Philly Cheesesteaks and Hoagies from **Philly's!***

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***Noth'n Fancy** offers good ol' southern comfort food, sold by the single item or the plate - for the super hungry!*

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**1,372**

purchase orders  
processed  
(15% decrease)

**1,125**

work orders for  
facility, custodial and  
vehicles  
(13% decrease)

**\$12,893**

spent for custodial  
supplies  
(15% decrease)

**\$53,709**

spent for office  
supplies  
(1.5% increase)

**44,290**

miles driven in  
SR-AHEC vehicles:  
(36% decrease)

**3,420**

pounds of paper  
shredded  
(33% increase)



Gary McMillan led the custodial team of Victor Oxendine, Kashina Dobbins and Beverly King to accomplish a vast list of maintenance duties during the year, including:

- Installed first phase of building security camera system
- Installed concrete pad and picnic table for work events as seen in picture above.

For mail operations and receiving, Angela Pettis joined the team in 2019. In addition to issuing the corporate credit card 780 times, she developed a work flow manual to help other staff who cover receiving. She also processed:

**18,188**

pieces of incoming  
mail/packages

**21,711**

outgoing mail/  
packages

**424**

requests for vehicles  
(33% decrease  
due to COVID-19)

# Administration and Finance Keep Up with Contracts, Grants, Writes Checks and Pays Bills

Southern Regional AHEC's Administration and Finance Department keeps important business operations up and running. The management of deposits and payments requires attention to detail - and the consistency of clean financial audits demonstrates the department's efficiency. Below you will find a number of accomplishments met by administration and finance personnel during a challenging year.

**138,517**  
transactions  
processed  
in general ledger

## Accounting

- *Clean* annual financial audit for FY20 and *Clean* annual retirement plans' 2019 audit
- An additional \$13 million via invoices for grants and other funded programs processed
- Processed 138 IRS 1099 forms for vendors
- Maintained Master Contract filing system which consists of over 200 active business contracts, MOU/MOA, service/maintenance agreements



**Jennifer Powell**  
Controller/  
Compliance Officer

**204**  
invoices issued for  
CPD and clinical  
services totaling  
\$590,447

## Grants Management

- Oversaw 13 individual grants from federal, state, and private funding sources, totaling over \$1 million dollars in funding
- Received *clean* review on three (3) external audits:  
(1) Single Audit on Federal Ryan White grant  
(2) NCDHHS/Aids Care Unit also for the HIV program



**Faith McGee**  
Senior Accountant

**1,825**  
deposits  
processed



**Lynn Greene, VP**  
Administration/  
Finance

- Worked with Corporate Controller to ensure government funding related to COVID-19 were awarded (Paycheck Protection Program, Medicare Advanced Payments, and Medicare Physician Support funds)
- Worked with Corporate Controller and HR Director to ensure special COVID-19 leave programs were administered properly for payroll and tax reporting purposes
- Worked with *COVID-19 Task Force* to ensure proper operational changes and precautions were identified and implemented



**Nicky Huey**  
Account Specialist

**\$6M**  
for non-wage  
expenditures consisting  
of 3,330 checks with  
69 check runs

- Prepared FY21 Operating and Capital budgets, adopted by Board of Trustees as presented
- Managed all business insurance policies to ensure proper coverages
- Worked with *Merrill Lynch* to actively review and make necessary changes to corporate investment portfolio to ensure optimal performance per the investment policy statement
- Worked with Merrill Lynch to review 401k and 403b investments quarterly, and processing fund changes as indicated



**Lisa Moncrief**  
Account Specialist

**3,668**  
payroll checks  
processed

# Business Office Sets Records for Billing and Collections Despite COVID-19

As part of the Administration and Finance Department, the Business Office for The Family Medicine and Specialty Medicine Centers was integral to the department's positive outcomes during the past year. Personnel assisted with implementation of the new patient portal, specifically helping to establish online payments.



**Tonya Russ**  
Revenue Cycle  
Manager



**Tamekia Parker**  
Coding Specialist



**Sabre Turner**  
Coding Specialist



**Helen Bohan**  
Patient Account  
Representative



**Daphne Haithcok**  
Patient Account  
Representative

## Business Office for Family Medicine and Specialty Centers Sets Records In 2019-20

The Business Office improved Category II code reporting workflow which improved ratings with Medicare UHC and Medicare BCBS, resulting in bonus payments.

The Net Collections had an excellent year with a rate of 100 percent, an indication of collecting on some small amount of prior year claims.

Gross Charges for 2019-2020 were \$8,974,256, setting a NEW RECORD, exceeding the prior record by six percent.

The number of Days in Accounts Receivable at 28, sets a record and better than the prior year by five days.

The amount of bad debt is less than .4 percent of Gross Charges - below the national average of 3-5 percent.

Accounts Receivable invoices more than 120 Days Old averaged three percent, exceeding the *MGMA Best Practice Benchmark* of eight percent.

# 41,000

claims processed by  
billing and coding  
staff

# 25,132

phone notes  
processed by  
Message Center

# \$4,669,086

collections record  
(breaking prior record  
by 14%)

### 2019-2020 SOURCES OF FUNDING

Sources	FY20	
NC AHEC/Duke	\$2,902,434	18.5%
Local \$	\$7,878,069	50.2%
Medicare/GME	\$3,485,376	22.2%
Grants	\$1,436,585	9.1%
	\$15,702,464	100.0%

Included COVID Funding FY20 > \$416,609

### 2019-2020 USES OF FUNDING

Uses FY20		
Administration	\$1,278,101	8.9%
Primary Care		
Residency Training	\$9,361,634	65.1%
Specialty Clinic Programs	\$ 813,517	5.7%
Continuing Education	\$1,883,657	13.1%
Community-Based		
Student Training	\$ 419,848	2.9%
Health Careers/		
WorkforceDevelopment	\$ 106,004	0.7%
Library/IT Services	\$ 512,912	3.6%
	\$14,375,673	100.0%

**COVID-19 FACT:** Business Office personnel assisted with successful implementation of Telehealth services



# Clinical Staff Navigates COVID-19 While Supporting Both Providers and Patients

The Family Medicine Center at Southern Regional AHEC provides medical services for our patients. In addition to the physicians, advanced practitioners, pharmacists, behavioral health professionals and administrative staff, our support staff of nurses, registered/certified medical assistants, referral personnel, labs/xray are essential to our operations and care of patients. We salute all of our healthcare heroes who learned new ways of offering quality health care, using proven best practices, during the backdrop of uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**372**  
COVID  
swabs used

**1150**  
prior  
authorizations

**337**  
clinic  
procedures

**19,372**  
medication  
refills



Lead LPN Karin Kitsmiller puts on a mask before starting her day interacting with patients

Safety for patients and staff is a top priority in The Family Medicine Center. This year, a new policy for use of safety needles, including safety scapels for *The Procedure Clinic* was introduced. The infection control policy manual was revised and updated. Keisha Stephenson and Allison Davis completed SPICE infection control training and shared their knowledge. Also, all nursing staff fulfilled dental varnishing training requirements during 2019-2020.

Because a number of patients coming into The Family Medicine Center with co-morbidities requiring an extra level of care, our *Chronic Care Management Program* grew to 115 patients through the efforts of Patient Care Coordinator Lanna Campbell, RMA. Also, Clinical Care Coordinator Hope Lewis, RN, conducted 476 Medicare Wellness Visits and set up 1,329 Transitions of Care documents. All nurses contributed to flu vaccines, retinal scans, OB visits, nurse visits and medication refills.

**1,615**  
Nurse  
Visits

**1,214**  
flu  
vaccines

**194**  
retinal  
scans utilizing  
RetinaVue and  
Visucam

**249**  
OB  
visits

**20**  
babies delivered  
(10 boys/10 girls)  
12 continued as  
patients



**34,000**

check-ins/  
check-outs for  
patient visits and  
other services

**2,131**

new  
patients

**20**

babies delivered FY  
2019-20 (10 boys/10  
girls) w/ 12 continuing  
as patients

**372**

COVID-19  
screenings

### Virtual Patient Visits

Nursing staff members were also instrumental in the success of our new TeleHealth program. By contacting patients prior to the visit, they ensured proper connectivity and ensured that patients felt comfortable navigating the application.

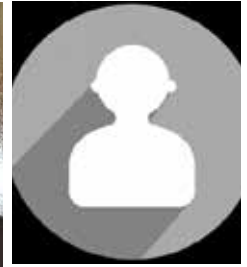
Nursing staff performed 372 COVID-19 screenings since the start of the pandemic and have become experts in donning personal protective equipment (PPE). Nursing staff have also graciously accepted the task of staffing the front entrance to provide COVID-19 screenings – for more than 20 hours per week since April, 2020.



**Amanda Pastore**  
X-Ray Tech/Lab  
Tech 1



**Cassandra Hopkins**  
Lab Tech/X-Ray  
(COLT)



**Judy Farrior,**  
Lab Lead Technician  
not pictured

exceptional team work, and technical abilities.

For the past three months Lab Director Ashley Posey has been preparing for their COLA inspection. With the advent of COVID-19 the inspection was postponed until August, and was a success.

Ashley recently brought on line a new analyzer that will perform testing in-house. She is working with her team to finalize validation testing to ensure this analyzer provides accurate results.

### Referrals Staff



**Erica Vandiford**  
Referral Coordinator



**Tonya Mercer**  
Referral Coordinator

Erica Vandiford and Tonya Mercer processed 10,884 referrals to area specialists and of those referrals, 830 were requested as urgent, requiring Erica and Tonya to have either a

same day referral or to see the specialist within 24 hours. These numbers reflect a nine percent increase in requests submitted over last year.

### Lab and X-Ray



**Ashley Posey**  
Lab Director

Lab staff processed over 39,800 labs in the past 12 months, a three percent increase over last year and seven percent over two years ago, showing positive growth in lab testing.

They were also able to perform over 1,900 X-rays - nine percent more than the previous year. The ability of the lab staff to increase their workload by 12 percent in a year attests to their

## Patients Served 2019-2020

The Family Medicine Center

**27,598**

(5% increase over previous year)

The Specialty Medicine Center

**1,725**

**COVID FACT:** Nursing staff pulled together to ensure clinic coverage allowing their teammates to take time away to care for their families when the need arose

# Clinic Staff Receives Local, State and National Accolades for HIV Progress

Since 2006, the HIV Clinic, part of The Speciality Medicine Center, has provided comprehensive wrap around services to HIV patients through *The Ryan White AIDS Grant*. There are currently 383 patients in the program.

Last July, Southern Regional AHEC's Ryan White grant staff hosted *The Ending the HIV Epidemic Town Hall* meeting at SR-AHEC. Sponsored by the *NC HIV Care and Prevention Program*, NCDHHS reported that it was the largest turn out of individuals working in the community and people living with HIV, with more than 70 people attending.

## The ECHO Project: Extension for Community Health Outcomes (ECHO)

Jovan McClean, HIV Retention Care Coordinator, presented the progress made on the *Ryan White ECHO Project* at a national conference in Washington DC. He received the following comments from Hope White from the NC Department of Health and Human Services: *I just wanted to touch base regarding the wonderful representation Jovan offered for your agency as well as North Carolina. Everyone loved him...from California to New York. He was very helpful in our statewide presentation, actively engaged with follow-up and insightful questions, and his jovial attitude and personality became contagious, she wrote. Hopefully, he was able to gather some interventions and ideas that will be helpful in providing the best quality of care for your clients. Thank you both for allowing him to represent North Carolina.*

The end+disparities ECHO Collaborative is a national initiative to reduce health disparities among four disproportionately affected HIV subpopulations:

- MSM of color
- African American and Latina women
- Transgender people
- Youth aged 13-24

The objective of the project is to work with young men to decrease their viral load to less than 20, the threshold for non-transmittal. Jovan worked with these young men and served on the quality council for the state. He continues to work on a different ECHO project, providing wrap around services.

The *Prevention for Positive Program* is now doing ZOOM with patients (many of them with us for over 10 years) providing the latest information, teaching and learning to grow old with the virus. The program also provides emergency assistance through *Ryan White Grant* funds: housing assistance, utilities, dental (over \$80,000 in dental services for patients in 2019), eye glasses, exams, program. There's no other place to get those services, according to HIV Program Manager, Yvonne Early.

Yvonne and Jovan are actively involved in the *Cumberland County HIV Task Force*. Both assisted with the planning of the annual *World AIDS Day Black Tie Gala* which was held in Fayetteville on December 6, 2019. Sherry Winston, Financial Case Coordinator, was nominated to receive the Advocacy Award during this community event.

Bridge Counselor Brenda Fields, bridged over 65 patients into care and referred over 25 to the state Bridge Counselor. Bridged patients are patients who have been lost to care, and through her individual efforts, she has been able to get these patients back to care in other locations or referred them to the state Bridge Counselor for further follow up. *Ryan White Grant* staff were audited by the state twice this year to ensure compliance with program requirements. Both were *clean* audits, attesting to the effective management and dedication of the staff to this program.



**Yvonne Early**  
HIV Program Manager



**Brenda Fields**  
Clinical Liaison



**Sherry Winston**  
Financial Case Coordinator



**Jovan McClean**  
Quality Manager/  
Retention Care Coordinator

# Health Careers Summer Camp and NC AHEC Scholars Program Convert to Online Learning

Southern Regional AHEC's Health Careers and Workforce Diversity Program works with school age and post high school students interested in pursuing a career in health care. Led by director Tony Burney, these students experience many facets of health care. From enrichment programs for high school students to the NC AHEC Scholars Program, the Health Careers and Workforce Diversity Program provides experiences for these students to become the health care leaders of tomorrow.



NC AHEC Scholars Cohort 2:

Left to Right: Dana Gaskins, Brittany Wilkes, Sierra Norwood, Jazharia Daniels, Makalya Bowe, Kayonia Bowe

## Health Careers/Workforce Diversity Virtual Camps

Because of COVID-19, the normally busy summer months with camps were scaled down this year. Health Careers and Workforce Diversity Director Tonya Burney offered *GEAR-UP Virtual Health Sciences Week* during the first week of June. Students signed in virtually to ZOOM and were directed in dissection by Lakeisha Bradley, Health Sciences instructor for Cumberland Polytechnic High School, part of the Cumberland County School system.

As part of the virtual camp, attendees were asked to write an essay reflecting their experience. A member of the second cohort of NC AHEC Scholars, Makalya Bowe, has been on state active duty with the National Guard during

COVID-19. In her essay, she wrote that she has had to adjust to wearing face masks and gloves while on duty, and assisted with food banks in distributing 1,335 meals and 800 hours of work.

*The gratitude and recognition from this experience helped me identify that going into the healthcare field is my true passion, as I love helping others around me and making a difference in someone's life, even if that individual is a stranger, she wrote.*

**COVID FACT:** Summer camps turned into virtual science camps in order to comply with social distancing guidelines



# Human Resources Buzzes with Employee Benefit Information and COVID-19 Provisions

In addition to filtering through and posting job applications, Southern Regional AHEC's Human Resources Department administers employee benefits, writes/edits HR-related policies and enforces federal HR mandates. They also implement a variety of employee activities throughout the year with the assistance of the AHEC Committee.



Honey Bee and Sugar Bee, aka Robin Thompson and Linda Baez of Human Resources (HR) had everyone buzzing about the new online benefits enrollment program

## **Benefits? Employees Find Out *How Sweet It Is!***

Honey Bee and Sugar Bee made sure that employees got the word about the new online annual benefits open enrollment process. Developing their own video helped HR successfully implement this first time ever online process.

*The behind-the-scenes work that had to be done, during what was already a very busy time, was huge, according to HR Director Linda Baez. Learning the administrator side of the system, working with Orchestrate HR to identify errors on their end and ensuring accuracy of each employee's enrollment elections were essential tasks. She said there was a tremendous amount of follow up with employees to ensure that they were electing the benefits that they desired.*

## **Dealing with COVID-19**

With the onset of COVID -19, the government implemented the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)* which included provisions for *Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL)* and *Expanded FMLA (EFMLA)*. The turnaround time to implement these new laws was extremely short, with little guidance from the government. There were forms that needed to be developed, policies and policy interpretations. Accurately implementing these regulations in time to comply with the government deadlines took tremendous effort.

## **More HR BUZZ**

For a presentation with the Board of Directors, the department developed an *HR Overview* book, detailing employee benefits, HR policy revisions, turnover rates, and employee activities.

HR Director Linda Baez also served as the key presenter with members of the regional HR professional group on how to implement the FFCRA EPSL and EFMLA.



**1,200**  
applications and  
resumes for job  
opportunities  
processed

**141**  
gift cards distributed  
for Pat on the Back  
Program  
(increase of 55%)

**6**  
HR Buzz  
newsletters  
developed

The Southern Regional AHEC "AHEC Committee" (A Happy Event Committee), this past year was comprised of Lisa Moncrief, Jenny Rosser, Melody Hardin, Pam Martin, Ashley Williams, Robin Thompson and Linda Baez. They coordinated several activities for employees, including

- Diversity Potluck
- Two-day Employee Appreciation Event
- Ice Cream Bar Social
- Halloween Potluck Breakfast
- Holiday Party
- Lemonade and Cookies
- Hot Dog Tailgate
- Valentine's Day Treats

**COVID FACT:** Human Resources created the SR-AHEC X-Change to assist employees by sharing tips and information that might be needed during the pandemic



# And More 2019-2020 Accomplishments...



**Lenny Salzberg, MD**  
Clinical Faculty

Dr. Salzberg worked with Diana Riddley, the first resident to do a *Disaster Preparedness* elective. He also assisted in the development the first diabetes elective for five residents. Dr. Salzberg was a presenter at the Student/Teacher Family Medicine Conference (STFM) on *Practice and Quality Improvement*. He also coordinated with Continuing Professional Development Director Karen Goble to present monthly program, *The Willam C Friday Dialogues for Civic Leadership*.

Jennifer Bigger was the recipient of the John Payne Fellowship from the NC AHEC Program Office. The fellowship is awarded annually to support fellows to study an aspect of health professions education relevant to the AHEC program. With her award, she is scheduled to attend the *Institute for Healthcare Improvement Summit*, October 21-23, 2020 to explore new ways of thinking and innovative models of providing care to patients.

- submitted by Carl Keiper, Practice Manager

Prior to COVID-19 Dana Bluemenschein, CEAS Program Assistant and Residency Support Specialist Melody Hardin made travel/hotel arrangements and processed 31 business trips attended by faculty and residents, in addition to making over 100 hotel reservations for fourth year medical students selected to interview with our program. They also ordered and set up 125 lunch meetings, prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When COVID-19 hit these two ladies were instrumental in getting personal protective equipment (PPE) items for us. After searching the internet, they were able to secure disposable masks, gowns and face shields in sufficient quantity that all staff were provided new masks at least weekly. They also assisted with the procurement of 50 high end N-95 masks, offered to us by an anonymous donor. These masks were donated to all of our providers and afforded them added protection while at the hospital and treating patients at SR-AHEC.

Melody worked closely with Dr. Salzberg to host this year's Chief Resident Leadership workshop. Scheduled to be in May, Melody and Dr. Salzberg scrambled to change the format from an in-person event to a virtual event. With Dana and Cheryl's help (Cheryl Haynes, Residency Manager), Melody was able to put together all of the training materials for each attendee and mail to each one before the event. The first session was so successful and demand was so high, that 30 days later, the team put on a second workshop. Dana assumed the responsibility of tracking payments for these 90 participants and was able to secure over \$68,000 in revenue. Melody and Dana exemplify the meaning of team work.



**Lisa Kiburn**, Director  
Information Access  
Center/Library

Faculty member Vicki Hardy was awarded a UNC Faculty Fellowship in 2019.

Lisa Kilburn completed her term as ANCHASL (Association of North Carolina Health and Science Libraries) Past-President in 2019-2020.



**Jennifer Bigger**  
Director of Clinical  
Quality Mgt & Patient  
Safety



**Cheryl Haynes**  
Residency Manager



**Dana Bluemenschein**  
CEAS Program  
Assistant



**Vicki Hardy, DO**  
Faculty  
SR-AHEC





**Wes Hilbert, MD**  
Faculty

Wes Hilbert, MD joined SR-AHEC as a faculty physician in August 2019 with experience working with family medicine residents since 1996.

Lynn Greene serves as Treasurer of the Board of Directors for *Carolina Collaborative Community Care (4C)*.

Executive Assistant Debra Page processed payments for 22 different providers with a variety of payers for each.

Clinical faculty member Rajesh Khurana, MD helped improve The Family Medicine Center's HCAPS score at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center.

Sterling Riddley, MD completed his obesity boards and is Chair of newly formed *Patient Safety Committee*

James Lester, DO presented *Pearls and Pitfalls* at Grand Rounds Cape Fear Valley Pain Management in March.

Dr. Lester was a featured speaker at the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFPP) conference on *What We Have Learned and How We Have Updated* in March.

He also developed a COVID-19 patient handout for the *Osteopathic Family Practice Journal* in May.

This year, Dr. Lester assisted third year residents in their success, preparing them for their boards. All PGY3 graduates passed their AOBFP examination.

Three residents were selected by faculty members as outstanding residents of the year and were recognized by the *North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians (NCAFP)*. They were selected, based on their demonstration of leadership, involvement in program recruitment and other factors.

The three residents chosen were Andrew Carney, DO - 2020 residency graduate; Kristina Krukimilis, DO - PGY3 FM Resident (Class of 2021); and Michael Colfax, MD - PGY2 FM Resident (Class of 2022).



**Lynn Greene, VP**  
Administration/  
Finance



**Sterling Riddley, MD**  
Clinical Faculty



**James Lester, DO**  
Clinical Medical Director



**Michael Colfax, MD**  
PGY 2 FM Resident  
2022 Graduate



**Debra Page**  
Executive Assistant



**Rajesh Khurana, MD**  
Clinical Faculty



**Andrew Carney, DO**  
2020 FM Residency  
Graduate



**Kristina Krukimilis, DO**  
PGY 3 FM Resident  
2021 Graduate

# Publications/Presentations by Clinical Faculty and Residents

**Bennin, B., Shapiro, M., Haynes, C., & Shah, S. (2020, March).**



**Brad Bennin, DO**  
2020 FM Residency  
Graduate



**Cheryl Haynes**  
Manager  
FM Residency



**Michael Shapiro, Ph.D**  
Director  
Behavioral Health



**Shefali Shah, MD**  
PGY 2  
2022 Graduate

*Difficult Conversations: Tools for End of Life Discussions*  
Lecture presented at the *North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians Family Medicine Day*. North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians Family Medicine Day. Durham, NC.

**LeDoux, H., Bowers, R., Shapiro, M., & Ghassemi, E.(2019).**



**Heather O'Brien**  
PharmD



**Emily Ghassemi,**  
PharmD

Perceptions of well-being among pharmacy residents and residency program directors. *Journal of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy*.  
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jac5.1197>

**Shapiro, M., & Shapiro, M. (2019, May 30).**



**Michael Shapiro, Ph.D**  
Director  
Behavioral Health



**Mary Shapiro, Ph.D.**  
Director  
ADHD Clinic

*Communication, Development, and Discipline in Teens*. Address presented at Ninth Annual Forward March: Moving Military Families Forward During Challenging Times.

**Shapiro, M., & Shapiro, M. (2019, February 15).**

*Understanding Teen Challenges*. Address presented at 12th Annual Teen Summit.

# Education Leader Recognized for Contributions to Organization as Deborah Teasley Award Recipient

When she was a librarian assisting health care professionals in the early 1990s, Russet Rogers, EdD never dreamed that she would become the administrator over the regional education and information services division of Southern Regional AHEC. But when 1999 hit and the imminent threats from Y2K emerged, she was appointed to assume that role. When she accepted, she immersed herself in the knowledge that would begin a new career. Armed with a Master in Library Science, Russet earned her educational doctorate while still working fulltime, concentrating on healthcare literacy.

In her role as administrator, Dr. Rogers built a strong department of professionals offering the training and resources needed to keep health care professionals in the region stay abreast of new research. The department has earned its reputation of bringing the latest updates in the field of medicine for doctors, dentists, nurses, behavioral health, pharmacists as well as allied health and public health to the forefront of healthcare education.

On Thursday August 19, the longtime SR-AHEC advocate was the second recipient of the *Deborah Teasley Award*, selected as someone who exemplifies the dedication of retired Southern Regional AHEC President/CEO, Deborah Teasley. Funded by an endowment created by Duke School of Medicine, the award was established to honor an employee who embodies:

- Compassion and service for the underserved
- Promotes an inclusive and diverse culture
- A holistic approach to healthcare
- Leading the development of innovative collaborations within the community
- Service to the organization
- Leadership

Nominated by her peers, the Vice President of Regional Information and Education Services was recognized and presented the award by current SR-AHEC President/CEO, Dr. Sushma Kapoor, at the annual State of the AHEC Address held in August.

*Dr. Rogers has demonstrated a high level of initiative, responsibility and resourcefulness within our organization reads her nomination. She has consistently worked to develop trust and credibility through open, respectful communication providing a sense of purpose, vision, and mission for her team.*



**Russet Rogers, Ed.D.**

Vice President Regional Education and Information Services  
2019 Recipient of SR-AHEC Deborah Teasley Award

After 28 years of service to the organization, Dr. Rogers will retire from SR-AHEC in late September. Her nomination for the Deborah Teasley Award concludes, *She is resilient and flexible, allowing her to be successful in accomplishing organizational, professional and personal goals. She has made a difference here.*



# Partnerships for 2019-20\*

Alliance Behavioral Healthcare  
Bladen County Health Department  
Bladen County School System  
Bladen County Hospital (Cape Fear Valley)  
Campbell University School of Pharmacy  
Campbell University School of Osteopathic Medicine  
Cape Fear Valley Health System  
The CARE Clinic - Fayetteville  
Cumberland Community Collaborative Care  
Cumberland Community Foundation, Inc.  
Cumberland County Child Advocacy Center  
Cumberland County Health Department  
Cumberland County Medical Alliance  
Cumberland County School System  
Duke AHEC Program  
The Duke Endowment  
Duke School of Medicine  
Eastpoint (Behavioral Healthcare)  
Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine  
Fayetteville State University  
Fayetteville Technical Community College  
FirstHealth of the Carolinas  
*(see Moore Regional and Hoke Campus, Richmond Memorial)*  
Harnett County Health Department  
Harnett County School System  
Harnett Health  
Hoke County Health Department  
Hoke County School System  
Hoke Hospital (FirstHealth)  
Hoke Hospital (Cape Fear Valley)  
Methodist University  
Moore County Health Department  
Moore County School System  
Moore Regional Hospital (FirstHealth)  
NC AHEC Program - Area L AHEC, Charlotte AHEC,  
South Eastern AHEC (SEAHEC), Eastern AHEC, Greensboro  
AHEC, Mountain AHEC, NorthWest AHEC, and Wake AHEC

NC Board of Nursing  
NC Department of Health and Human Services  
NC Division of Public Health NC Division of State Operated  
Healthcare Facilities  
NC Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/  
Substance Abuse Services  
NC Hospital Association  
North Carolina Medical Society  
NC Osteopathic Medical Association  
NC School Psychology Association  
Office of Healthy Carolinians  
NC Evidence Based Practices Center  
Richmond Community College  
Richmond County Health Department  
Richmond County School System  
Richmond Memorial Hospital - (a Division of FirstHealth Moore  
Regional Hospital)  
Robeson County Health Department  
Robeson County School System  
Robeson Technical Community College  
Sampson County Health Department  
Sampson County Technical Community College  
Sampson Regional Medical Center  
Sampson County School System  
Sandhills Center  
Sandhills Community College  
Sandhills Regional Medical Center  
Sandhills Physicians, Inc.  
Scotland County Health Department  
Scotland County School System  
Scotland Regional Hospital  
Southeastern Health (formerly Southeastern  
Regional Medical Center)  
Southeastern Regional Mental Health/DD/SAS  
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill  
University of North Carolina- Pembroke  
VA Medical Center (Fayetteville)  
Womack Army Medical Center (Ft. Bragg)

**\*We have made every attempt to recognize and acknowledge our partnerships of the past fiscal year. We apologize in advance for any omission or error on our part.**

Graduation 2020, an outdoor event, looked a bit different this year



“Coming together  
is a **beginning** Keeping  
together is a **progress**  
Working together  
is a **sucess..**”

Anonymous

Monday - Aug 27, 2012(3:43 am)