



NEWS RELEASE

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MAHEC's 50 Years Recognized at Asheville City Council Meeting

Asheville Mayor urges citizens to join in celebration of MAHEC's 50th Anniversary this month

Asheville, NC, March 13, 2024 – With the founding of Mountain Area Health Education Center—MAHEC—on March 22, 1974, the independent, mission-driven, not-for-profit organization has been honored with a Proclamation from Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer recognizing March as MAHEC's 50TH Anniversary Month. The ceremony took place at the regular meeting of Asheville City Council on May 12 in front of a capacity crowd. (See text of the Proclamation, next page.)



Accepting the Proclamation was MAHEC CEO **Dr. William R. (Bill) Hathaway** (*shown center*), joined by representatives of MAHEC's highly trained and dedicated staff and board (*left to right*): **Carol Steen**, member of the MAHEC Board of Directors; **Julie Burger, RN**, Program Manager of the MAHEC School Health Program; **Tamara Garland, BSN, RN**, School Health Nurse Supervisor; **Qiarra Martin**, a local high school

student participating in MAHEC's Medical Mentoring Program; **Francisco Castelblanco, RN, DPN**, AHEC Director and Chair of Continuing Professional Development; **Leslie Council, CPLC**, Director of Health Careers and Diversity Education; **Dr. Amy Russell**, Chief Medical and Population Health Officer; **Dr. Steve Buie**, Chair, Department of Psychology; **Gwyneth DeHart, MHA**, representing MAHEC's Department of Program Evaluation and Research; **Sandra Whitlock, MD**, Associate Dean and Director of UNC School of Medicine Asheville Campus; **Tessa Scarborough, MRes**, Administrative Director, Center for Psychiatry; **Carriedelle Fusco, FNP-BC**, Medical Director of Office-Based Opioid Treatment Clinical Services; **Dolly Pressley Byrd, CNM, PhD**, Medical Director and Interim Chair, Ob-Gyn Department.

The text of the Proclamation follows.

TEXT OF THE PROCLAMATION FROM ASHEVILLE CITY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, Mountain Area Health Education Center—MAHEC—was founded 50 years ago for the people of Western North Carolina, and is committed to transforming rural health and wellness through education, the delivery of patient care, and a focus on community and public health; and

WHEREAS, MAHEC, in partnership with hospitals and clinical sites across the mountain area, has provided residency and fellowship training to more than 700 doctors, dentists, and pharmacists, who in addition to improving access to healthcare, are creating jobs and contributing to the economies of the communities they serve; and

WHEREAS, UNC Health Sciences at MAHEC is the home of branch campuses of UNC schools of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and public health, providing Asheville with an academic medical center and boosting the city's reputation as the region's medical hub; and

WHEREAS, MAHEC provides continuing professional development classes, conferences, and simulation training for a full range of health professionals, having hosted more than 700 events last year with 100,000 learners; and

WHEREAS, MAHEC also conducts healthcare career exploration programs with emphasis on rural and under-represented students to cultivate our region's next generation of healthcare workers; and

WHEREAS, MAHEC, as an FQHC—Federally Qualified Health Center—Look-Alike, provides care for the community's most vulnerable and underserved citizens, with more than 250,000 patient visits last year; and

WHEREAS: MAHEC is on the front lines of the opioid epidemic and was the lead organization in collaboration with other community partners in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, MAHEC is now celebrating its 50th anniversary as a nationally recognized, mission-driven organization, and is the largest private, not-for-profit employer in the region with a staff of more than 1,100 highly qualified and compassionate individuals.

NOW, THEREFORE I, Esther E. Manheimer, Mayor of the City of Asheville, do hereby proclaim March as

MAHEC's 50th Anniversary Month

in the City of Asheville and encourage the citizens of Asheville to recognize MAHEC's vital role shaping the past, present, and future of our region's healthcare system, and to celebrate its dedicated staff, learners, faculty, board members, patients, partners, and all those responsible for the organization's continued success and growth since its founding on March 22, 1974.

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