



NEWS RELEASE

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William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust Awards \$1 Million Grant to MAHEC

Emergency grant will support critical healthcare and workforce needs in Western North Carolina following continued impacts from Hurricane Helene

(Asheville, NC - July 2025): Nearly 10 months after Hurricane Helene swept through Western North Carolina, the region continues to face significant challenges. The William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust has awarded a \$1 million emergency grant to MAHEC—Mountain Area Health Education Center—to support critical healthcare and workforce needs following the storm’s devastating impacts.

This significant investment will empower MAHEC to expand its essential healthcare services, with a focus on access to care, maternal and child health, and behavioral health.

The William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust is a New York perpetual trust based in Chapel Hill, whose grantmaking is generally centered in the four states of Florida, New York, North Carolina, and Virginia. Its mission is to empower human potential through education and whole community investment.

This funding will allow MAHEC to respond with agility to the evolving needs of the communities it serves—where 81 percent of counties are designated as rural—supporting expectant mothers, linking patients to vital resources like food and housing, providing trauma-informed mental healthcare, and strengthening the rural healthcare workforce through interprofessional training.

“This award from the Kenan Charitable Trust is an extraordinary investment in the health and resilience of our region, ensuring that our most vulnerable neighbors, many still struggling to recover from the storm, will have access to compassionate, high-quality care now and in the months ahead,” said MAHEC CEO William R. Hathaway, MD. “With this funding, MAHEC will continue to be a cornerstone of recovery and healing across its 16-county service area, helping Western North Carolina move forward, stronger and more connected than before.”

“On behalf of the Trustees and staff of the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust we are honored to support the very fine work of MAHEC in Western North Carolina. The devastating impact of Hurricane Helene created gaps in access to healthcare services and we are pleased to support MAHEC’s continued work of providing high quality care to those in need,” said Executive Director Nancy J. Cable, PhD.

How the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust grant will benefit Western North Carolina

With help from the Kenan Charitable Trust award, MAHEC can continue meeting long-term needs in Western North Carolina. Examples of how the nonprofit organization provided care over the past year include:

- **Maternal and Child Health:** MAHEC delivered more than 1,900 babies in the past year, many in high-risk situations, through its OB/GYN, maternal-fetal medicine, and family health providers. These services are critical in a region where pregnant patients often face long travel times to access care.

Mountain Area Health Education Center

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- **Health-Related Social Needs:** Understanding that factors like food, housing, and transportation significantly affect health outcomes, MAHEC launched a care navigation program in January 2025. Since its launch, the program has screened 1,604 patients, with a 43 percent positive rate for unmet social needs. To date, 368 patients have been successfully connected to essential resources, with plans underway to expand screening efforts across the organization.
- **Behavioral Health for Children & Teens:** MAHEC providers responded to more than 1,280 referrals for new school-based therapy, addressing a 34 percent increase in post-disaster trauma, depression, and anxiety.

The Kenan grant further strengthens MAHEC's ability to fulfill its mission to inspire and equip the next generation of healthcare professionals and expand access to care for all.

- **Strengthening the Rural Healthcare Workforce:** MAHEC plays a vital role in building a sustainable healthcare workforce for the region through its rural teaching practices and graduate medical education programs. The Kenan award will support the expansion of rural training pathways in areas hit hardest by the storm, including Rutherford, Mitchell, and Cherokee counties.
- **Interprofessional Learning:** With support from the grant, MAHEC can increase interprofessional learning experiences across the mountain region, to include delivering care to patients at outreach sites such as AHOPE, Sunrise Community, and ABCCM.

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About MAHEC

Established more than five decades ago, [MAHEC—Mountain Area Health Education Center](#)—is a leader in healthcare, education, and innovation, with a mission to inspire and equip the next generation of healthcare professionals and expand access to care for all. MAHEC's impact can be felt across Western North Carolina, with patient care offered at our main, 14-acre [Asheville location as well as at numerous satellites](#). Our providers can be found in 200+ medical practices, hospitals, and other clinical sites, while nurses, therapists, and oral health providers care for children in schools.

As an academic health center, MAHEC offers countless professional development opportunities and also serves as a branch campus for UNC schools of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and public health. The largest of nine Area Health Education Centers in North Carolina, MAHEC is also a Federally Qualified Health Center and private, [501\(c\)3 nonprofit organization](#). It is one of the largest nonprofit employers in the mountain region with more than 1,100 employees. For more information, visit [mahec.net](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#).

About the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust

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