



NEWS RELEASE

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Wake County Receives Grant to Help Improve Health Outcomes of ‘Familiar Faces’

A Wake County plan to improve the health outcomes of our community’s most vulnerable residents has received a \$540,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

A team of five practitioners——now designated as Robert Wood Johnson [Clinical Scholars](#)——will work with community partners to provide integrated health services to people with complex needs.

Known as “familiar faces,” these residents have frequent interaction with:

- Criminal justice and correctional systems;
- Emergency medical services;
- Homelessness services;
- Physical and mental health services; and
- Substance abuse detox and treatment services.

“The grant will help us make progress on our community’s plans to better serve this vulnerable population,” said [Dr. Jose Cabañas](#), Wake County EMS director/medical director, and leader of the Clinical Scholars team. “We will apply what we learn to make

further improvements to enhance access and delivery of health and social systems of care across Wake County.”

The following practitioners join [Dr. Cabañas](#) on the team, known as the Wake County Familiar Faces Collaborative:

- [Jason Wittes, PharmD](#) – Wake County Human Services
- [Dr. Derrick Hoover, MD](#) – Duke University Health System – Duke Primary Care
- [Thava Mahadevan, MS LCAS](#) – UNC School of Medicine – Department of Psychiatry - UNC Center for Excellence in Community Mental Health
- [Keturah Beckham, MSW](#) – WakeMed Health and Hospitals

An Ongoing Initiative

Wake County Government and community partners have been working together for several years to improve the care and support of these residents. These patients often suffer from severe mental and physical illnesses and attempt to seek care across a scattered safety net of medical and social services—and they frequently interact with the criminal justice system.

Several policy initiatives adopted by the county have called for a more robust strategy to meet the needs of this vulnerable population, including the [Wake County Behavioral Health Plan](#) (2018), the [Community Health Needs Assessment](#) (2019), the [Population Health Task Force Report](#) (2018) and [Live Well Wake](#) (2019). Each plan highlights the need to address familiar faces in a coordinated fashion.

Over the three years of the grant, the Clinical Scholars team will knit together a comprehensive understanding of these challenges and engage existing and new stakeholders to improve the health outcomes of this fragile population.

Learn more about the Wake County Familiar Faces Collaborative [here](#).

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