

Tarheel Tandem



Volume 77 | Spring 2023

2022-2023 Board of Directors

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President's Message

By Meeti Nigam, NCMSA President; nigammeet@gmail.com



Dear Current and
Prospective Members,

Welcome to the North
Carolina Medical
Society Alliance!

Even in this difficult
economy, our Alliance

has stood strong, thanks to the resilience of our members. We are determined to continue along this path and do everything possible to foster stronger bonds between our community and its physicians. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to be part of our legacy.

Each day brings a new opportunity for each of us to positively impact our Alliance, families, and communities. The positive work of our Alliance will outlive each of us. The NCMS Alliance has provided resources and support to physician families and their communities since 1923. We also support health and wellness initiatives to improve health across the state as our donation of \$50,000 helped free clinics across the state in the past year. Please visit the NCMS Alliance Diabetes Intervention and Treatment Program (https://ncmsalliance.org/resources/Documents/NCMSA_NCAFFC_DiabetesProgram_2022_Map.jpg) for a map showing clinics supported by this program.

We also donated money for different organizations through our Holiday Sharing Card project this year.

As physician spouses, you are the foundation of the family. As such, your responsibilities to family are crucial. I understand that every effort you make on behalf of the Alliance, whether for philanthropy, community activities or otherwise, is a sacrifice. However, I believe that supporting our mission is of utmost importance. Through our philanthropy efforts, we also provide a support system for physician families to help mitigate some of the stresses that go along with the current medical environment and the constant struggle of balancing work and family. It is for these reasons that I will put forth my best effort to continue the good works of the NCMSA.

We need to promote membership this year since our members are our ambassadors and our mission is to build healthier communities. By connecting physician families and collaborating to educate and advocate, we need to increase membership in each county and recognize Alliance leaders in their community for their health resources and advocacy.

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Let's Celebrate! The North Carolina Medical Society Alliance Celebrates Its Centennial

By Kirby Sheridan, NCMSA Vice President for Program Development; kirbyps Sheridan@gmail.com

On April 18, 2023, the North Carolina Medical Society Alliance will turn 100 years old. That is quite an accomplishment for a volunteer organization. We should all be proud – not just because the NCMSA has staying power, but because of all the work that our members have done over the years to improve the health of the people of North Carolina. From supporting NC tuberculosis sanatoria and volunteering for more than 100,000 hours on war service projects during World War II, to aiding in the distribution of the polio vaccine and creating the Mental Health Research Endowment Fund at North Carolina

Memorial Hospital Psychiatric Department, to supporting education combating the opioid epidemic and funding diabetes care in the state's free clinics, North Carolina Medical Society Alliance members have contributed countless hours and their talent, energy and financial resources to help answer health-related challenges of North Carolina citizens.



Members of the North Carolina Medical Society Alliance have benefitted from their membership along the way. Originally founded as a social organization, the Alliance offers social connections and support for members of the medical community. The NCMSA also affords substantial leadership opportunities that allow members to hone those skills as they collaborate on projects and strategic planning. What began as the Woman's Auxiliary of the Medical Society of the State of North Carolina has grown and changed as the needs of its members and of North Carolinians have changed.

On April 27, the North Carolina Medical Society Alliance will celebrate its centennial at the opening of the 100th Annual Meeting. The Centennial Celebration will take place at the Greensboro History Museum from 5:30-8:30pm. The annual meeting will continue the next day, April 28, at the Starmount Forest Country Club with NY Times best-selling author and North Carolinian Wiley Cash as the Hubbard Memorial Luncheon speaker. Please join us for the celebration. Details are in this *Tarheel Tandem* or look on the NCMSA website. Questions: contact NCMS Alliance Executive Director Vicky Elia: 717-368-8382, velia@firstpointresources.com. Let's celebrate!



Save the Date

NC Medical Society Alliance Centennial Celebration

April 27, 2023, 5:30 - 8:30 pm
Greensboro History Museum

Annual Meeting

April 28, 2023, 9 am - 2:30 pm

Hubbard Luncheon at noon
Starmount Forest Country Club, Greensboro, NC

Visit www.ncmsalliance.org for event details and Historical Highlights by the decade.

Thank You to Our Centennial Sponsors

The North Carolina Medical Society Alliance thanks the following for sponsoring our Centennial Celebration.

We appreciate your support of our 100th anniversary and our mission to improve the health of the people of North Carolina.

Gold Sponsors

WakeMed Health and Hospitals
Cape Fear Medical Alliance

Silver Sponsors

Our State Magazine
Decision Point Wealth Consulting

Bronze Sponsors

Gay Bowman
Susan Edens Hammer
Manas Nigam, M.D.
Mukesh and Meeti Nigam
David and Kirby Sheridan

Donations

Cabarrus County Medical Society Alliance
Ben and Racheal Kunesh

99th Annual Fund Recognitions

Donations

Leigh Bruner
Karen Harper



Honor the Past, Look to the Future – Serve on the NCMSA Board

By Gina Becherer, NCMSA Immediate Past President; gmbecherer@gmail.com

As we prepare to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the NCMSA, we reflect back on the work of the Alliance and its commitment to the health and welfare of communities across North Carolina – county by county. We celebrate the Alliance membership who volunteered time, talent and treasure to support the Alliance mission.

Turning our thoughts to the future, we must face harsh realities. Our membership has struggled, our affiliate county alliances have dwindled to a small few. However the NCMSA continues its steadfast mission to improve the health and welfare of those in need across North Carolina. We do so by funding projects and donating to community organizations providing much needed health services in rural parts of the state.

As Chair of the Board Development Committee, I am encouraging our members to consider serving as a NCMSA board member. It is a great way to represent your county and local communities at the state level. If you would like to get more involved, please contact me at gmbecherer@gmail.com

We need the voice of our membership to move us forward.

Sharing the Gift of Health by Supporting Community Outreach – NCMS Alliance Holiday Sharing Card 2022



We are excited to report the 2022 NCMS Alliance Holiday Sharing Card project raised \$1775 from 17 donors! As a tribute to our Centennial Celebration, we supported five nonprofits, past recipients of NCMS Alliance support, including:

- \$500 for Mustard Seed Community Health, Greensboro
- \$500 for National Alliance on Mental Illness of North Carolina
- \$100 for NC Association of Free and Charitable Clinics for diabetic health care in rural areas
- \$525 for NCMSA Health Education Opportunity Fund
- \$150 for Poe Center for Health Education, Raleigh – Drugs Uncovered: What Parents Need to Know

The following seventeen donors had the privilege of selecting the recipients of their donation from the above list. The donors' names were included in the nondenominational holiday greeting in the 2022 NCMSA Holiday Sharing Card distributed electronically across the state's medical community. We appreciate their participation in this project as a way of supporting community outreach and connecting with the medical community.

Gay Bowman
Linda-Lee Hanrahan
Susan Edens Hammer
Karen Harper
Ginger Karb
Lucy H. Kernodle

Michelle Kroll
Racheal Kunesh
Margaret Littlejohn
Barbara Lupton
Meeti Nigam
Rebekah Oyler, MD

Sandra Pagano
Shelly Polite
Kirby Sheridan
Mary Tyrey
Beverly Wright



**Proud to help celebrate 100 years of the
North Carolina Medical Society Alliance.**

We share in your commitment to building
healthy communities through service, advocacy and
advancing health equity.

Congratulations on this milestone anniversary.

WakeMed 
WakeMed Health & Hospitals

Raleigh, NC | wakemed.org

National Doctors' Day 2023: Recognize and Honor Doctors' Service

By Susan Edens Hammer, NCMSA past president and current board member; sjehammer@att.net

Since 1933 Doctors' Day has been celebrated on March 30, the day in 1842 when Dr. Crawford W. Long first used an ether anesthetic during surgery in Barrow County, Georgia. On the first Doctors' Day, the spouse of a physician in Barrow County sent cards to all the doctors she knew and placed red carnations on the graves of those deceased. Doctors' Day continues to be an opportunity to recognize the unrelenting work of physicians and their contributions to medicine and service in their communities.

Following overwhelming approval by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, on October 30, 1990, President George Bush signed S.J. RES. #366 (which became Public Law 101-473) designating March 30 as "National Doctors Day."

We invite you to celebrate spouses, family members, and others in the medical community who have had a significant impact in your life by donating in their honor or memory to our NCMSA Health Education Opportunity Fund. A gift for Doctors' Day will help the NCMS Alliance promote health care to our citizens statewide as we continue the focus of access to rural care.

You may make your donation online at <https://ncmsalliance.org/Donate>. If you are giving in honor or memory of a particular person, please

let us know in the comment section. You may mail a check payable to the NCMS Alliance to 3739 National Dr., Ste 202, Raleigh, NC 27612. Honorees and memorials will be recognized in the *Tarheel Tandem*. Provide us with the email and/or postal mail addresses of honorees and families of memorials so we can notify them of your donation.



A hidden waterfall. A slice of homemade pie. A scenic mountain drive. We take you to the places locals love and show you the views of a lifetime. It's the best of North Carolina, delivered monthly.

I saw it in
Our State
Subscribe at ourstate.com



Annual Meeting to Be Held in Greensboro on April 28

The North Carolina Medical Society Alliance looks forward to returning to the Starmount Forest Country Club on April 28 for our 100th annual meeting. Thank you to the Alliance members in Greensboro, both at the local and state level, who are so welcoming and willing to help with planning and logistics. It will be a good second day of celebrating our Centennial. Here is the schedule of events for our two-day Centennial Celebration and annual meeting:

Thursday, April 27 at the Greensboro History Museum—130 Summit Avenue, Greensboro

3:45-5:00pm Guided tour of the Greensboro Museum of History (optional). Please indicate your attendance on the annual meeting registration page. We will gather in the lobby at 3:45.

5:30-8:30pm Centennial Celebration
(ticketed event, see NCMSA website for details)

Friday, April 28 Annual Meeting at the Starmount Forest Country Club—1 Sam Snead Drive, Greensboro

9:00-9:30am Continental breakfast and conversation

9:30-11:45am Annual meeting morning session with breaks

Noon-2:30pm Hubbard Memorial Lecture Luncheon and Installation of Officers

New York Times Bestselling Author Wiley Cash is Hubbard Memorial Luncheon Speaker

The NCMSA is excited to welcome Wiley Cash as our Hubbard Memorial Luncheon Speaker at the annual meeting. Cash, who holds a PhD in American Literature, is the author of four award-winning novels including *The Last Ballard*, *This Dark Road to Mercy*, *A Land More Kind Than Home* and *When Ghosts Come Home*. He is also the founder of an online creative community, This is Working, and teaches fiction writing and literature at UNC-Asheville. The NCMSA looks forward to hosting Wiley Cash.



When the Physician Needs Care: Joseph P. Jordan, PhD, CEO of NCPHP, is Keynote Speaker at Annual Meeting Morning Session

Physicians spend time treating patients with substance abuse disorders. Sometimes they deal with substance abuse themselves. Where do they go for confidential help when they need it? Where can someone anonymously refer a practitioner who they see struggling with a substance abuse disorder? The North Carolina Professionals Health Program (NCPHP) assists medical professionals with recovery from substance use disorders and other conditions that could impair their abilities to safely provide care and services to their patients. Originating in 1988 as the physician's health committee of the North Carolina Medical Society, NCPHP is now a private, free-standing, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation that provides services to medical practitioners confidentially and serves the veterinary and pharmacy professionals, as well.



As CEO of the NCPHP, Joseph P. Jordan, PhD brings more than 30 years of experience in the areas of substance abuse and mental health disorders to his role. Dr. Jordan holds national credentials in substance use disorder counseling, supervision, and mental health counseling. He will speak about the services that NCPHP offers at the morning session of the annual meeting. Come learn more about the NC Professionals Health Program.



Credit: VShortPhotography.com

100th NCMS Alliance Annual Meeting Registration

April 28, 2023 • Greensboro, NC • Registration Deadline: April 11, 2023

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

*Dietary Restrictions: ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe: _____

Attending the Greensboro History Museum optional guided tour on April 27 at 3:45pm? ☐ Yes ☐ No Number in party? _____

All Inclusive Member-Only Full Registration

Friday, April 28 • 9:00 am - 2:30 pm • Starmount Forest Country Club, 1 Sam Snead Drive, Greensboro, NC

Morning Keynote Speaker: Joseph P. Jordan, PhD, CEO of North Carolina Professionals Health Program

Please check box and provide numbers below. Space is limited.

☐ Reserve _____ place(s) for All Inclusive Member-Only Full Registration \$110 per person
(includes Continental breakfast, Hubbard Luncheon & Annual Meeting)

Choose one entrée per person. All entrées include bread, iced tea, coffee, salad & dessert.

- ☐ 1. Pan-Seared Chicken Breast - gruyere custard potatoes, roasted leeks, vichy carrots, mushroom duxelles, pan jus
☐ 2. Flounder Roulade - two rolled flounder filets stuffed with wilted spinach, ricotta and sun-dried tomato with lemon cream sauce, cauliflower gratin & orange zested carrots
☐ 3. Roasted Vegetable Lasagna - ricotta, pasta, fresh mozzarella, pomodoro sauce

All Inclusive Registration Fees Total: _____

Centennial Celebration — Thursday Evening, April 27, 2023

Separate registration for the Centennial Celebration on April 27 is required by April 11, 2023.

Register online at NCMS Alliance or contact Vicky Elia: 717-368-8382, velia@firstpointresources.com.

Hubbard Luncheon ONLY

Friday, April 28 • 12:00 pm • Starmount Forest Country Club, 1 Sam Snead Drive, Greensboro, NC

Featuring: Wiley Cash, Author of *A Land More Kind Than Home*

Please check box and provide numbers below. Space is limited.

☐ Reserve _____ place(s) ONLY for the Hubbard Luncheon and Officer Installation..... \$50 member or \$75 non-member

Choose one entrée per person. All entrées include bread, iced tea, coffee, salad & dessert.

- ☐ 1. Pan-Seared Chicken Breast - gruyere custard potatoes, roasted leeks, vichy carrots, mushroom duxelles, pan jus
☐ 2. Flounder Roulade - two rolled flounder filets stuffed with wilted spinach, ricotta and sun-dried tomato with lemon cream sauce, cauliflower gratin & orange zested carrots
☐ 3. Roasted Vegetable Lasagna - ricotta, pasta, fresh mozzarella, pomodoro sauce

Hubbard Luncheon ONLY Fees Total: _____

GRAND TOTAL DUE: _____

Payment Information

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

Credit Card: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Credit Card # _____ CVV2# _____ Exp. Date _____

Name on Card _____ Signature _____

Please mail or email your completed registration form by April 11, 2023 to:

Vicky Elia, NCMS Alliance, 3739 National Drive, Suite 202, Raleigh, NC 27612

Phone: 717-368-8382 • Email: velia@firstpointresources.com



The Cape Fear Medical Alliance honors the women from New Hanover County who have served as president of the North Carolina Medical Society Alliance during its 100 years. We are proud of the service and leadership contributed by these women to support the family of medicine, and promote health education and service in community health-related projects.



Mrs. J. Burden Sidbury
President 1934-1935



Mary Leila Andrews
President 1977-1978



Eleanor M. Hunt
President 1982-83



Linda Patton Nance
President 1984-1985



Connie Parker
President 1991-1992



Rachel Pace
President 2000-2002

County News

Cabarrus County

By Kirby Sheridan, CCMSA member and NCMSA board member;
kirbypsheridan@gmail.com

Long Time, No See

After a long hiatus following the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cabarrus County Medical Society Alliance gathered at the home of Karen Byrd on November 17 for fun and fellowship. It was good to get together again after so long. Thanks to Karen for hosting us. Thanks, also, to Wendy Harsch, CCMSA member and School Health Assistant Director with the Cabarrus Health Alliance, for bringing a Welch Allyn Spot Screener to show us how vision screenings can be done with fewer volunteers in a socially distanced process. Vision screenings have not started again on a large scale, but when they do, only 2-3 volunteers will be needed at each site.

During the pandemic, the CCMSA continued to work with the Cabarrus County Medical Society to award a joint scholarship to a student at the Cabarrus College of Health Sciences. This year there were two awardees--Abigail Dunk-Brown, a first-generation college student working on her associate degree in nursing and Andrea Mosconi, pursuing her bachelor's degree in nursing.



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Healthy Charlotte Alliance

Volunteer Project with Shelter Health Services

On November 2, six members toured community partner and 2022 grant recipient (\$27K), Shelter Health Services.

Importantly located adjacent to the Salvation Army's Center of Hope Shelter, Shelter Health



Services supports the women and children staying in the shelter to get healthy and back on a path to stability. Alliance volunteers helped with administrative tasks, including shredding documents, and OTC medicine inventorying and cleaning, in order to lift just a bit of the burden off of the remarkable staff.

Improving Sleep Quality and Sleep Health

On November 9, 30 Alliance members and friends enjoyed an informative and entertaining program on Improving Sleep Quality and Sleep Health. Enterprise Lead and Medical Director of Sleep Medicine, Atrium Health, Dr. Douglas Kirsch outlined correlations between sleep restriction, obesity and heart disease, explained common sleep disorders, and shared tips to achieve 7-8 hours of quality sleep for better emotional and physical health.



Integrative Medicine's Role in a Traditional Medicine Model

On December 1, 30 Alliance and general community members participated in an informative program with Dr. Chasse Bailey-Dorton, Atrium Health, to learn about integrative medicine, which is:

- evidence-based,
- complimentary to conventional medicine (not instead of), and
- individualized to treat the whole person (mind, body and spirit), and not just the disease.



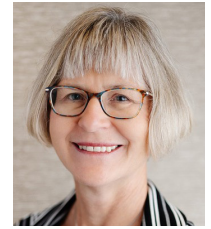
Dr. Bailey-Dorton discussed the compression of morbidity ideal, i.e. living disease free for as long as possible and compressing illness into as small of a time period as possible, at the very end of life. She affirmed that 30% of aging issues are genetic while 70% can be mitigated by healthy lifestyle choices. Further, approximately 40% of all cancers can be related to diet, lack of exercise and obesity.

Dr. Bailey-Dorton offered applicable strategies to cancer prevention and taking control of your health! She shared that most cancer patients turn to integrative oncology in conjunction with conventional care, as a way to take an active role in their treatment. The various therapies can enhance cancer treatment, reduce side effects, and decrease the chance of a recurrence.

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From Iowa to North Carolina – Meet Our Next AMA Alliance President, Racheal Kunesh



The youngest of six children, I grew up on a family farm in Iowa. My dad passed away when I was 4, leaving my mom to navigate raising us as well as managing the farm. Luckily my mom let me explore a wide variety of things, so when I entered college, I was torn between studying music and chemistry; I took another path and transferred to chemical engineering.

It was my membership in the Hawkeye Marching Band that gave me the chance to cross paths with my future spouse. We married in 1987, just after I graduated from the University of Iowa (GO HAWKS!) with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering. While I worked at 3M in Minnesota, Ben attended medical school at the University of Iowa. When I transferred to a 3M plant in Iowa, we were finally able to live together!

We headed back to Minnesota for Ben's internal medicine residency at Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis, and I transferred back to 3M's Medical-Surgical Division. During my free time, I earned an M.B.A. from the University of St. Thomas.

We then decided to leave the Midwest, landing in Concord. Ben joined a traditional internal medicine practice, and I continued working in product development. I remember my first introduction to the Alliance when my neighbor, Austin, brought over a welcome basket. My first volunteer experience was helping set up our annual family Farm Party; I had a fun time and met many physician spouses at all seasons of life. I was hooked!

We were blessed with the arrival of Adam in 1995 and Lizzie in 1998, at which time I decided to stay home full time, welcoming Isaac in 2000.

Looking to make connections, I became an involved parent volunteer and an active member of our county Alliance. The Alliance afforded me the opportunity to meet other spouses and contribute to meaningful projects, creating a sense of accomplishment and community. Screening the vision of elementary children and raising funds for the public school nursing program via our Swing for the Kids golf tourney were highlights of local Alliance work.

In 2007, I took an opportunity to return to work part time in process engineering. During this time, I continued to stay involved with my local and state Alliances. Thanks to encouragement from Julie Newman and Beverly Wright, I served as president of the NCMSA in 2010-2011 when we hosted Rock with the Docs, with proceeds benefiting initiatives addressing childhood obesity.

I first became involved with the AMA Alliance by serving on the Board Development committee. I then was a committee member with Membership Marketing, Affiliate Relations, Internal Communications and Finance Committees. I joined the AMA Alliance board as director of Communications and Alliance in Motion editor, serving two years in this position, followed by two years as secretary. Throughout my years of AMA Alliance involvement, I have learned so much and I am constantly amazed by the professionalism and accomplishments of our members.

In 2017 I was given the opportunity to work with Celgard, a company associated with electrification and green energy, and decided to

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ANNUAL MEETING

2023



Let's meet in the heart of **Nashville**

In-person **JUNE 2-4**

Virtual Sessions **May 23-24**

amaalliance.org | Physician families connecting, educating, and advocating.

 AMA Alliance

County News

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Wake County

By Zohra Osman, WCMSA President; zohra.wcmsa@gmail.com

Winter Gatherings

In November we visited the beautiful Governor's Mansion, enjoying a private docent-guided tour. Then in December, a group of members enjoyed gathering in person for our annual holiday luncheon.

Also in December, the Wake County Alliance Book Club enjoyed a special treat. Local author Diane Chamberlain joined us and discussed her newest novel, *The Last House on the Street*! She shared her writing process and the fascinating experiences that have shaped her extraordinary writing career through the years!

We plan to have a Past Presidents' Luncheon and also celebrate Doctors' Day this spring.



Our Next AMA Alliance President

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take the leap back to full time employment. Ben and I are marking our fourth year as empty nesters. We sold the home in which we raised our family and are building a house at our lake place. Ben is practicing outpatient medicine with a group at Lake Norman and reports that he is "not burned out, just slightly toasted." Our UNC Chapel Hill graduates (GO HEELS!) are spreading their wings with Adam in Tulsa and Liz in Barcelona. Isaac is a senior in Cinema and Television Art at Elon; you will see some of his editing work on our AMA Alliance videos.

I would love for you to join me in Nashville for the AMA Alliance annual meeting!

Racheal Kunesch
President-elect@amaalliance.org

President's Message

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Please invite your physician family friends to join and begin to enjoy the benefit of belonging to the only state organization representing the physician family today. Our amazing network of members throughout the state connects you with other physician families.

Our Centennial Celebration is the celebration of a legacy of 100 years. We are so excited to celebrate with our members. You received a Centennial sponsorship package with a pledge form. All our members are leaders in their communities. Please solicit sponsorships in your community for this good cause; funds will be used to promote more projects through the Alliance in coming years.

Since 1923 the NCMS Alliance has been the voice of physician families. We have impacted our members and our communities in amazing ways. Your membership is making a huge difference. If more physician families will join our Alliance and support our health and wellness initiatives, we will be more effective building healthier communities.

No one person can do this alone. This is why I ask for your consideration to do what you can to keep the Alliance successful this year. Your valuable time and efforts are always greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

Meeti Nigam
2022-2023 NCMSA President



DOCTORS Day DINNER

March 31, 2023

Join the Oklahoma State Medical Association Alliance for dinner and celebration of Doctors Day! Dr. Donna Van Natten will bring her high-octane, interactive, and fun presentation that provide new insights and tools about human behaviors for all professions, ages, and stages of life.

OKLAHOMA CITY GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB
7000 NW GRAND BLVD. NICHOLS HILLS, OK, 73116

HOSTED BY OKLAHOMA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION ALLIANCE
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ALLIANCE SOUTHERN REGION MEETING





Alliance Southern Region Meeting

CONNECT IN OKLAHOMA CITY
MARCH 30 - APRIL 1, 2023

WWW.AMAALLIANCE.ORG/REGIONAL-MEETINGS

OPEN TO ALL PHYSICIAN SPOUSES/PARTNERS
REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN AND
INCLUDES OSMAA DOCTORS DAY DINNER ON MARCH 31.





PO Box 30939
Raleigh, NC 27622

Looking Towards the Next 100 Years of the NCMSA



*By Barbara Lupton, NCMSA Secretary/Treasurer;
bvlupton@gmail.com*

This year the Alliance will focus on our goals and plans for the next decade or more. Organizations occasionally need to review where they have been and where they want to go. In our strategic planning process, we will take a deep dive into what type of organization we are and want to become and how we continue to be relevant moving forward. This is an exciting time for the NCMSA, and all members will be encouraged to participate in one way or another.

As chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, my goal is to have a large representation of our membership. I invite all interested members to join the committee to help us reimagine our Alliance to meet the needs of our members and to become even more relevant to our medical community and surrounding health care environment. If you are interested, please contact me at bvlupton@gmail.com.

Announcing the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

By Laura Pinto MHSA, MS, RN, AMAA Programs Council member

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. In July 2022, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration launched the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, which replaced the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The change is in response to the increasing number of people reporting mental distress, and the need for improved access to and mobilization of mental health services.

The increase in calls to the crisis line has been significant: from about 50,000 in 2005 (when the initial support line was established), to over 2.5 million in 2021. Data from August 2022 show that the new 988 number saw a 45 percent increase in contact volume compared with August 2021 (Smith, T. October 19, 2022. 988 – the new suicide prevention hotline – sees big increase in use. Available at: ama-assn.org.)

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is a national network of more than 180 local crisis centers in all 50 states. According to 988lifeline.org, "People experiencing suicidal ideation, substance use, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress can call, chat, or text 988 and speak to trained crisis counselors." This lifeline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and provides free and confidential support and resources.