NCHA
North Carolina Healthcare Association

WHERE CARE MEETS COMMUNITY

How NC Hospitals Strengthen Communities

North Carolina hospitals are helping build a healthier North Carolina — not only by caring for people when they are sick, but by working to prevent illness, improve health, expand access to care, and address the factors that shape health in communities across the state.

Hospitals partner with schools, nonprofits, local governments, universities, and others to identify local needs and develop solutions that help people stay healthy, connect with care earlier and improve their quality of life. At the same time, they are educating the next generation of healthcare professionals, expanding services and investing in the communities they call home.

In 2025, North Carolina hospitals and health systems provided an estimated **$8.7 billion in community benefits** — supporting patients and families while making investments that strengthen communities and help meet North Carolina's growing healthcare needs.



Scan the QR code to read NCHA's *Where Care Meets Community* report highlighting how hospitals across the state extend care well beyond patient rooms — investing time, talent, and resources to address community needs, drive innovation, grow the healthcare workforce, and protect or expand access to care across our communities.

NC HOSPITALS GIVE BACK

$464M
Health Professional Education and Training

Hospitals are investing in education, partnering with colleges, offering scholarships, and providing ongoing training to attract new talent, and support current care providers, ensuring communities have the skilled professionals they need.

$178M
Essential but Underfunded Services

Hospitals provide vital services like trauma care, NICUs, mental health, addiction services, and maternity care that often lose money and rely on funding and cross-subsidies to remain available.

$130M
Community Health Improvement

Hospitals improve community health by offering programs that prevent disease, support chronic condition management, address mental health needs, increase access to nutritious food, and more.

$113M
Healthcare Research and Innovation

Hospitals are recognized nationwide for research and innovation, turning discoveries into new diagnostics, treatments, and therapies that advance care and help people live longer, healthier lives.

$82M
In-Kind Donations

Hospitals support their communities by providing equipment and supplies to clinics and nonprofits, offering meeting space for health workshops or local events, and contributing staff time for volunteering and community programs.

$16M
Community-Building Initiatives

Hospitals strengthen communities by addressing social determinants of health through initiatives that improve housing, enhance safety, and foster partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and local governments.

$1.7B
Charity Care

Hospitals provide charity care by offering free or reduced-cost medical services to patients who cannot afford to pay, ensuring access to essential healthcare regardless of financial means.

$6.5B
Medical Debt Relief

In addition, North Carolina hospitals have helped relieve more than $6.5 billion in medical debt for more than 2.5 million North Carolinians.

Note: Totals based on financial data reported to NCHA.

ALWAYS THERE: ESSENTIAL CARE FOR EVERY COMMUNITY

Hospitals operate 24/7, 365 days a year, providing essential care that is often underfunded or unreimbursed. In 2025, North Carolina hospitals handled **5.1 million emergency visits**, **delivered 124,000 babies**, and **admitted 1.38 million patients**, while incurring $695 million in Medicaid losses and $5.6 billion in Medicare shortfalls.

NC Hospitals: Lifelines for Every Community

Read NCHA's ***Where Care Meets Community*** report for stories like these:

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY HEALTH

Hospitals are working with communities to improve health, prevent illness and help people get the support they need to stay healthy. By partnering with schools, local governments, nonprofits and other community organizations, hospitals are addressing health needs before they become more serious and helping build a healthier North Carolina.

Cone Health connected 94 people with 35 organizations at its 2026 Alamance County community event, where 74.5% of attendees received health screenings, compared with 18.6% the previous year.

Atrium Health provided school-based virtual care at 240 schools in 2025, serving more than 8,200 students. More than 60% of visits allowed students to remain in school.

CarolinaEast Health System connected patients who frequently used the emergency department with primary and continuing care. Among 16 frequent ED users, visits fell from 187 to 109.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO CARE

Hospitals are investing in new facilities, expanded services, technology and innovative care models to make it easier for patients to receive emergency, primary and specialty care closer to home as North Carolina grows.

Carteret Health Care is building a 50,000-square-foot, $50 million freestanding emergency department in western Carteret County, expected to bring emergency care closer to approximately 10,000 patients a year.

CaroMont Health is investing $200 million in a new cancer center in Gastonia and expanded services in Belmont, doubling oncology capacity across the region.

FirstHealth of the Carolinas is investing $43.2 million in a replacement for **Montgomery Memorial Hospital**, providing modern inpatient, emergency, outpatient and observation services while creating room for future growth.

TACKLING THE WORKFORCE CRISIS

Hospitals are helping build the workforce North Carolina will need by educating students, creating career pathways, supporting clinical training and helping current healthcare professionals develop new skills.

Cape Fear Valley Health and Methodist University welcomed the inaugural class of 64 medical students to a new School of Medicine, representing a $65 million investment in North Carolina's future physician workforce.

Frye Regional Medical Center is partnering with Catawba County Schools to bring students together for Med Camp, providing an early introduction to healthcare careers and the skills needed to succeed in them.

UNC Health Southeastern is welcoming military clinicians into a 12-month program that combines hands-on experience with service in a rural setting, helping bring additional clinical expertise to communities that need it.

INNOVATING TO IMPROVE CARE

Hospitals and health systems are using research, technology and new approaches to solve problems for patients — from identifying health risks earlier to making care more connected and bringing advanced treatments closer to home.

Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center is using Q-rounds technology to help family members stay connected to their loved one's care, allowing them to receive real-time updates, join rounds remotely and ask questions even when they cannot be at the bedside.

ECU Health Medical Center gave patients with operable metastatic brain tumors access to an emerging treatment through the national ROADS clinical trial.

Duke Health is expanding access to cell and gene therapies, helping more patients access emerging treatments for cancer and other complex conditions closer to home.

SERVING TODAY. PREPARING FOR TOMORROW.

North Carolina hospitals are employers, educators, partners, neighbors and problem-solvers. They are helping people stay healthier, expanding access to care, developing the healthcare workforce, strengthening communities, and finding new ways to improve care. They need stability to sustain this important work and continue meeting the needs of their communities.

H.R. 1 includes significant Medicaid funding changes and limits on provider taxes that affect the financing structure supporting key statewide healthcare initiatives. These changes begin taking effect in 2027. Over the next decade, North Carolina hospitals could lose an estimated $32 billion in funding, putting additional pressure on hospitals' ability to sustain programs and services that support healthier communities and improve access to care. **Strong hospitals help build a healthier North Carolina.**

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