

AHEC Update

July 2005



Family Physicians for North Carolina Communities

Before 1974, families in many North Carolina communities had no access to a family practitioner or other primary care physician. With a major commitment to address the health care needs of underserved areas and to ensure access to primary care providers, the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation to create the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers Program, expand the East Carolina University School of Medicine to a four-year school, and establish the North Carolina Office of Rural Health. Since then, AHEC has partnered with the state's four schools of medicine and major community hospitals to dramatically increase the number of primary care physicians in the state, and with the Office of Rural Health to place them in rural and underserved communities throughout North Carolina.



Susan Elizabeth Aycock, MD, was born in Lumberton and raised in Wake County. She earned her medical degree from ECU in 1987 and attended Southern Regional AHEC in Fayetteville for her family medicine residency. She

practices rural health medicine at Bladen Medical Associates in Elizabethtown, NC. "My AHEC residency sharpened my skills for practicing in a rural area," she says.



Mott Blair, MD, grew up in Wallace, NC, and attended ECU School of Medicine. After completing an ECU residency in family medicine, he returned home to practice. A past president of the NC Academy of Family Physicians, Blair is also

an AHEC preceptor and trains medical students on rotation through his practice. He says his AHEC connections keep him in touch with the academic world and the latest in medicine.

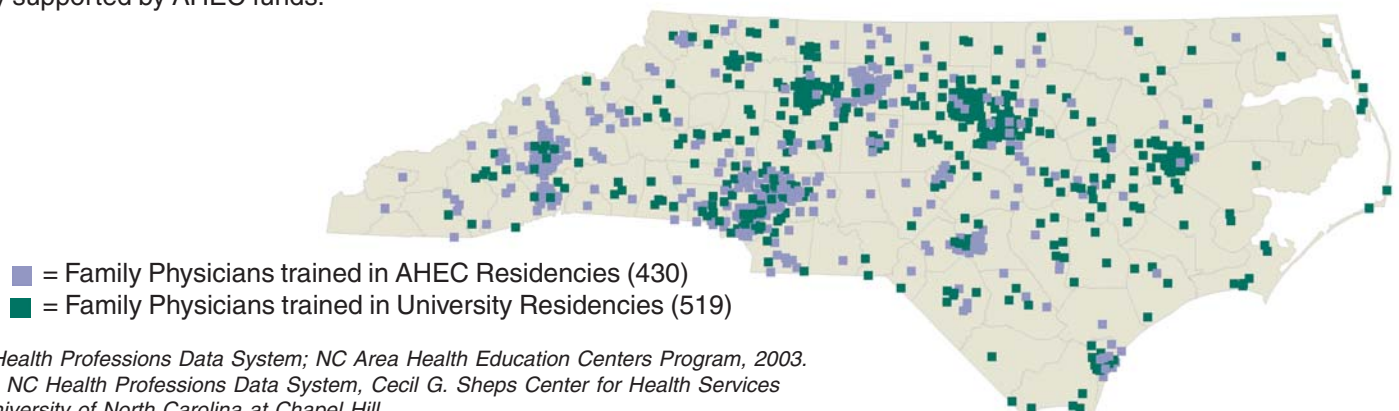


Wendy McNeill, MD, is a 1993 graduate of the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine. She completed a three-year residency in family medicine with the Moses Cone Hospital/Greensboro AHEC Family Medicine Teaching Program.

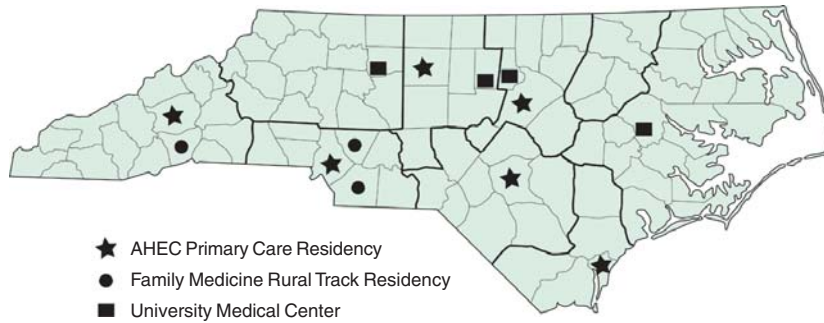
Today, she sees obstetric and other primary care patients as one of five doctors in the Western Rockingham Family Medicine practice in Madison, North Carolina.

Locations of Family Practice Physicians Trained in AHEC-Supported Residencies in North Carolina

Of the 2,347 practicing family physicians in North Carolina, 40% completed a residency supported by AHEC funds.



NC AHEC-Supported Primary Care Residency Programs



North Carolina's Strategies to Improve Access to Health Care for Rural Areas are Clearly Working:

- ◆ Since 1970, North Carolina's 75 non-metropolitan counties have shown greater improvement in their physician-to-population ratio than comparable non-metropolitan counties in the rest of the U.S.

Growing Shortages:

- ◆ In spite of North Carolina's success in training and recruiting family physicians and other primary care practitioners over the past 30 years, the state is now experiencing a growing shortage of physicians, especially primary care, due to the growth and aging of its population.
- ◆ The shortages are already acute in rural areas, with 39 counties losing primary care physicians in 2003.

AHEC's Role in Training and Supplying Doctors for North Carolina:

- ◆ Since 1974, 339 new primary care residency positions have been created with support from AHEC, with 220 of these in family practice.
- ◆ During the past 20 years, 67 percent of the graduates of AHEC family practice residencies have remained in the state to practice.
- ◆ Primary care residents trained at an AHEC are more likely to settle in a rural or underserved community.

North Carolina Area Health Education Centers

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www.areasahhec.dst.nc.us

Charlotte AHEC

Harry Gallis, MD, Director & Vice President
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www.charlotteahec.org

Coastal AHEC

Paul Woodworth, PhD, Interim Director
 Tel: 910.343.0161
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Eastern AHEC

Stephen Willis, MD, Executive Director
 Tel: 252.744.8214
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Greensboro AHEC

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 Tel: 336.832.8025
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Mountain AHEC

Teck Penland, PhD, President & CEO
 Tel: 828.257.4400
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Northwest AHEC

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Southern Regional AHEC

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