

SHAPING THE

FUTURE

2026 Winter Meeting Feb. 18-20

Strategy, Innovation and Advocacy in an Era of Change



The Embassy Suites by Hilton Raleigh Durham Research Triangle in Cary

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 18

8:00 am - 12:00 pm **Rural Pre-Conference**

The Blueprint: Rural Health Policy, Practice, & Sustainability Planning

This session will bring together leaders from critical access hospitals, small rural hospitals and health systems, along with community partners, philanthropic organizations, and technical assistance experts to discuss a blueprint for transforming rural health in North Carolina — both for today and for a value-driven future.

This program is funded by the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Grant Program, administered by the North Carolina Office of Rural Health in collaboration with the North Carolina Healthcare Foundation and its funded partners. [Register here.](#)

8:00 am **Registration Opens**

8:30 - 10:30 am **Sponsor Table Setup**

11:45 am - 1:00 pm **Lunch**

1:00 - 1:15 pm



NCHA Board Chair Address

Brian Floyd, ECU Health President and COO

1:15 - 1:30 pm



Welcome and Announcements

Josh Dobson, NCHA President and CEO

1:30 - 2:30 pm



The Future of Healthcare Delivery: Probable Scenarios

Nate Kaufman, Managing Director of Kaufman Strategic Advisors
With 47 years of real-world experience in negotiation, system strategy, and physician alignment, Nate is known for his candid, evidence-based insights on what it takes to succeed in today's healthcare environment. A seasoned advisor, he cuts through industry noise to deliver practical, financially grounded strategies health systems can act on now. Don't miss his straight-talk perspective on where healthcare is headed — and how to prepare.

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 18

2:30 - 2:45 pm Break

2:45 - 3:45 pm



The Biology of Possibility: Wired to Evolve. Built to Lead **Anu Arasu, MD** Founder of London Bioidentical Hormones

Dr. Anu Arasu is the founder of London Bioidentical Hormones, a physician, and an organizational transformation expert known for her bold, human-centered approach to leadership and performance. With a distinguished medical career and more than two decades of experience guiding individuals from burnout to breakthrough, she reframes transformation as a biological — not merely technological — process. By integrating science, resilience, and real-world leadership insight, Dr. Arasu equips audiences to navigate change with confidence, adaptability, and renewed energy. Her thought-provoking perspectives on human potential, change-readiness, and sustainable performance leave audiences inspired, empowered, and ready to act.

3:45 - 4:00 pm Transition to Breakouts

4:00 - 4:45 pm **Sponsor Breakouts**

Attend a breakout topic of your choice.

Hospital-Led Innovations in Care Coordination: Bridging Gaps in Behavioral Health Access and Patient Retention

Bamboo Health — Dean F. Cikins, FACHE, Strategic Client Director

Behavioral health access is often limited by long wait times, fragmented care, and poor follow-through. In Georgia, Privia Medical Group partnered with Bamboo Health to implement Bamboo Bridge®, a real-time care navigation solution embedded into clinical workflows. The program reduced referral delays from weeks to days, increased first-appointment engagement fivefold, and lowered ED and inpatient utilization by 20% — without adding staff. Using rapid outreach, validated assessments, smart scheduling, and closed-loop communication with primary care, this scalable model improved access, strengthened care continuity, and closed critical care gaps.

North Carolina Workforce State of the Market

Qualivis — Kelly Parker, Vice President Channel Partnerships

This session will examine the current state of North Carolina's healthcare workforce, with a focus on nursing, allied health, and advanced practice providers. Participants will explore key supply and demand trends across these critical disciplines, uncover emerging challenges and opportunities, and learn how healthcare organizations are responding to an increasingly complex and competitive labor market. Attendees will leave with actionable insights into the forces shaping today's talent landscape — and a clearer perspective on how to strengthen strategic workforce planning for the future.

Driving Higher Workforce ROI Through New Child Care Tax Credits and Tri-Share

TOOTRIS — Tony Dillon, VP Corporate Benefits Advisor

Healthcare leaders face workforce pressures and limited resources. This session reframes child care as a strategic tool to boost retention, reduce absenteeism, and deliver ROI. Attendees will learn how to use the 45F Employer Child Care Tax Credit and North Carolina's Smart Start Tri-Share program to cut employee child care costs by up to 67% and recoup up to 50% of employer expenses. By combining public funding, tax credits, and employer contributions, organizations can stabilize critical roles, advance equity, and lower net benefit costs.

4:45 - 6:30 pm

Sponsor Reception

Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

THURSDAY, FEB. 19

7:00 - 9:00 am Complimentary Breakfast in hotel atrium

9:00 - 9:15 am Welcome and Announcements

9:15 - 9:30 am **NCHA Advocacy Update**

James Tucker, NCHA Executive Director of Advocacy & Legislative Counsel

9:30 - 10:30 am **Are We There Yet? A Responsible Roadmap to AI Regulation**

This panel on Artificial Intelligence will provide up-to-date insights on current and emerging federal and state regulations governing AI, while exploring the opportunities and ethical challenges associated with its use across the healthcare industry.



Moderator: S. David McSwain, MD, MPH

Professor of Pediatric Critical Care Medicine and the System Chief Medical Informatics Officer for UNC Health



Merage Ghane, PhD

Director of Responsible AI at the Coalition for Health AI



Suzanne Wilson, MD

Chief Medical Information Officer, FirstHealth of the Carolinas

10:30 - 10:45 am Break

10:45 - 11:45 am



From Behavioral Health Parity to Patient Protections: How State Insurance Laws Can Improve Access to Care

David Lloyd, Chief Policy Officer, Inseparable

David Lloyd, a nationally recognized expert on mental health and substance use, is Chief Policy Officer at Inseparable, the only advocacy group building a social movement to win federal and state reforms that save lives and improve care. Previously at The Kennedy Forum and as a legislative aide to Sen. Debbie Stabenow, he has shaped health policy with a focus on equitable access, parity, and systemic solutions in mental health.

12:00 - 12:15 pm



Video Message from Governor Josh Stein

12:15 - 1:15 pm Lunch and Networking

1:15 - 1:30 pm Transition to Breakouts

AGENDA

THURSDAY, FEB. 19

1:30 - 2:15 pm

Sponsor Breakouts

Attend a breakout topic of your choice.

North Carolina Medical Debt Relief Policy: Update and Solution for NCHA Members and their Patients

AblePay — Ryan Werling, Senior Vice President, Business Development

The NCHA finance team will provide an update on the medical debt relief policy. NCHA's endorsed partner, AblePay, will also share how they support members in navigating the medical debt relief policy through a tool designed to significantly increase patient revenue, improve collection efficiency, and enhance the overall patient experience.

Show, Don't Tell: Using Transparent, Plain-Language Video to Build Patient Trust and Improve Understanding

Cyrano Video — Greg Rossino, Executive Director of Marketing

Patients trust what they can see and understand, yet hospitals often overwhelm them with dense handouts and complex language. This session shows how short, plain-language videos boost clarity, reduce anxiety, and build trust throughout care. Attendees will learn practical, scalable ways hospitals use transparency and clarity videos to transform patient communication.

Responsible AI & Change Navigation in AI Integration

Marsh McLennan Agency — Lindsay Frazier, Senior Vice President, Operations

This presentation equips participants with a comprehensive understanding of responsible AI principles and practical strategies for navigating organizational change during AI integration. It emphasizes ethical considerations, cultural readiness, strategic implementation, and fostering productive human-AI partnerships to maximize AI's benefits while managing risks.

2:15 - 2:30 pm

Break

2:30 - 4:00 pm

CEO's Forum (*invitation only*)

2:30 - 4:00 pm

Mentorship Mingle

2:30 - 4:00 pm

Free Time (for those not in either Forum or Mentorship)

4:00 - 4:30 pm

HOSPAC and Heal the System

Join Jordan Shaw of Heal the System NC and John Green, HOSPAC Board Chair, for an informative session on the impact and importance of political engagement in shaping healthcare policy. In this critical election year, learn how your involvement can make a meaningful difference.

4:30 - 6:00 pm

Reception

Join your peers for a networking reception featuring cocktails and hors d'oeuvres.

DINNER ON YOUR OWN

AGENDA

FRIDAY, FEB. 20

7:00 - 9:00 am Complimentary Breakfast in hotel atrium

9:00 - 9:15 am Welcome and Announcements

9:15 - 9:30 am **Strategic Partners and Foundation Update**

Jody Fleming, MBA, NCHA Strategic Partners President

LaPonda Edmondson, DrPH, MHS, NC Healthcare Foundation President

9:30 - 9:45 am **Healthcare Workforce Wellbeing**

This session will include special recognitions and important updates on healthcare workforce wellbeing from the North Carolina Clinician and Physician Retention and Wellbeing (NCCPRW) Consortium and the Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation.

9:45 - 11:00 am



NC Political Landscape and Emerging Trends

Morgan Jackson and **Paul Shumaker**

Morgan Jackson and Paul Shumaker bring decades of experience shaping winning political campaigns in North Carolina and across the nation. Jackson has nearly 30 years of experience advising and managing high-profile races and is a longtime advisor to Governor Josh Stein and former Governor Roy Cooper, playing a key role in multiple historic statewide victories. Shumaker brings more than four decades of experience developing data-driven strategies for candidates and organizations statewide and is one of North Carolina's most successful political consultants, having led multiple U.S. Senate victories. Together, they are widely respected for their strategic insight, analytical rigor, and results-focused approach to state and national politics.

11:00 - 11:15 am **Closing Remarks**

11:00 am **Sponsor Table Breakdown**



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A contribution from
NCHA Strategic Partners
is assisting with the cost
of this meeting.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Registration Fees

\$750 NCHA Member (hospital staff and trustees)

\$2,500 Non-member

\$350 Member Spouse/Guest

All guests must accompany a full paying registrant

CLICK HERE to register. Meeting registration deadline is **Feb. 10**. All registrants will receive a confirmation from NCHA. Cancellations received by Feb. 10 are subject to a \$75 processing charge. After Feb. 10, refunds cannot be granted but substitutions are accepted.



Conference Venue and Accommodations

Embassy Suites Raleigh-Durham-Research Triangle, Cary

201 Harrison Oaks Blvd., Cary, NC 27513

919-677-1840

[Website](#)

A room cancellation policy will apply for overnight rooms within the NCHA block. Room cancellations within 48 hours will be charged one night's room and tax. The room block closes Jan. 30.

Credit Hours

NCHA is authorized to award **7.0 hours** of pre-approved ACHE Qualified Education credit for this program toward advancement or recertification in the American College of Healthcare Executives. Participants in this program wishing to have the continuing education hours applied toward ACHE Qualified Education credit should indicate their attendance when submitting the application to the American College of Healthcare Executives for advancement or recertification.

Note on Special Needs

NCHA wishes to ensure that no individual is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently from others because of the absence of auxiliary aids or services. If you need any of the auxiliary aids or services identified in the Americans with Disabilities Act, contact NCHA Education Services, at 919-677-4246.

Questions about the Winter Meeting?

Call NCHA at 919-677-4246.

