



SUPPORTING NORTH CAROLINA'S HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO CARE

The nationwide shortage of doctors, nurses and other primary care providers is **hitting North Carolina especially hard.**

ALMOST HALF
OF NORTH CAROLINIANS ARE EXPERIENCING PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER SHORTAGES.¹

70 OUT OF 80
OF NC'S RURAL COUNTIES ARE CLASSIFIED AS **MEDICAL DESERTS** DUE TO THEIR LACK OF PRIMARY CARE.²

18,000
— THIS ESTIMATED SHORTAGE OF **NURSES** IN NC BY 2033 WILL MAKE ACCESS TO CARE HARDER, PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AREAS OR SENIOR POPULATIONS.³

Without adequate access to primary care, **too many North Carolinians don't get the preventive care they need to stay healthy**, leading to more chronic illness treatment, expensive emergency room visits, **and increased health care costs for everyone.**



HOW BLUE CROSS NC IS HELPING

COORDINATING CARE TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

BLUE PREMIER

By putting a greater focus on prevention and coordinated care, our groundbreaking value-based care program helps members build a stronger foundation for good health. Providers in this program can see a fuller picture of a patient's health, meaning more primary care services and fewer expensive ER visits.

\$650 million in **health care savings** have been achieved by participation in Blue Premier. This allows physicians to direct more resources into growing their practices to better meet the needs of the communities they serve.

STRENGTHENING PRIMARY CARE

\$200M+ in investments from Blue Cross NC have been made in UNC School of Medicine's Primary Care **Rural Advancement Program** and **Physician Assistant Studies Program** to address the shortage of primary health care professionals in our state.

\$8M in investments for programs that focus on the role of social determinant interventions in **improving rural community health** and allow primary care professionals to provide better care to fewer patients. These programs include scholarships for students attending Eastern Carolina University, Appalachian State University, and North Carolina Community Colleges, as well as partnerships with organizations like the NC Association of Free and Charitable Clinics.

PROVIDING TOOLS AND SOLUTIONS

EXPANDING TELEHEALTH

Telehealth expansion allows members all over the state to access primary care **when and where** they need it.

GIVING DOCTORS TIME TO FOCUS ON PATIENTS

We're supporting independent primary care practices with **tailored services like Alo** that ease administrative burden and offer clinical support so doctors can focus on providing high-quality care for their patients.



ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE HELPS PREVENT ILLNESS AND SKYROCKETING COSTS OF CARE

By strengthening our members' access to primary care, supporting the providers already working in the state, and investing in future health care professionals, we're giving more North Carolinians the opportunity to be healthy.

Better health means fewer expensive treatments for chronic or emergency conditions, **making health care more affordable for everyone.**

Learn more about our efforts to treat the causes of unaffordable care.

Sources:

1. Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), KFF. (2023, November 1). <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/primary-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&selectedRows=%7B%22states%22%3A%7B%22north-carolina%22%3A%7B%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22coll%22%3A%22Location%22%2C%22sort%22%3A%22asc%22%7D> (Accessed December 2023).

2. Balfour, B. (2018, February 1). Expanding Access to Medical Care in Rural North Carolina. North Carolina Nurses Association. <https://ncnurses.org/about-ncna/latest-news/expanding-access-to-medical-care/> (Accessed December 2023).

3. The Program on Health Workforce Research and Policy at the Cecil G Sheps Center. "NC Nursecast: A Supply and Demand Model for Nurses in North Carolina." November 1, 2021. <https://ncnursecast.unc.edu/key-findings/> (Accessed December 2023).