

# Tarheel Tandem



Volume 74 | Fall 2020

## 2020-2021 Board of Directors

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**Meeti Nigam**, VP Membership Development

**Kirby Sheridan**, VP of Program and Resource Development

**Chrystal Harris, MD**, Pitt

**Deborah Harrell Meehan**, Wake

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**Tracy Steadman**, Executive Director  
tsteadman@ncmsalliance.org

**As of January 1, 2021:**

**Vicky Elia**, Executive Director  
velia@firstpointresources.com

**NCMS Alliance**

1500 Sunday Drive, Suite 102  
Raleigh, NC 27607

**www.ncmsalliance.org**

Phone: 919-573-1316

Fax: 919-787-4916

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## President's Message

### Welcome to Fall! My question is, where did Spring and Summer go?

By Barbara Savage, NCMSA President; [savageba0823@gmail.com](mailto:savageba0823@gmail.com)



I hope this finds everyone surviving and doing well during these crazy times. Your NCMSA Board has been busy these last few months working to keep our Alliance moving forward.

It is my pleasure to introduce our new Executive Director, Vicky Elia. She has been working with Tracy at FirstPoint Resources since February and will take over at the end of the year. We thank Tracy Steadman for her six years working with us. We will miss you.

I want to thank Greater Greensboro Society of Medicine Alliance for graciously inviting our entire state membership to their ZOOM presentation on Physician Burnout, covering the prevalence of burnout currently seen in physicians and ways to help cope with it. Featured speakers were Dr. Kelly Leggett and Dr. Aarti Kapur.

Having just finished our virtual Board Retreat, here is what is new at NCMSA:

- Our programming focus this year will continue to be Access to Care—targeting health disparities and social determinants of rural healthcare in underserved communities. We are reaching out to like organizations for potential collaboration.
- In addition, we are developing **Member Connect**, a virtual video club to discuss current topics of interest. You can read more about Member Connect later in this newsletter.
- **Coffee with the Prez** will continue on a quarterly basis. The next coffee will be November 18 at 10AM. During this pandemic we want to check in with our members, see how you are doing, let us know what is happening in your county and how we can help you and your Alliance.

*continued on page 7*

# Stay Connected with Member Connect

By Gina Becherer, NCMSA President-elect; gmbecherer@gmail.com

COVID-19 has dramatically changed how we interact with each other. How do we continue to connect for a casual conversation about how we are doing and what we are thinking. Starting in January 2021 NCMSA will launch **Member Connect**.

## What is Member Connect?

It's similar to a book club, except the expectations are more flexible and it requires less of a time commitment. A group of friends and acquaintances meets, virtually of course, to talk about a chosen article or video rather than a book. Each session will have a "host". The host will start off the discussion by sharing their perspective and take-aways from the article or video.

The first **Member Connect** event will be hosted by Gina Becherer on January 14, 2021. We will use E-vite to announce the event, including links to the article or video to be discussed. The meeting link will be sent to those who are interested in participating. We hope you will join us!!

# Introducing SHOP & SHARE!

The NCMSA is hosting a series of virtual pop-up stores to benefit the Health Education Opportunity Fund. In October we featured **Pampered Chef**. A special thanks to all who placed an order.

Our next shopping event is a **Kendra Scott** pop-up on November 19-20. **Kendra Scott** sells jewelry, home décor and gift items. Please look for an email with information on our next pop-up and the special link.



For Giving Tuesday, we are bringing back popular **Noted Candles**. Please look for more information about this SHOP & SHARE event to come.

#GIVINGTUESDAY

Throughout the year we will present vendors who have offered to donate a portion of total sales to the NCMSA Health Opportunity Fund.

**SHOP** from the convenience of your home and our vendors will **SHARE** a portion of total sales.

## A Letter from Our Membership Vice President

Dear Current and Prospective Members:

Our Alliance stands strong thanks to the resilience of our members. As we settle in for a safe and homey fall season, our state Alliance is looking forward to promoting unity and an active support base for our Alliances and the overall community.

Our mission to effect positive changes in the health of North Carolinians is invaluable, as displayed through our efforts to address the opioid epidemic, promote pandemic recovery relief for communities, encourage health projects and grants, and act as a general support base for physician families. As an Alliance, we consist of many wonderful, motivated people. It's so amazing to see and hear about all of the efforts and accomplishments of the Alliance on personal, professional, and community levels. We can continue to expand on this with your support and we would love to have your contribution in any form—time, membership dues, donations. Please show your support for the Alliance by joining or renewing your membership today. Remember your spouse may join, as well.

### Here's how to join:

- **If you were a member last year** and have not yet renewed, you should receive a second dues notice by mail in November, **or**:
  - Go to our website [www.ncmsalliance.org](http://www.ncmsalliance.org) to pay your dues online, **or**
  - Call Tracy Steadman at 919-573-1316 **or** email her at [tsteadman@ncmsalliance.org](mailto:tsteadman@ncmsalliance.org).
- **New members** can join online as a New User on the Join Now page.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me, Meeti Nigam, at [Nigammeeti@gmail.com](mailto:Nigammeeti@gmail.com) or call 434-228-0220.

If you have already remitted your dues for the June 2020-May 2021 year, THANK YOU for your support of our Alliance.

I would like to thank the NCMSA for the opportunity to serve as the Membership Vice President this year. I am looking forward to my years ahead as a member of the NCMSA Alliance and helping to create a footprint to our future!

— Meeti Nigam, NCMSA Vice President of Membership

# Access to Health Care in Rural Areas

By Kirby Sheridan, NCMSA Vice President of Program/Resource Dev.; kirbypsheridan@gmail.com

There is much focus on the growth of urban and suburban areas of North Carolina and the opportunities and challenges this growth presents. However, North Carolina is a rural state. To improve the health of North Carolinians we must focus on access to health care in rural areas.

According to the NC Rural Center, people living in rural areas are often older and have underlying health conditions. Some rural hospitals have closed or are in financial distress. There is a shortage of healthcare providers in these areas and, while telehealth is expanding access to health care for many, the lack of broadband in rural areas means many citizens living there cannot take advantage of it.

The North Carolina Rural Center recommends the following actions:

- Close the health insurance coverage gap. Newly released state-level data from the U.S. Census Bureau on health insurance coverage by state shows that 1,157,000 North

Carolínians, or 11.3 percent of the state's total population, lacked health insurance in 2019. This data does not include the impact of COVID-19.

- Expand efforts to recruit and retain rural health providers, including specialists, in underserved areas of the state. Sixty-three of our eighty rural counties are designated as health professional shortage areas.
- Explore broad-based solutions for the substance abuse crisis that address both prevention and treatment.
- Address the Healthy NC 2030 attainment goals that seek to holistically address and improve the health, safety, well-being of North Carolínians.

For more information on improving access to rural health care and ways to advocate for it, visit [www.ncruralcenter.org/research/advocacy](http://www.ncruralcenter.org/research/advocacy). North Carolínians should have access to quality health care, regardless of their zip code. We can advocate for better rural health care.

## Grant Money Available; Applications Due Nov. 30

By Barbara Savage, NCMS Alliance President; savageba0823@gmail.com

One way the NCMS Alliance supports the good work of county Alliances is through our Health Promotion Grant funds. These monies are for grants and not sponsorships. Grant money is available each year to support projects that promote the development of and participation in programs and projects that address health and health education issues.

**Grant application deadlines are November 30 and February 28.**

The grant application process is easily accessible on the NCMS Alliance website. If you need a paper copy of the application, please contact the NCMSA executive director at 919-573-1316 or [admin@ncmsalliance.org](mailto:admin@ncmsalliance.org). The purpose of NCMSA Health Promotions Grants is to provide seed money for programs and projects. Those applying for a grant of \$500 or less must provide a 25% matching grant. Those applying for grants over \$500 must match at 100%. Plan now to meet the first grant application deadline of November 30 if you are developing a program that may be eligible.

## NCMSA Holds Virtual Annual Meeting

By Kirby Sheridan, Vice President of Program/Resource Dev.; kirbypsheridan@gmail.com

The North Carolina Medical Society Alliance decided to hold a virtual annual meeting in May when COVID-19 restrictions prevented us from holding our traditional in-person meeting. Planning a virtual meeting allowed the board to examine the agenda and streamline events for a more effective and efficient meeting. We had fun connecting with old and new friends virtually. Barb Savage (Wake) was elected to a second term as president. President-elect is Gina Becherer (Wake). Please see the list of 2020-2021 officers in this edition of the *Tarheel Tandem*.



# Get a Flu Shot Sooner Rather than Later

By Nancy Schneider, AMA Alliance Programs Council Director;  
2schneiders@comcast.net

(Reprinted, with permission, from the September 2020 issue of the AMAA LINK)

Experts always advise against waiting too long to get a flu shot, but now they say it's more important than ever to protect yourself against seasonal influenza as soon as possible.

Flu season typically kicks into high gear around December. Vaccines are usually available as early as September, and the CDC says September and October are the optimal times to get the shot and have protection over the entire flu season.

Public health officials are worried that the double threat of coronavirus and the flu circulating at the same time could stress hospitals even further. The flu killed between 12,000 and 61,000 people each year in the United States over the past decade, according to estimates from the CDC. The number of people sickened ranged from 9.3 million to 45 million, with as many as 810,000 people hospitalized in a single year.

Many of those at high risk for serious complications of the flu are also at high risk for more severe or deadly cases of COVID-19. Doctors aren't sure how sick someone might become if they are stricken with both diseases at the same time, or one right after the other. Symptoms of the flu and COVID-19 are similar, which could lead to more doctor visits once flu season starts, the CDC says. People with either disease can develop a fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue and several other symptoms.

The CDC says vaccine manufacturers are shipping a record number of flu shots this year. Nearly 200 million doses will be distributed compared to about 175 million last year. The CDC and other agencies are also planning a blitz of public service announcements to convince people to get immunized.

# The Importance of Legislative Advocacy

By Sherry Clarke, AMA Alliance Legislation Chair;  
sclarke0816@yahoo.com

(Reprinted, with permission, from the October 2020 issue of the AMAA LINK)

The AMA Alliance Legislative Committee's role is to inform members of important national advocacy and call-to-action alerts. In this era, medicine is more than caring for patients; it is a business and, whether we like it or not, it is political. As members of the medical family, Alliance members need to support each other and our physicians. We can't stand by and allow decisions to be made by members of Congress without our input. Congress needs to be educated and aware of the ramifications of the legislation they pass. If not us (and physicians we share our lives with) then who will represent medicine?

Here's how to find information on the Legislation/Advocacy pages on the AMA Alliance website. On the website's **Public** page, under Programs, click: Legislation and Advocacy. This gives an overview and a listing of the TOP AMA ADVOCACY ISSUES. Additionally, you will find a click here link to join the Alliance, thereby providing you access to the Members Only pages.

The **Members Only** pages for Legislation/Advocacy offer an assortment of helpful resources such as:

- Toolkits on how to set up fundraisers
- Legislative Advocacy Guides
- How a Bill Becomes a Law
- Hyperlinks to finding your legislators
- AMPAC information and education
- Awards and Events

To get to Legislation and Advocacy information from the **Members Only** section follow these steps:

Select Programs—from the dropdown menu select Public Health Awareness—from this dropdown menu select—Legislation and Advocacy

## A Limited Number of Love and Caring Cards Remain!

Donors to the NCMS Alliance Annual Fund will receive a set of four Love and Caring Cards until our current supply is depleted. Donations may be made in honor or memory of special people in your life who will be recognized in the next issue of *Tarheel Tandem*. The proceeds from the Annual Fund support the NCMS Alliance focus on improving the health of our communities in North Carolina, including helping facilitate COVID-19 testing in underserved communities.

Please use the Annual Fund donation form included with this newsletter or donate online at:  
<https://www.ncmsalliance.org/resources/Documents/2019%20Response%20Card%20-%20Annual%20Fund.pdf>



# County News

## Cabarrus County Medical Society Alliance

By Kirby Sheridan; kirbypsheridan@gmail.com

COVID-19 precautionary measures halted the traditional fall project of the Cabarrus County Medical Society Alliance—vision screenings for second and fifth graders in the county. Outside parties are not allowed into the schools at the moment so school nurses will need to screen the students themselves. School health screenings in general will be challenging since many students are joining classrooms from a distance. At the moment, these measures are on hold.

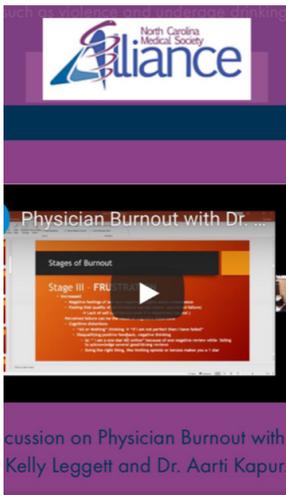
Meanwhile, CCMSA leaders are looking for other ways to make a difference in Cabarrus County. We are exploring ideas that will allow for social distancing. Our Alliance was able to award a scholarship to a student at Cabarrus College of Health Sciences once again. This is a joint scholarship with the Cabarrus County Medical Society and totals \$2500.

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## Greater Greensboro Society of Medicine Alliance

by Mary Sears Truslow, Co-President; mary.truslow@gmail.com

The Greater Greensboro Society of Medicine Alliance has been working to put together some meaningful programs and activities for their members. Social distancing has made in-person gatherings impossible, but through the miracle of “Zoom” we were able to pull off a virtual program on the topic of “Physician Burnout” on September 29, which featured physicians, Kelly Leggett, MD and Aarti Kapur, MD. The information that was shared with us was timely and very pertinent, especially in this time of Covid-19. This program was recorded and is available to share. Go to our website at ggsma.org to view.



Our Alliance has been an ongoing supporter of the Spartan Open Pantry (SOP) that is associated with UNCG and the Wesley-Luther ministries. The SOP supports UNCG & Greensboro College students who are food insecure. Collectively, our Alliance has raised over \$20,000 of donated items and money for the SOP over the course of this year. Through our Alliance donations, the SOP was able to purchase in June a much-needed produce

refrigerator for eggs and fresh produce. We are making a difference by “Fueling the Minds” of our local at-risk students.

Social opportunities are rare these days. Just for fun we have scheduled our first Virtual Yoga session for our members. I am curious to see how we manage downward dog and various poses while trying to watch an instructor on a video screen. This has the potential to be hilariously funny. We can all use a good laugh! Our Book Club recently reconvened in a local botanical park under a canopy of trees and has plans to move indoors to a local restaurant banquet room for the balance of the year. We will continue to look for ways to support and keep our members connected and safe.



Throughout this year we have organized monthly community service projects. Each month we are highlighting a specific need and asking members to get involved. In August we made homemade goodies for returning UNCG students to be included in their Spartan Open Pantry welcome packages. In September we donated needed personal hygiene products to the SOP. In October we volunteered in the “Healing Garden” that is located next to the Cone Health Cancer Center. This garden provides much-needed natural healing beauty to cancer patients as they undergo treatment.

New to our Alliance this year is our “Junior Ambassadors” group. The daughter of one of our members has organized her high school club to perform community service in conjunction with our Alliance. The students were looking for a way to fulfill their required community service hours when they came to us. They have been baking homemade goodies for the SOP, and plan to assist us with the Healing Garden project. This is a great experience that we can provide to young people as we work shoulder-to-shoulder to help improve our community.

We are very thankful and proud to have members of our board that are talented in the area of social media. We appreciate all of those that volunteer and give of their time and energies to make the GGSMA a success.

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# County News

continued from page 5

## Healthy Charlotte Alliance

By Erin Edwards, Executive Director;  
Edwards@healthycharlottealliance.org

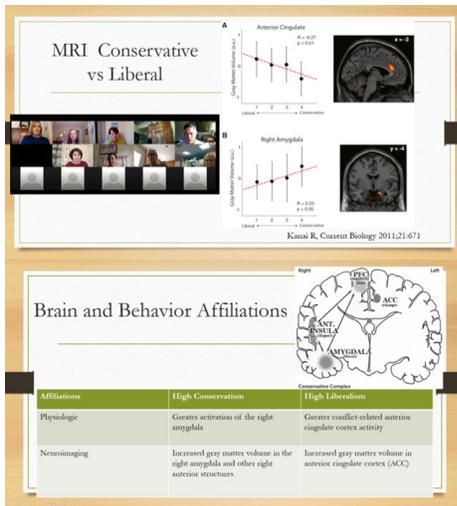
The Healthy Charlotte Alliance offered two virtual programs to our members in September. Below is a summary of each program. We will continue virtual programs into the year.

**ABCs of Medicare** — On September 10, 15 members of Healthy Charlotte Alliance participated in our first virtual health education program and learned all about the ABCs of Medicare.

Thank you to our very own member, Board Treasurer, and Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) volunteer, Leslie Aronovitz, for presenting such an informative program. Attendees learned how Medicare works, various options and little known tips on how to get the most value from Medicare.



**The Science of Politics** — Dr. John Allbert, president of the Mecklenburg County Medical Society, presented a timely program on The Science of Politics. He discussed how personality differences, genetic information and other neurobiologic factors shape your political outlook. In times of prosperity, people tend to become more liberal.



## Wake County Alliance

By Paige McLaurin, President; paigemclaurin@gmail.com

Wake County Medical Society Alliance began our 2020-21 season with Java Jumpstart hosted in the lovely home of Dorothy Nance. It was a beautiful October day for the outdoor coffee klatch. Also, on October 25, we organized a hike at our local state park, Umstead Park, with yoga and stretching after, led by member Karen Coates, M.D., RYT 500. We also held a meet-up afterward at the renowned Angus Barn in another outdoor venue, "the saloon." We sent an informal invitation to the Wake County Medical Society to join us for fellowship. We are looking forward to holding an oyster roast holiday event with the medical society in December.



We are planning Ladies Night Out every month that we do not have an event. A few members will meet at Vinos Finos Wine Bar in North Raleigh to spend time together catching up. Next, we will meet in Cary and after that in downtown Raleigh. We want to hit all the hot spots!

Past President, Gina Becherer will lead small groups in our annual blanket making event to benefit the Green Chair Project.

We are doing a No-fuss fundraiser to benefit Wake County School children. We will provide tutors for kids who would otherwise not be able to afford them.

This will be a dynamic year for WCMSA, like none before! I look forward to having a great time!

## Member's Point of View

*Editor's Note: This is a new Tarheel Tandem forum for members to express their views about health-related topics affecting North Carolinians. To submit your point of view, please email Kirby Sheridan at kirbypsheridan@gmail.com. The Tarheel Tandem is issued twice each year in the fall and spring.*

### Expanding Medicaid in North Carolina

*By Deborah Harrell Meehan, Past President and current board member, NCMSA; DHMeehan@NCMCreaty.com*

We all know by now that North Carolina is one of only 12 states that did not adopt Medicaid Expansion even though 90% of those costs would be covered by federal funds. We have more than 500,000 residents with access to healthcare. It's time our legislators in Raleigh put aside partisan politics and listen to the needs of our state. Affordable and accessible healthcare is necessary to ensure the well-being of our families, our friends and our neighbors, but it's also necessary for those we don't see every day—those living in poverty, struggling to provide for their families on a minimum wage of \$7.25/hour! Medicaid Expansion at the very least, will close the coverage gap and help increase economic growth to our state.

When I was growing up in NC, back in the 50's and 60's, my family was fortunate that healthcare costs were affordable. Although my dad was the sole provider for our family of 8 children, he was able to pay the \$150 fee for my childbirth as well as our family's other healthcare expenses. Today in North Carolina, according to statistics compiled by Fair Housing and as reported in Business Insider, the cost of having a baby without having insurance is nearly \$12,000 and that doesn't even include the costs associated with prenatal care or complications such as a C-Section!

Did you know that, according to a Medicaid Eligibility Chart on a NC.gov website, a family of three is only eligible to get healthcare coverage under Medicaid if they earn less than \$667/month or \$8,004/year and have assets valuing no more than \$3,000?! Does it make sense that they are forced to go without healthcare coverage just because they own a car to drive to work?

It's time to reach out to our local representative(s) in the NC General Assembly! Tell them to do the decent thing and expand Medicaid! Thousands of men, women and children need our support!

## President's Message *continued from page 1*

- We have launched our virtual **Shop and Share** as this year's fundraiser to support the Health Education Opportunity Fund. Please watch for pop-up-shops, get an early start on your holiday shopping and help raise funds to support our communities.
- Membership Committee is reviewing and updating the full NCMSA database, totaling approximately 2300 names.
- We are updating the website to give us a fresh look, more organized pages and to be more user friendly. We are adding many more links to information, articles and websites important to our members.

Please look for more updates as we solidify our plans for the year. You will receive regular eblasts throughout the year. Please do not just delete without reading. We will keep them short and not overload your inbox.

If you have any questions, suggestions, ideas or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the board members. We are more than happy to speak with you at any time.

HAPPY FALL TO ALL!

## 97th Annual Fund Recognitions

**In honor of Racheal Kunesh  
In honor of Barbara Savage**

*by Gay Bowman*

**In honor of Mary Beth Ellison  
In honor of Barbara Savage**

*by Racheal Kunesh*

**In honor of these mentors of NCMSA**

Susan Edens Hammer  
Kirby Sheridan

## Remember to Renew Your Membership!

Renew your membership in the NCMSA by December 1st to be eligible for a \$150 Amazon gift card.

<https://www.ncmsalliance.org/membership>



1500 Sunday Drive, Suite 102  
Raleigh, NC 27607

## Calendar of Events

### **November 18**

Coffee with the Prez  
10:00 AM

### **November 19-20**

Kendra Scott Pop-up Store

### **November 30**

NCMSA Grant Application Deadline

### **December 1**

Giving Tuesday for the Noted Candle  
Pop-up Store

### **January 14**

Member Connect Video/Article Club

### **January 20**

Board of Directors Zoom Meeting  
10:00 AM

### **January 20**

AMA Alliance Awards Submission Deadline

### **February 15**

*Tarheel Tandem* Submission Deadline

### **February 24**

Board of Directors Zoom Meeting  
10:00 AM

### **February 28**

NCMSA Grant Application Deadline

### **February 28**

Alliance Health Education Initiative  
Grant Submission Deadline

### **March 24**

Board of Directors Zoom Meeting  
10:00 AM

### **March 30**

Doctor's Day

### **April 21**

Board of Directors Meeting

### **May TBD**

NCMSA Annual Meeting



# NCMS Alliance 97th Annual Fund

Donor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

*Print your name as it should appear for recognition in the NCMSA Tarheel Tandem newsletter*

Check here if you prefer your donation be anonymous

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## Annual Fund Donor Levels (please check one box below)

- Sadie McCain Circle** (includes ten acknowledgements in the Tarheel Tandem).....\$500 & above
- Champion** (includes six acknowledgements in the Tarheel Tandem).....\$300
- Mentor** (includes four acknowledgements in the Tarheel Tandem) .....\$200
- Advocate** (includes two acknowledgements in the Tarheel Tandem) .....\$100
- Friend** (includes one acknowledgement in the Tarheel Tandem) .....\$50
- Surprise us with a donation level of your choice**..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Each donor will receive a set of four Love and Caring cards until supplies are depleted.\*

## I want to honor these special people for the NCMS Alliance Annual Fund

These special people will be recognized in the next issue of the NCMSA Tarheel Tandem newsletter.

*Please print:*

- In honor/memory (circle one) of:  
\_\_\_\_\_

- In honor/memory (circle one) of:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- In honor/memory (circle one) of:  
\_\_\_\_\_
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- In honor/memory (circle one) of:  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Payment

Check (*Please make your check payable to NCMS Alliance*)

Credit Card:  Visa  MasterCard

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

CVV2 # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Please mail completed form to:

NCMS Alliance, 1500 Sunday Drive, Suite 102, Raleigh, NC 27607

**Donors will receive cards within three weeks of NCMSA receiving donations and their special people will be recognized in the next Tarheel Tandem.**

## Thank you for your support!

*NCMS Alliance is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and donations are tax-deductible.*