

# The power of partnership

UNC Health

Novant Health

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine

2022-2023 annual report

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# The power of partnership

It's moving and humbling when a local father asks for his child's complex surgery to be done at your hospital in Wilmington so he can fulfill his job during the day and stay at the bedside at night. And it's such a rewarding feeling when you can say yes to this request.

This is one of the many success stories illustrating the power of our partnership, launched when Novant Health and New Hanover Regional Medical Center came together in February 2021. Since then, our organizations — UNC Health, Novant Health and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine — have worked together to advance the health and well-being of our communities in North Carolina.

The priority of our partnership is carrying out a three-pronged approach to improving and delivering care in the Coastal region: through expanded clinical, academic and research opportunities. This means bringing care closer to home and increasing patients' access to care. It means engaging middle school, high school and college students in healthcare careers. And it means connecting physicians to new research opportunities and providing patients with access to more clinical trials.

In the last two years, Novant Health has provided \$15 million in funding, empowering us as we've taken this commitment to new heights. We're establishing a psychiatry residency program through a partnership with Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune, Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center and UNC School of Medicine. We're poised to launch a rural track of the family medicine residency program in Pender County in 2024. We've awarded over a half million dollars in research grants fueling big ideas and creating a sustainable research infrastructure in the Coastal region. We're supporting reciprocal rotations and fellowships between UNC School of Medicine and New Hanover Regional Medical Center.

There's so much more. Since 2021, our affiliation members gather annually at a fall retreat to review our work, discuss progress we've made and establish what we want to achieve in the future.

It was at our recent fall 2023 retreat when Sherry Ross, MD, chief of the division of pediatric urology at UNC Health, shared the story of the young patient needing surgery. The child's father revealed that when they had previous hospital stays in Chapel Hill, family members couldn't visit.

"The father actually asked me, 'Can we do surgery in Wilmington?'" said Dr. Ross. "If you do surgery here, we can work during the day, and then I can come and stay overnight."

For the surgical team from Novant Health and UNC Health, "that was inspirational for us," Dr. Ross said. When the patient was discharged for home five days later, with no complications, the family felt relief — both for their child's improved health and for being able to stay close and involved throughout the process.

We're committed to changing lives and providing great care for our patients, close to home. It's a privilege of our partnership. The work we're doing is truly making an impact right here in southeastern North Carolina. Every day, we're inspired by our patients to provide safe, expert care and improve the health of the people in our region.

Our partnership executive team is excited about what's to come as we collectively take our work to the next level and pursue opportunities for further collaboration. Through our partnership, we are truly better together.

Sincerely,

Andrea Gymer, vice president, strategic and business planning, Novant Health

Jaime McQueen, director of coastal outreach, UNC School of Medicine

Joseph Pino, MD, senior vice president of medical education, Novant Health

Mike Steiner, MD, associate dean, outreach initiatives, UNC School of Medicine



Changing lives and providing great care for our patients near home is not only our commitment, but a privilege of our partnership.



## Pediatric specialty care grows on the coast.

### Families who need subspecialists for their children don't have to drive to the Triangle area.

Lack of access to needed healthcare has always been a top concern for both Novant Health and UNC Health. No parent of a child with a heart condition wants to wait four months to see a cardiologist. But that's how long it took on the coast in 2021. Now you can see a pediatric cardiologist much sooner, typically within two weeks.

Getting expert healthcare for children is getting easier on the coast, as families can now see many specialists far faster. Novant Health and its physicians have been rolling out a strategy to expand pediatric specialty care to include access points in Brunswick County and Jacksonville, North Carolina. Not only has Novant Health worked to build out existing services, but a partnership with UNC Health and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine in 2021 accelerated expansion with additional resources and specialists.

"Bringing your child to a specialty pediatric appointment already requires a time commitment for the family," said Michael Jaskolka, MD, clinical physician executive for the Novant Health Women's & Children's Institute within the Coastal region. "We now save them a couple of hours driving time to the Triangle, and we're very pleased to offer expanded appointment times closer to home to support the many children and families we serve who live farther away from our Wilmington locations."

### Time saved on travel

In past years, the limited number of local specialists practicing left many families driving hours to get timely care. Now, offering pediatric appointments in Jacksonville alone saves families roughly 10,000 miles of travel every month. The reduced travel time also makes it easier to follow up with important appointments and treatment.

"The partnership to date has helped transform access and availability of children's specialty care so that families who need subspecialty consultation for their kids don't have to drive to the Triangle. We're able to offer that locally now," said Michael Steiner, MD, associate dean for outreach initiatives, UNC School of Medicine.

### What services are available?

By building up existing services and establishing more care locations, Novant Health has expanded the following core medical specialties:

- Cardiology
- Neurology
- Pulmonology
- Gastroenterology
- Endocrinology

Pediatric patients can also now receive care for hematology, rheumatology, urology and nephrology conditions, as well as for feeding disorders. These expansions complement other services, including pediatric surgery and cleft and craniofacial surgery.

### Where is this specialty care being offered?

Children also see specialty physicians and receive treatment at Novant Health Nunnelee Pediatric Multispecialty Care - Autumn Hall and Novant Health Betty H. Cameron Women's & Children's Hospital, both located in Wilmington.

In addition to that, Novant Health UNC Children's - Jacksonville now offers pediatric endocrinology, hematology, neurology and urology, in addition to existing pediatric gastroenterology and cardiology services. Specialists now see over 200 patients a month there.

In Brunswick County, gastroenterology and cardiology appointments are now also available at Novant Health Pediatrics Brunswick in Supply.

"Pediatric service expansion has been a recognized need for a long time in the area," Dr. Jaskolka said. "It's part of the transformation of Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center into a regional referral center."

"The partnership to date has helped transform access and availability of children's specialty care so that families who need subspecialty consultation for their kids don't have to drive to the Triangle."

— Michael Steiner, MD, associate dean for outreach initiatives, UNC School of Medicine

# Wilmington clinics make life easier for pediatric patients with sickle cell.

## Reduced travel time for treatment means less stress for families.

Amariona Bullock was just days old when she was diagnosed in 2015 with sickle cell anemia, an inherited blood disorder. The disease specialists she was referred to were at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Children's Pediatric Hematology Clinic. That was a 284-mile round trip from Amariona's home in Cerro Gordo, North Carolina.

Sickle cell, a chronic illness, requires regular checkups and constant health monitoring to keep patients healthy. That means Amariona, now 8, has made dozens of trips to see care teams and has had blood drawn almost 100 times during her short lifetime.

Driving to Chapel Hill was a long day of travel that often led to a full day of stress. Amariona made the trip at least four times a year — sometimes more. Alicison Bullock, Amariona's mom, had to take a day off work. Costs for gas and food could get pricey. And finding your way around a large academic medical center campus took time.

Patients with sickle cell disease also must see a lot of specialists: hematologists, pulmonologists, endocrinologists. That means a lot of different appointments.

Starting in 2022, however, all of this changed for the Bullocks and other pediatric patients and families needing convenient, expert care at the coast.

Throughout her treatment, Amariona has seen one UNC Health nurse practitioner more than others and she quickly became her favorite. That's Diana Gordon, whom she first met at the Chapel Hill clinic but is now her primary sickle cell caregiver in Wilmington.

UNC Health providers have commuted from Chapel Hill to the coast monthly for over 50 years to provide specialty care for these patients. Gordon started making the trip in 2011 before transferring to the Novant Health location permanently in 2022, and she now sees patients four days a week.

"We made Amariona's appointments for the Wilmington office when Diana was there," said Alicison, who started going to the coastal location regularly in 2018, when Diana was at the clinic once a month. "We worked our schedule around hers. It now takes me one hour and nine minutes to get there." Much more convenient than Chapel Hill, which took two hours and 45 minutes.

The Wilmington clinic is staffed with both UNC Health specialists and Novant Health nursing and support team members, and provides comprehensive care for sickle cell pediatric patients. Gordon estimates the clinic has about 80 patients with sickle cell disease.

Services recently expanded, and an important screening is now available in Wilmington. Patients with sickle cell disease used to travel to Chapel Hill to get their annual transcranial Doppler ultrasound. The procedure is used to identify those children at an increased risk for stroke so preventive treatment can be started. Stroke is a leading cause of death and disability for children with sickle cell anemia. That important screening, as well as educational testing, can now be done in Wilmington.

The sickle cell care team in Wilmington also tries to evaluate patients during the day for anyone experiencing pain or fever to avoid visits to the emergency department. "If they have a fever, we want to see them immediately within hours," Gordon said. Prompt treatment of complications by providers familiar with sickle cell disease can preclude admission to the hospital and prevent additional complications.

Having access to these specialists has changed Alicison's life. "I love everything about Amariona's care team in Wilmington," she said. "It brings me comfort to my mind and comfort to my soul because they always listen. They then take the time to explain what's going on and answer my questions.

"I am so grateful to have someone like Diana care for my child because otherwise I would be so lost," said Alicison. "I feel her strength."

"I love everything about Amariona's care team in Wilmington. It brings me comfort to my mind and comfort to my soul because they always listen."

— Alicison Bullock,  
Amariona's mom



## Providing more specialized care to the underserved

A big challenge for adults with sickle cell disease is access to appropriate healthcare, especially in low income and rural communities with limited resources. It's hard to find the specialists they need because there aren't a lot of them, and sickle cell programs tend to be at large academic medical centers, and those facilities are often far away.

As of October 2022, UNC Health sickle cell specialists started seeing adult patients every other month in Wilmington at a Novant Health clinic. Some of those patients would otherwise have to travel to Chapel Hill for appointments.

UNC Health and Novant Health gladly teamed up to address health disparities for this specific patient population. "We're here to provide the expert care for these patients who need it," said Tara Alin, a UNC Health nurse practitioner who sees patients along with Jane Little, MD, director of the adult sickle cell program at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "And we are prepared to travel to Wilmington every month to see these patients once volume supports that."

The care team estimates 90 adult patients with sickle cell anemia may use the clinic. "More than 50% of patients with sickle cell are on Medicaid, which means securing transportation from the coast to Chapel Hill is a challenge," said Alin.

"Transportation can be a huge burden for many," said Caroline Hale, a UNC Health clinical social worker who spends a considerable amount of time finding rides for patients. It's easier to find rides the closer the appointments are to home.

Providing specialized care closer to home is exactly what these patients need to help ensure they get better outcomes and stay healthier.

# Clinical trials benefit patients, empower physicians.

## Partnership with University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine allows clinicians to pursue research opportunities.



A growing partnership with UNC Health and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine has further expanded Novant Health's research across the organization's footprint. Access to leading-edge research is aiding patients of today and the future, as well as physicians wanting the opportunity to pursue their own studies.

"This is lifesaving and life-changing research that helps us fulfill our promise of expanding access to care for everyone in our communities," said Mark King, vice president of research and innovation at Novant Health. King is chair of the partnership's Research Advisory Council, which drives research initiatives across the region with Novant Health's strategic partners.

"The best way to expand access to care is to offer research opportunities for patients close to home, delivered with a keen focus on ethics, safety, quality and compliance."

### Advancing care through clinical trials

In the clinical trials, physicians offer patients with specific conditions like heart disease or cancer an opportunity to participate. If patients opt in to a trial sponsored by a pharmaceutical company and meet eligibility criteria, they may have an opportunity to receive advanced treatments that are not yet available to other patients. These studies help determine if a new medication or therapy improves outcomes for our patients, either by improving the chance of a cure, reducing the chance of recurrences, shortening recovery time or reducing side effects of current therapies.

In other trials, sponsored by organizations like the National Institutes of Health, Novant Health physicians are performing both treatment and observational studies where they monitor patients, gathering data to help the medical community learn what treatment or combination of treatments is working best.

Altogether, Novant Health cardiologists, oncologists, surgeons and others are participating in more than 45 clinical trials in the region. More clinical trials are being opened to patients every quarter, and soon, opportunities will be extended to our pediatric and neurosciences patients.

### Research to help define the future of healthcare

In addition to these sponsored trials, Novant Health physicians are taking the initiative to design their own research in partnership with peers from the UNC School of Medicine, utilizing grant funding to explore urgent health needs.

This research includes both clinical and health equity studies. Clinical research is led by physicians who are primarily studying patient responses to various treatment plans, carefully reviewing the data and determining the most effective way to treat patients. For instance, Patrick Maguire, MD, radiation oncologist at Novant Health, will be evaluating biometric data for patients with head and neck cancer, and the pediatric team plans to study the safety of pharmaceutical caffeine in babies with a specific brain diagnosis.

In our health equity studies, investigators from Novant Health and UNC School of Medicine study how socioeconomic factors impact the health of our communities and their ability to receive the care they need. For example, Kiran McCloskey, PhD, is studying pediatric epilepsy disparities, and Amber Woodard, clinical excellence programs manager, is studying the effectiveness of early intervention in treating pregnant mothers with high blood pressure.

"Ultimately, it's about each person in our region living the healthiest possible life," King said. "Our partnership is delivering a broader availability of leading-edge research. This will benefit community members now and for generations to come."

## Research Advisory Committee funds 11 grants.

The collaboration between UNC Health and Novant Health is offering new research opportunities for clinician dyads serving the Coastal region. The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) has awarded 11 \$50,000 grants, all earmarked for projects related to health equity or clinical research.

Below is a list of studies funded by the collaborative RAC, made up of representatives from Novant Health, Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine and UNC Health.

### Health equity grants

- **HE0101 - Understanding Pediatric Epilepsy Surgery Disparities Within the State of North Carolina**  
Kiran McCloskey, PhD (NH) and Qian-Zhou Yang, MD (UNC)
- **HE0201 - Family Physicians and Transgender Care in NC**  
Victoria Boggiano, MD, and Kathleen Young, PhD
- **HE0302 - BFAST: Measuring Initial Implementation Outcomes in Southeastern NC (studies early intervention in Black toddlers diagnosed with autism)**  
Christina Orahovats, MD, and Khadijia Reid, MD
- **HE0303 - Reducing Disparities in Prostate Cancer Counseling and Care Through Visual Decision Support**  
Hung-Jui Tan, MD, and Ibarido Zambrano, MD
- **HE0304 - CARE: Coordinating Risk Assessment to Reduce Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy Morbidity Through Early Intervention**  
Rachel Urrutia, MD, and Amber Woodard, DNP

### Clinical research grants

- **CR0101 - Creation of a Firearm Event Registry and Evaluation of Gun Shows' Impact on Gun Violence Rate**  
Sanjay Batish, MD, and Sarah Kowitt, PhD
- **CR0201 - Comparison of Adjuvant Monotherapy With Endocrine Therapy or Accelerated Partial Breast Irradiation Following Lumpectomy for Low Risk Breast Cancer Patients Over 65**  
Patrick Maguire, MD, and Dana Casey, MD
- **CR0204 - Pilot Study Incorporating Biometric Data Evaluation for Patients With Head and Neck Cancer**  
Patrick Maguire, MD, and Colette Shen, MD
- **CR0206 - Pharmacokinetics and Safety of Caffeine in Neonates With Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy**  
Sherri Carroll, MD, and Wesley Jackson, MD
- **CR0207 - Pharmacologic Therapies to Mitigate Radiation-Associated Heart Disease**  
Patrick Maguire, MD, and Shivani Sud, MD
- **CR0302 - Evaluation of Transcriptomic Differences and the Tumor Immune Microenvironment of Oral Proliferative Leukoplakia Among Smokers and Non-Smokers: A Pilot Study**  
Jason Tasoulas, MD, and Siddharth Sheth, DO

### Case study:

# Can visual aids help reduce disparities in prostate cancer deaths?

## Reducing disparities in prostate cancer counseling and care through visual decision support

In North Carolina, more Black men die from prostate cancer than any other type of cancer, including lung cancer. Novant Health urologist Ibarido Zambrano, MD, is dedicated to reducing the incidence of death from prostate cancer, particularly among minority populations.

So, Dr. Zambrano, along with Hung-Jui (Ray) Tan, MD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine, applied for a \$50,000 research grant. They received the [award](#) from the Research Advisory Council in June 2023 and began their year-long research study.

The disparities in prostate cancer mortality appear to be man-made, driven by differences in access and quality of care, Dr. Zambrano said.

“Under Dr. Tan’s leadership, our team developed a visual risk tool for prostate cancer that urologists accepted and importantly, reduced variation in perceived risk based on pilot survey data,” Dr. Zambrano said. “Putting all this together, we are seeing an opportunity to enhance communication and decision-making in prostate cancer care using a visual decision support tool. We want to determine if these visual tools can attenuate differences in patient-provider communication and if there is a difference in the performance of this tool in academic versus community settings.”

The project’s chief goal is to generate preliminary data to fund larger-scale trials. Those trials would focus on using visual decision aids in underserved care settings to improve patient-provider communication and reduce disparities, Dr. Zambrano said.

### In North Carolina:

The rate of new prostate cancer cases is

**124 CASES**

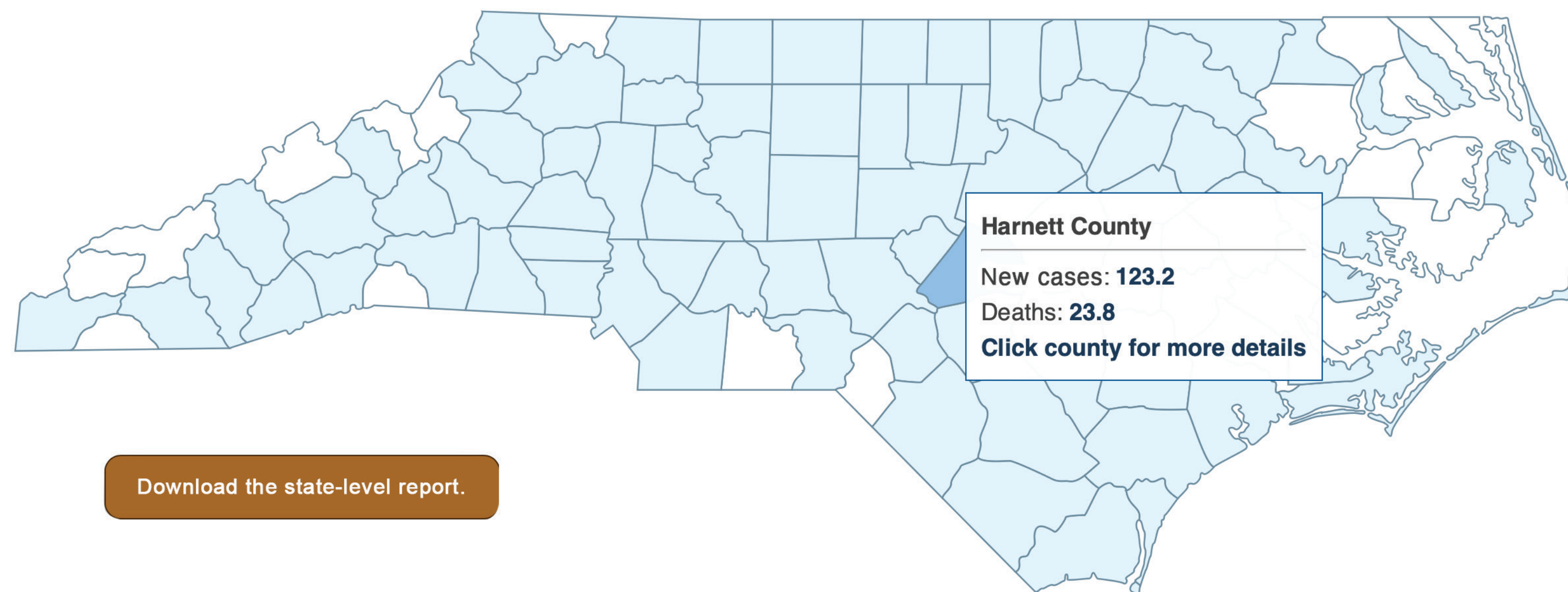
per 100,000 men.

The overall prostate cancer death rate is

**20 DEATHS**

per 100,000 men.

(Hover over a county to view, or use the table below.)



[Download the state-level report.](#)

“Under Dr. Tan’s leadership, our team developed a visual risk tool for prostate cancer that urologists accepted and importantly, reduced variation in perceived risk based on pilot survey data.”

—Ibarido Zambrano, MD



## Charlotte campus on path for growth

In 2021, the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) determined Novant Health and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine had the resources in place to begin training medical students at UNC School of Medicine Novant Health Charlotte Campus.

In 2022, the first class of nine medical students began the full-scale curriculum at the Charlotte campus, with a special focus on health equity led by Novant Health.

“From the beginning, the support from our leadership at all levels has been phenomenal and has been crucial to our success,” said Mark Higdon, DO, program director and campus director of the UNC School of Medicine Novant Health Charlotte Campus. “Educating the next generation of physicians and giving them the foundation to succeed is woven into the fabric of what we’re doing.”

Over the past two years, the Charlotte campus has continued to recruit and train third-year students, and more than 180 physicians have received faculty appointments at UNC School of Medicine. Another 70 physicians have begun the process of being credentialed to teach.

“We appreciate the involvement and overwhelming support of our teams at Novant Health Presbyterian, Matthews and Huntersville Medical Centers,” said Kelley Lawrence, MD, associate program director and assistant dean at the UNC School of Medicine Novant Health Charlotte Campus. “Our students have given rave reviews about their experience at our campus.”

Dr. Lawrence noted that Charlotte campus faculty from varying specialties have developed over 30 fourth-year medical school rotations — a number that continues to grow.

“Many of our fourth-year students often return for a second rotation due to the rich learning environment our faculty and facilities afford,” she said.

# Growing influence

## Novant Health helps shape the careers of future physicians.

The shortage of physicians in the United States is a pressing issue, and Novant Health, in cooperation with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine, is helping fill that pipeline.

When Novant Health purchased New Hanover Regional Medical Center in 2021, the deal included a partnership with the UNC School of Medicine. Since the ink has dried on that partnership, dozens of medical school students have advanced their education under the tutelage of the medical experts at Novant Health. Since the partnership began, Novant Health has opened the UNC School of Medicine Novant Health Charlotte Campus and expanded the opportunities available at the branch campus in Wilmington.

Most of these future physicians are in their third year of medical school, where they are learning hands-on about the different fields of medicine available to them. They learn about what makes each community unique, they discover what field they might want to specialize in, and they contribute to the care of patients. The curriculum at the Novant Health campuses also includes a focus on health equity and eliminating disparities in medical treatment.

They also absorb the culture at Novant Health, which includes a special focus on health equity. The tenets of our organization become the foundation for their professional careers.

The Wilmington campus now has a fourth-year program that allows medical students to complete their degrees with us. Many other students will return for a fourth-year rotation at one of our hospitals or clinics.

In 2023, the Wilmington campus hosted its largest class to date: 21 third-year students and nine fourth-year students. Those numbers will continue to grow, as Wilmington plans to expand to 30 third-year students and nearly as many fourth-year students by 2025, said Joseph Pino, MD, associate dean for the UNC School of Medicine Novant Health Wilmington Campus and senior vice president of medical education for Novant Health.

“These students become invested in our communities while they are training to care for patients,” Dr. Pino said. “It becomes home to them, and many of them will return to use their skills to help our community become healthier.”

The Charlotte campus now has nine third-year students and is poised for future growth that could reach up to 30 students per class. Many students who have completed their third year return for a rotation in Charlotte during their final year of medical school.

Medical school graduates from UNC-Chapel Hill and other medical schools who match with Novant Health residencies can begin their professional careers alongside our experts in a number of fields.

Ideally, the students who learn from our doctors and train with them after graduation will be inspired by our culture and cause. When they choose to continue their careers with Novant Health, they enhance Novant Health’s legacy of commitment to improving the health of all our community members. And even those who choose to practice elsewhere will take the foundations they learned at Novant Health and contribute to the overall well-being of their own communities.



Leaders from UNC, Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune and Novant Health at the May 2023 announcement of the new psychiatry residency program

# Expanded residency programs lay foundation for a healthier future.

## Rural programs bring family medicine and psychiatry residents to the coast.

One of the key factors in ensuring a healthy future is the ability to recruit talented medical professionals to our communities. These physicians will take care of our communities now and provide an opportunity for future generations to live healthier lives.

Our medical residency programs at Novant Health give us an opportunity to showcase our organization while we are preparing our future physicians to be leaders in their fields. Research from the Association of American Medical Colleges shows that 57% of medical residents practice in the state where they completed their residencies. Similarly, American Family Physician found that 56% of family medicine residents practice within 100 miles of where they completed their residencies.

Clearly, residency programs are important to a thriving medical community. Novant Health, in cooperation with South East Area Health Education Center (SEAHEC) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine, is expanding residency opportunities in the Coastal region. While helping these doctors learn and grow, we are also planting seeds for the future of healthcare in our communities.

The growth of residencies in the Coastal region received a significant boost when Novant Health partnered with New Hanover Regional Medical Center and UNC School of Medicine in 2021. In 2024, we are expanding graduate medical education through opportunities that have never existed in this region.

### Rural family track will add six residents.

First, the rural track of the family medicine residency, in cooperation with Black River Health Services, will bring six new resident physicians to rural Pender County by 2026. Lack of access to medical care in rural areas can negatively impact rural residents. Novant Health is committed to ensuring our community members have access to quality medical care, and this residency program is one more way we are fulfilling that promise.

“The training of primary care physicians is a priority because data shows that those who train in rural settings seek practice opportunities in similar rural settings afterward, so our goal is to keep them in Pender County,” said Ruth Glaser, president and chief operating officer of Novant Health Pender Medical Center. “Everyone deserves access to high-quality healthcare regardless of where they live.”

### Psychiatry collaboration to welcome seven residents

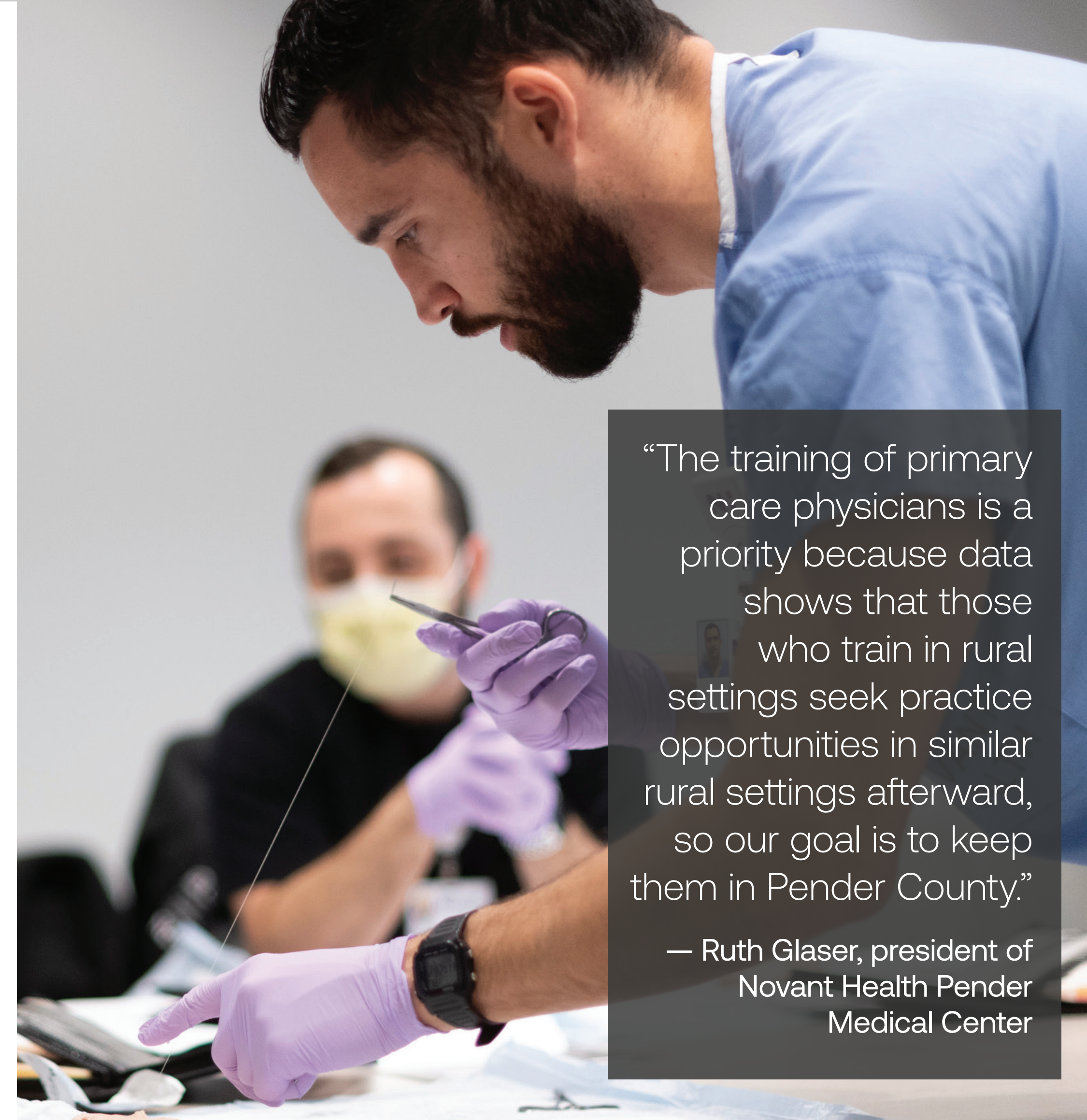
Nationally, we have a shortage of mental health professionals. So, we are excited about a new program launching in 2024 that will offer a unique opportunity for seven resident psychiatrists.

Through a partnership with Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune, Novant Health is building a psychiatry residency program where resident physicians have an opportunity to do clinical rotations at Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune and Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center.

For civilian psychiatry residents, this is a rare opportunity to work closely with our military and treat conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury. Military psychiatry residents, on the other hand, will have the opportunity to work with patients of all ages in a more traditional hospital or outpatient setting — a learning opportunity they might not experience by working strictly in military hospitals.

“We are thrilled that our organizations are able to combine forces for this vital opportunity to train more psychiatrists,” said Joseph Pino, MD, senior vice president of medical education for Novant Health. “This new residency will help increase the number of physicians in southeastern North Carolina and serving in the armed forces.”

Together, Novant Health and UNC School of Medicine are improving the future of medical care by training talented, motivated new physicians.



“The training of primary care physicians is a priority because data shows that those who train in rural settings seek practice opportunities in similar rural settings afterward, so our goal is to keep them in Pender County.”

— Ruth Glaser, president of Novant Health Pender Medical Center

## Local partners CFCC and UNCW address nursing shortage

In southeastern North Carolina, academic institutions Cape Fear Community College and University of North Carolina Wilmington are regional pillars for educating and training future healthcare workers. These institutions are also doing key work within the partnership to address the nursing need in the community.

### UNCW

The School of Nursing’s state-of-the-art Simulation Learning Center provides future nurses with hands-on career preparation that includes realistic medical scenarios. Within this dynamic learning environment, nursing students work in a wide range of clinical settings through laboratories within the center, including an outpatient clinic, pediatric lab, health assessment lab, maternal-infant lab, acute care lab and more.

### CFCC

Course offerings specifically aimed at cultivating the next generation of nurses include the Associate Degree Nursing curriculum, the Practical Nurse diploma program and the accelerated LPN to RN option for licensed practical nurses to become registered nurses. Following their completion of the accelerated three-semester program, graduates are eligible to take the National Council Licensure Examination, a requirement to practice as a registered nurse.

# The power of partnership

