



# Strategies for Improving Employee Fulfillment and Retention

## Session 1

*Tuesday, April 14, 2026*

*This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$550,000 with 0 percentage financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov)*

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- National Cooperative Agreement awarded in 2014
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# HOUSEKEEPING



- This session is being recorded and the **recording** and **presentation** will be emailed to registrants
- **Be present**– it is wonderful to have everyone engaged!
- Use the **Chat** box to ask questions, share comments, and thoughts
- Send a message to **Mariah Blake**, if you are experiencing technical difficulties
- Please complete the **evaluation** at the end of the session



# Building Workforce Well-Being Through Growth, Opportunity, and Strategy

# Who We Are

RCCHC is a Health Center located in rural Northeastern North Carolina, dedicated to serving communities with complex health and workforce needs through accessible, high-quality care and strategic workforce development initiatives.

# The Perception

Workforce well-being is about reducing burnout, offering wellness activities, and helping staff manage stress.

- Self-care initiatives
- Employee appreciation day
- Mental health resources
- Work-life balance

# Understanding Burnout

Burnout is not just stress—it's lack of growth.

- Lack of direction
- Lack of opportunity
- Lack of investment

 People don't leave because they're tired—they leave because they're stuck.

# Understanding **Burnout**



## **TRUE CAUSE:**

Lack of growth opportunity in rural healthcare.

# Reducing Burnout Through Structure

## Burnout decreases when:

- Career pathways are clearly defined
- Training is consistent and structured
- Staff feel supported and valued
- Expectations are clear and aligned

# Workforce Reality



Staffing shortages



Burnout



Limited career pathways



Competition with larger systems

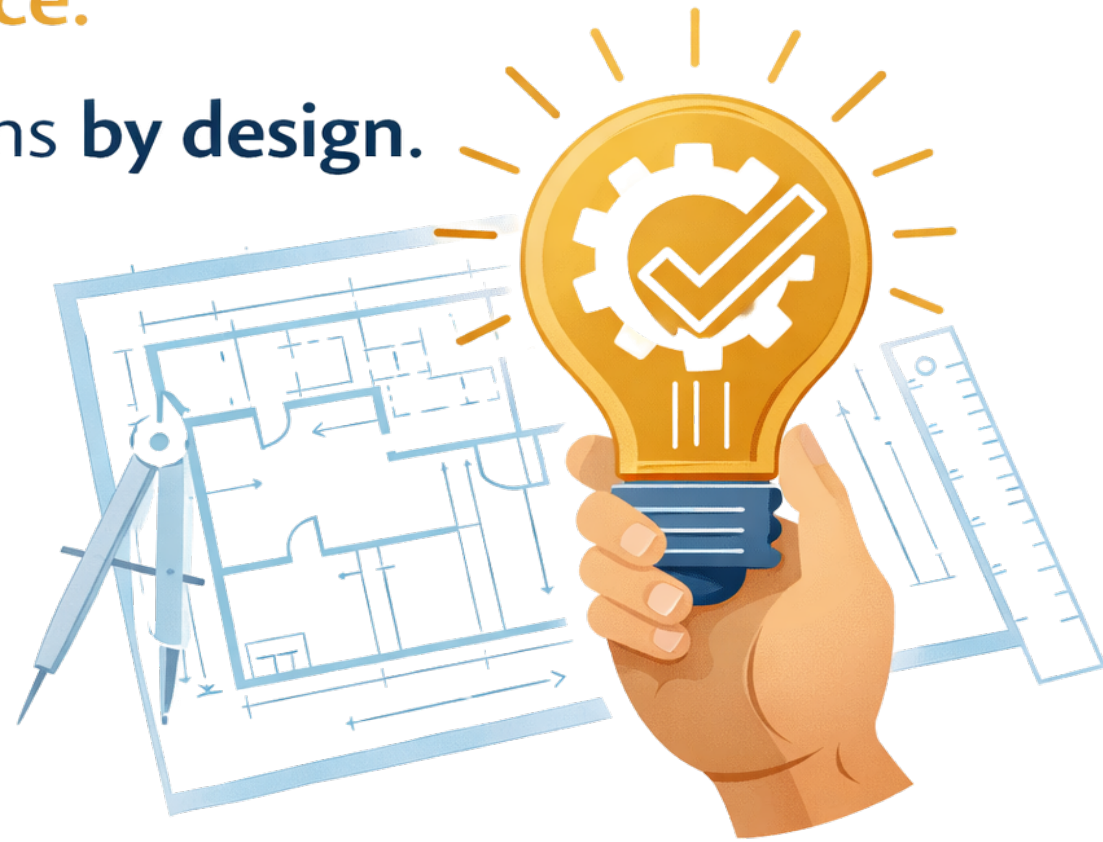
# Reframing Workforce Well-Being

Workforce well-being is more than self-care. In rural healthcare, it must include an opportunity.

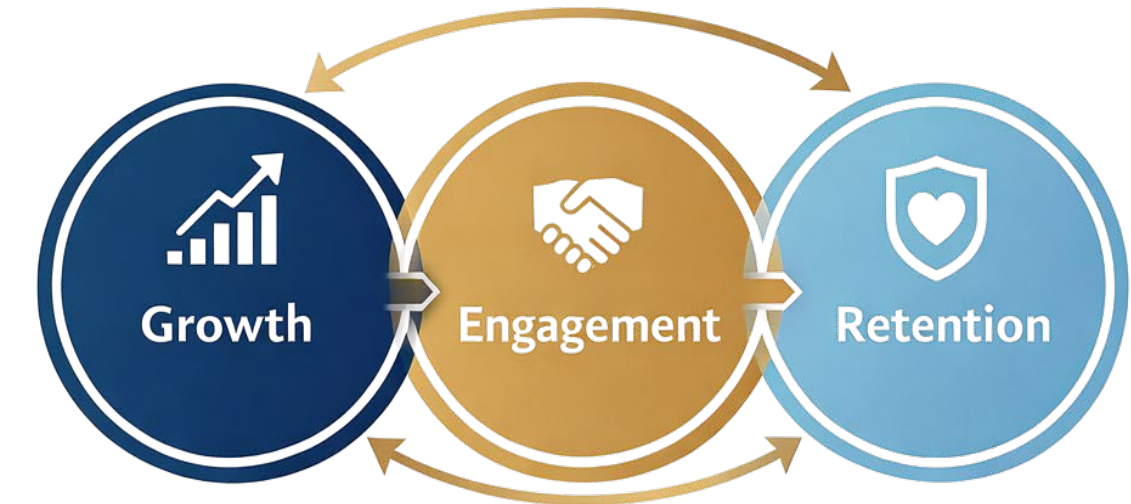


**Workforce well-being** doesn't happen  
**by chance.**

It happens **by design.**



**Workforce Well-Being = Access to Growth**



**Growth drives engagement**



**Engagement drives retention.**

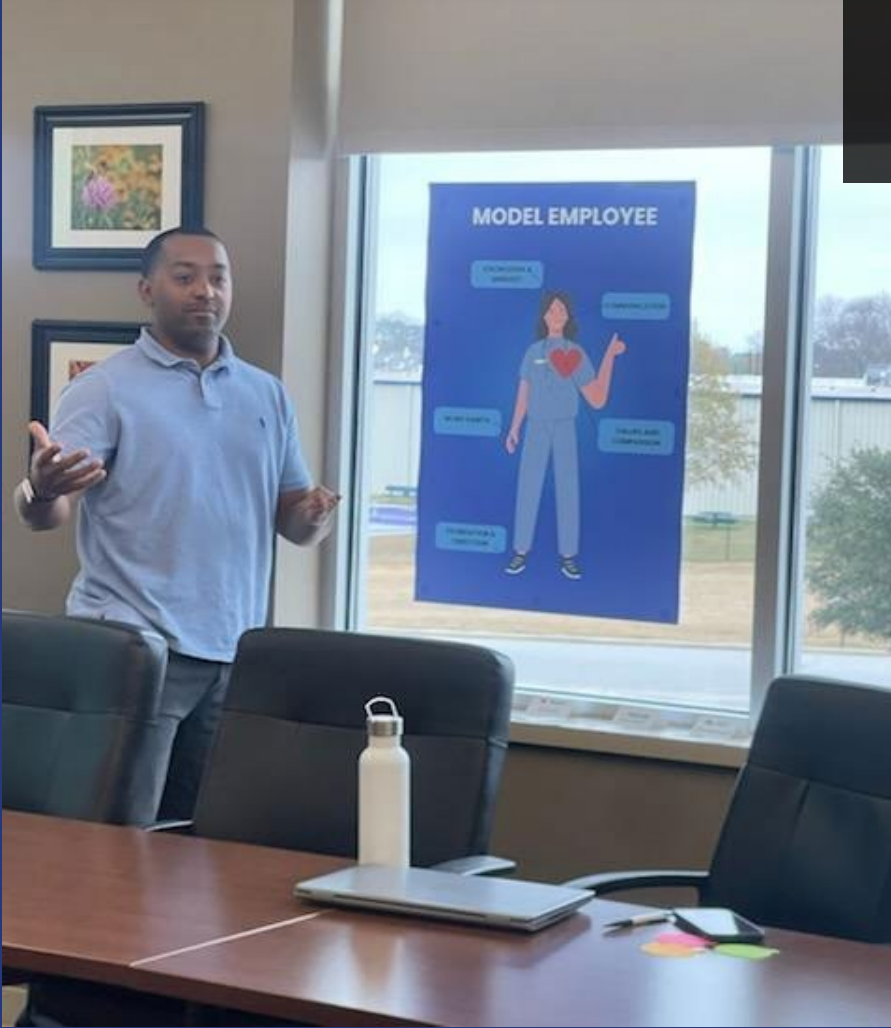
# What Workforce Well-Being Actually Is:

Workforce well-being is a strategic, systems-level approach that ensures staff are supported, developed, and positioned to thrive through clear structure, meaningful opportunities, continuous growth, and an atmosphere of safety.

- Growth: Career pathways, upskilling, advancement
- Structure: Clear roles, onboarding, and workflows
- Opportunity: Internships, apprenticeships, tuition support
- Support: Safety, leadership visibility, recognition



# From Hiring to Workforce Development



# A Strategic Model for Developing Future Healthcare Professionals

## Early Career Exposure

- Students introduced to healthcare careers early

## Structured Learning Experiences

- Guided training, coursework, and skill-building

## Work-Based Learning

- Internships, apprenticeships, clinical rotations

## Mentorship & Coaching

- Support from preceptors, leaders, and staff

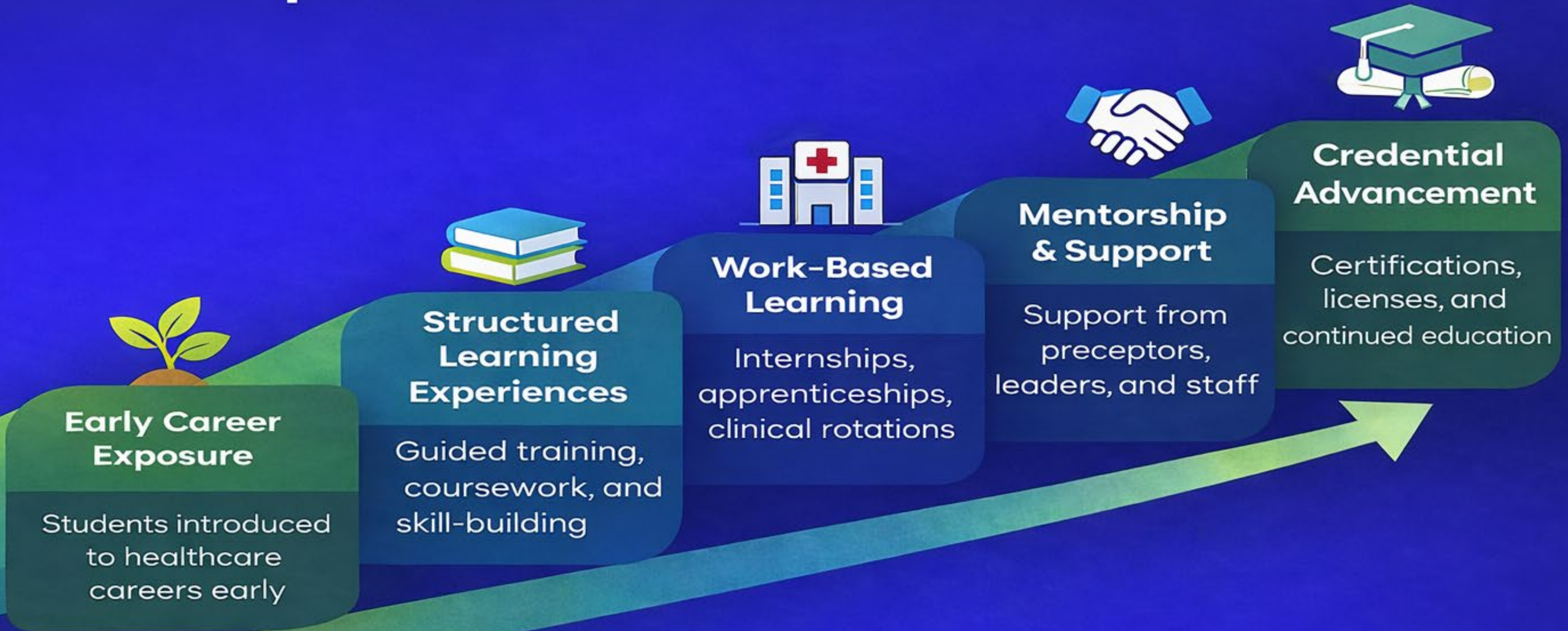
## Internal Career Mobility

- Opportunities to grow and advance within RCCHC

## Credential Advancement

- Certifications, licenses, and continued education

# Pipeline Model Includes

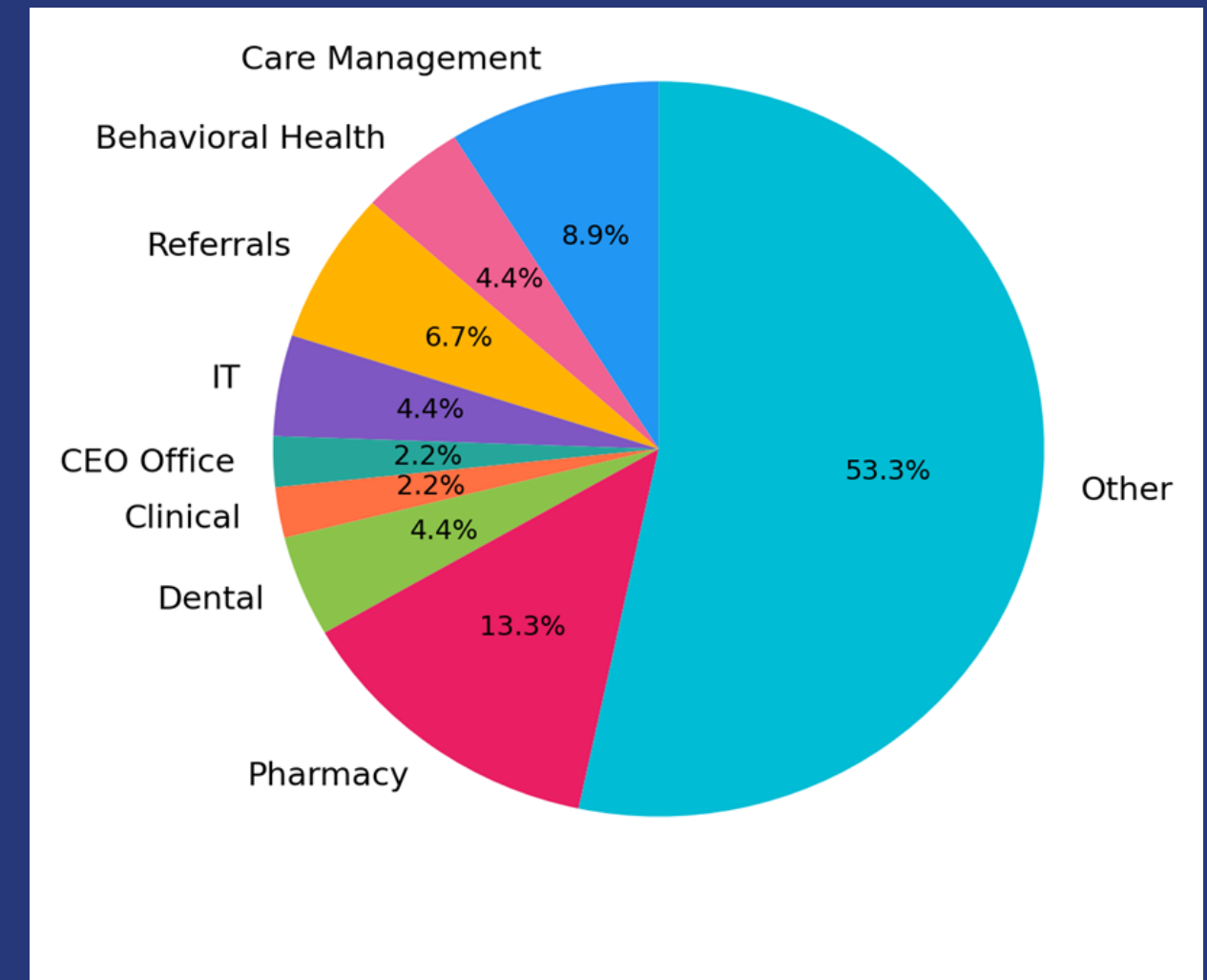


From Exposure → Employment → Career Advancement

# Building the Pipeline Early

Partnering across the education continuum to build future talent:

- High schools
- Community Colleges
- Universities
- Area Health Education Centers (AHEC)



# Strategic Partnerships in Action

## Community Colleges:

- Halifax Community College
- Martin Community College
- Pitt Community College
- Roanoke-Chowan Community College

## Universities:

- East Carolina University (ECU)
- Elizabeth City State University (ECSU)
- Chowan University

## Workforce Boards

- Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program
- Rivers East
- Turning Point

## Industry Partners

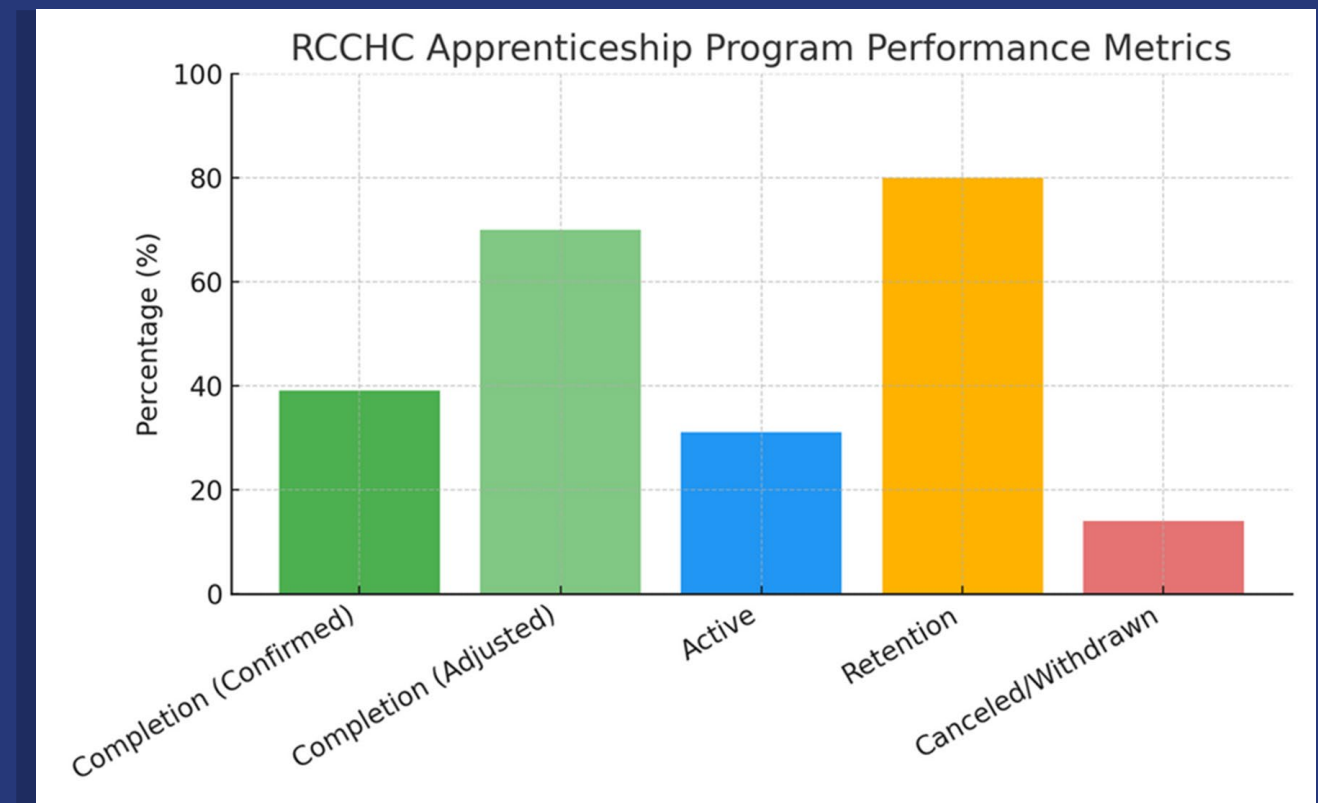
- National Health Careers Association (NHA)
- ApprenticeshipNC
- National Institution of Medical Assistant Association (NIMAA)



# Apprenticeship Overview

**A structured model that combines:**

- **Paid** on-the-job training
- **Structured** Classroom instruction aligned to competencies
- **Progressive** wage increases tied to skill development
- **Mentorship** and milestone-based evaluation



# Strengthening Internal Support Systems

Key Strategies include:

- Preceptor training and development
- Incentives and stipends
- Staff recognition initiatives
- Structured mentorship programs

👉 Strong preceptor support directly strengthens retention and workforce stability.



# This Is More Than Programs—It's Infrastructure

- Demonstrates organizational commitment
- Strengthens workforce engagement
- Fosters a supportive work environment
- Improves retention and workforce stability



# Workforce Well-Being in Action

Staff → Students → Apprentices → Leaders

- Internal growth over external hiring

Investment → Retention → Stability

- Workforce development = workforce strategy

# Impact Story: Akeiba's Journey

- Hired as Patient Navigator for Pharmacy
- Participated in the NIMAA program
- Certified Medical Assistant (Pediatrics)
- Supports student observation
- Will become Preceptor in Spring 2026



## Impact Story: Akeiba

- Started as a Patient Navigator – Pharmacy
- Participated in the NIMAA program
- Transitioned to a Certified Medical Assistant (Pediatrics)
- Expanding into preceptorship development



Developing not just staff — but future leaders within the workforce.





## Apprenticeship in Action: Latoya's Journey

- Entered as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) through Apprenticeship
- Gained hands-on experience through clinical skills
- Earned while learning through wage progression
- Advanced to Registered Medical Assistant (RMA) Journeyworker
- Now a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Journeyworker and Preceptor
- Enrolled to be a Registered Nurse (RN)



*This apprenticeship offers a distinct opportunity to earn while gaining hands-on experience, allowing me to build a solid foundation in the medical field. It enables me to develop crucial skills while working in a supportive and educational setting, ensuring both personal and professional growth.*



*My apprenticeship at RCCHC has been one of the best experiences anyone in my career field could ask for. I've had the privilege of working alongside amazing providers and clinical staff who were always willing to go out of their way to teach me valuable skills essential to patient care. If I had the chance to relive this experience, I would do it again in an instant*



*RCCHC has provided me with hands-on experience, skill development and valuable mentorship, boosting my confidence and job readiness. They helped me build a professional network, gain financial independence and develop a stronger work ethic. These experiences have shaped my career path, increased job satisfaction and given me a sense of achievement that continues to inspire me.*



**Brittany Vinson**  
Medical Assisting Apprentice

**NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK**

**April Vinson**  
Certified Medical Assistant Apprentice

**NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK**

**Radasia Sessoms**  
Certified Medical Assistant Apprentice

**NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK**



**RCCHC INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT**

**Have you acquired any new skills or knowledge during your time?**  
*I have developed valuable skills in multitasking, professional communication, and understanding organizational workflows.*

**Has this internship influenced your perspective on your chosen career path?**  
*This internship has confirmed my passion for leadership roles and reinforced my desire to pursue a career where I can help others.*

**In what ways have you grown professionally or personally through this internship?**  
*I have become more confident in my ability to lead and multitask. I have also learned the value of practice and adaptability.*

**How would you describe the work environment and culture at CU?**  
*The work environment has been supportive and collaborative, with a culture that encourages learning and growth.*



**Atar Idrissi**  
Adminstration Intern



**RCCHC INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT**



**Shakirra Lassiter**  
Communications Intern

**RCCHC is committed to building meaningful healthcare careers. Can you share something you've learned or a skill you've gained here that has helped shape or support your decision to pursue your future career in healthcare?**  
*During my time at RCCHC, I gained a lot of soft skills that I know will help me as I pursue a career in healthcare, especially communication, time management, and professionalism. As the marketing/communications intern, I saw how important it is to continuously grow a rural healthcare center to benefit its future patients and employees. I was also given the opportunity to shadow a resident and attain feedback from different doctors—it was a huge part of what made this experience so meaningful. It gave me a better idea of what I want for my future and helped me feel more confident in that path.*

**How has working in a rural healthcare setting at RCCHC changed the way you see teamwork or patient care that others may not realize?**  
*I noticed that in a smaller, rural healthcare setting, people take on a lot, and teamwork is really what keeps everything going. Everyone is willing to help each other out, and that kind of support system is what allows patient care to stay strong, even when things get busy. It made me appreciate how much behind-the-scenes work happens and how important collaboration is.*

**What role did mentorship or guidance play during your time at RCCHC, and how did it impact your experience?**  
*Mentorship was a big part of my experience. My supervisors checked in with me every day, and I always felt welcomed and supported. I could ask questions, get advice, and try new things without feeling nervous. That encouragement helped me grow professionally and made me feel like my time and work actually mattered.*

**Looking back, what's one goal you're proud to have reached during your internship—and how did you get there?**  
*I'm really proud that I got to help create the Intern Spotlight series and contribute to a handbook for future interns. It felt good knowing something I worked on would actually be used and help others. I got there by staying organized and open to feedback from my fellow interns' experience, but also because my supervisors encouraged me every step of the way—they made me feel confident in my ideas and capable of handling real responsibilities.*



**NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK**



# From Programs to a Workforce System

- Pipeline development (internships)
- Career pathways (registered apprenticeships)
- Strategic partnerships
- Preceptor development and support
- Workforce investment (education & training support)
- Internal alignment (Workforce Development Workgroup)



# Lessons Learned from Implementation

- Structure must be established early
- Tracking systems are essential for sustainability
- Consistent communication drives success
- Leadership alignment is non-negotiable



# Getting Started: Building Your Workforce System

- Create internship opportunities
- Build partnerships with local colleges
- Develop and support preceptors
- Implement registered apprenticeship programs
- Build clear career pathways

# TALENT PIPELINE

## Grow Your Own Workforce

A 5-STAGE PATHWAY FROM AWARENESS TO ADVANCEMENT



### EXAMPLE PATHWAYS IN HEALTHCARE



### WHY THIS PIPELINE WORKS

# WORKFORCE WELL-BEING FRAMEWORK

A Holistic Approach to Building, Supporting, and Sustaining a Thriving Rural Health Workforce



## GROWTH

- ✓ Career ladders & mobility pathways
- ✓ Professional development
- ✓ Credential & certification advancement



## STRUCTURE

- ✓ Clear expectations & role clarity
- ✓ Consistent onboarding & training
- ✓ Defined processes & support systems



## OPPORTUNITY

- ✓ Internships & paid pipeline programs
- ✓ Registered apprenticeships
- ✓ Tuition & certification support



## SUPPORT

- ✓ Safety & belonging
- ✓ Leadership investment & visibility
- ✓ Recognition, feedback & engagement

## OUR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Operationalizing Workforce Well-Being Through Action



### PIPELINES

(Build the Entry Points)

- ✓ High school internships
- ✓ College partnerships
- ✓ Community outreach
- ✓ Paid internship tracks



### APPRENTICESHIPS

(Build the Skills)

- ✓ Registered Apprenticeships
- ✓ Medical Assistant
- ✓ EHR / Health IT
- ✓ Cross-training pathways



### PARTNERSHIPS

(Expand the Reach)

- ✓ AHEC
- ✓ NAWDP
- ✓ Community Colleges
- ✓ Camber
- ✓ Local Education Partners



### WORKGROUPS

(Drive the Strategy)

- ✓ Workforce Learning
- ✓ Preceptor Development
- ✓ Credential Tracking
- ✓ Career Mobility Planning



### OUTCOMES

(Strengthen the Workforce)

- ✓ Increased retention
- ✓ Reduced burnout
- ✓ Stronger internal pipeline
- ✓ More qualified pipelines

## OUR NORTH STAR



- ✓ Build pathways
- ✓ Invest in people
- ✓ Create opportunity
- ✓ Strengthen rural healthcare from within

# Closing Thoughts

Workforce development is how we build a workforce that lasts.

When you invest in growth:

- Staff stay (Retention)
- Leaders emerge (Advancement)
- Communities thrive (Prosperity)

# Thank You

Happy to connect and share resources:

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Workforce Development Coordinator

Roanoke Chowan Community Health Center

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