



North Carolina Community Health Center Association

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MEDIA ADVISORY

What: Ribbon Cutting Celebration for 'THIS-NC,' a NC-Based Nonprofit Health Equity Research Organization

When: Thursday August 15, 2:00-3:30PM

Where: First Choice Community Health Centers, 40 Autumn Fern Trail, Lillington, NC

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The Translational Health Institute of the Safety Net in North Carolina (THIS-NC) Celebrates Ribbon Cutting at First Choice Community Health Centers in Lillington

A new health research organization with a mission of advancing health equity will hold its inaugural event, a ribbon cutting celebration at First Choice Community Health Centers in Lillington, on Thursday, August 15 from 2:00-3:30pm. Known by the acronym THIS-NC (The Translational Health Institute of the Safety Net in North Carolina), the nonprofit organization partners with safety net providers to support equity in health research and quality improvement projects that are driven by the communities that they serve.

"THIS-NC formed from the drive to value lived experiences and elevate community voices. We believe that communities know what they need and have the best solutions for any challenge," said Dr. Becca Hayes, Director of Health Research Equity at the North Carolina Community Health Center Association (NCCHCA), a main collaborator on the THIS-NC launch. "We support communities by capturing the voices of diverse populations who are often overlooked, including racial and ethnic minority groups, rural residents, and members of the LGBTQ community."

Along with NCCHCA, which supports First Choice Community Health Centers and other Federally Qualified Health Centers in North Carolina, THIS-NC is affiliated with the North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics, the North Carolina School Based Health Alliance, Rural Health Centers, North Carolina Central University research programs, and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. THIS-NC plans to work with these partners to support health equity in marginalized North Carolina communities by co-developing

sustainable, data-driven solutions to improve health access and outcomes through community-based research and education.

“I look forward to THIS-NC being a community-engaged organization that provides an inclusive and equitable approach to research that involves safety-net providers working in close partnership with the communities they serve,” said Chris Shank, President and CEO of NCCHCA.

Joining Ms. Shank and Dr. Hayes at the THIS-NC ribbon cutting are April Cook, Board Chair of THIS-NC and CEO of the North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (NCAFFC); Sheila Simmons, CEO of First Choice Community Health Centers; Deepak Kumar, PhD, Associate Provost and Dean of Research and Sponsored Programs at North Carolina Central University; and Kathryn Ferguson, Board Chair of First Choice Community Health Centers. North Carolina State Senator Jim Burgin (R- Harnett, Lee, Sampson) has also accepted an invitation to attend the ribbon-cutting as an honored guest and elected official overseeing Lillington and Harnett County, where THIS-NC will be based.

This event is open to the media with prior authorization. Please contact Ben Porco at 919-632-5812 for access details.

About This-NC:

Our Vision is to be the partner of choice for North Carolina's historically underrepresented populations, safety-net providers, study sponsors, and funders invested in clinical trial and clinical care equity and serve as a model nationally.

About NCCHCA:

The North Carolina Community Health Center Association represents 43 Community Health Center (CHC) organizations that operate over 500 clinical sites in 85 N.C. counties, and served more than 752,000 patients in 2022. CHCs are federally funded, nonprofits organizations that have a mission of providing integrated primary, dental, and behavioral health care to underserved and rural communities, without regard for insurance status or ability to pay.

About First Choice Health Center:

First Choice Community Health Centers (FCCHC) was established in 1979 as a non-profit community health center and certified as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). FCCHC is dedicated to providing primary health care and dental services to the underserved citizens of Harnett and surrounding counties. The mission of First Choice Community Health Centers is to provide comprehensive primary healthcare services, with excellence and compassion, for the entire community.