



UNC Health Sciences at MAHEC Commitment Statement on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic

UNC Health Sciences at MAHEC is committed to partnering with the [National Academy of Medicine \(NAM\) Action Collaborative on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic](#) to implement and disseminate systems-level solutions that reduce opioid misuse and improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities adversely affected by opioids. MAHEC is leading coordinated efforts that align with [North Carolina's Opioid Action Plan](#) and the NAM Action Collaborative's four priority focus areas.

Education and Training

Guided by an interdisciplinary [Substance Use Disorder Task Force](#), UNC Health Sciences at MAHEC has provided opioid-related education to more than 10,000 healthcare professionals and community partners across the region and state on safe opioid prescribing, acute and chronic pain management, substance misuse prevention, and opioid and substance use disorder screening and treatment.

In partnership with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, UNC Health Sciences at MAHEC is currently [training residency programs across the state](#) in medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder (OUD). MAHEC trains all of its family medicine, ob/gyn, and psychiatry residents in MAT and offers technical assistance and support to primary care professionals who want to provide MAT.

Prescribing Guidelines and Evidence Standards

In advance of federal regulatory changes, MAHEC developed opioid prescribing guidelines to provide safer pain management for patients and guiding principles for medical residents and learners. These guidelines reflect evidence that opioids have limited efficacy for managing acute and chronic pain and are dangerous and rarely beneficial at high doses.

MAHEC healthcare providers avoid prescribing opioids for acute pain and work to taper doses for chronic pain patients. MAHEC uses a patient-centered approach to educate and support patients and learners through team-based interprofessional care.

Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery

Prevention efforts include medication lockbox distribution and naloxone co-prescribing, an opioid speaker's bureau, community town halls, participation on regional substance use task forces, drug take-back events, coordination of naloxone distribution and training for public school staff, region-wide distribution of information to high school parents about opioids and safe medication disposal, and an [innovative original children's musical](#) for middle school students.

MAHEC provides integrated substance use treatment and recovery services in all of its family medicine and ob/gyn teaching practices. Team-based primary care includes access to MAT, clinical pharmacists, psychiatrists, behavioral health and addictions professionals, certified peer support specialists, legal aid, and care coordination for additional substance use treatment, social services, and community resources.



Research, Data, and Metrics

The [Department of Research](#) at UNC Health Sciences at MAHEC engages in research focused on opioid use, substance use disorders (SUD) treatment, and community-based harm reduction efforts. UNC Health Sciences at MAHEC has developed a database to track maternal health and infant outcomes for patients receiving perinatal substance use treatment in Western North Carolina.

UNC Health Sciences at MAHEC is committed to sharing best practices with the NAM Action Collaborative to amplify the impact of our collective efforts to counter the U.S. Opioid Epidemic.

[Click here](#) for our full commitment statement.