



Atrium Health

New Hanover Regional Medical Center Request for Proposal

FOLLOW-UP INQUIRIES

MAY 1, 2020

NEW HANOVER REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER RFP

D. Atrium Health Follow-Up Inquiries

1. Please describe Atrium Health’s approach to receiving a reasonable reimbursement for telehealth and other digital health services. Please provide evidence of Atrium Health’s success and detail what support Atrium Health would offer NHRMC in this area.

Atrium Health delivers tremendous value to our patients through a wide array of clinical services, many of which are virtually delivered and connected across our network. We are the region’s leading provider of on-demand virtual primary care visits. Atrium Health pioneered the integration of virtual behavioral health into primary care practices and are now seeing over 600 emergency department telepsychiatry consults per month at Atrium Health and Atrium Health partner Emergency Rooms across our network. Today, our virtual critical care platform provides 24-hour monitoring, seven days a week, of more than 300 ICU beds across the Carolinas and Georgia – allowing our facilities to better manage more complex patients closer to home with enhanced clinical outcomes at a lower cost.

As detailed in **Section 1.9** of our Request for Proposal response, Atrium Health’s three-pronged approach to achieving a financially sustainable telehealth program includes **improving our internal revenue cycle processes, working collaboratively with payers and implementing a comprehensive advocacy strategy**. In 2018, Atrium Health established a telehealth revenue cycle workgroup to provide consistent oversight and expertise in telehealth billing. Results of this collective effort have been tremendous: Atrium Health has achieved 45% improvement in coding accuracy, 97% of telehealth charges are automatically coded, and 84% of all telehealth charges are fully automated. Atrium Health has also developed new and innovative partnerships with payers to achieve appropriate reimbursement for telehealth services. For example, we are partnering with BCBSNC to fund the expansion of our virtual school clinic program. Based on our demonstrated outcomes, BCBSNC agreed to fund significant expansion of our program for three years, increasing from three on-site clinics to 20 in that same time period. In addition to focusing on internal revenue cycle process improvement and partnering with payers, Atrium Health is lobbying for legislative changes to improve telehealth coverage, like partnering with the NCHA to advocate for parity and providing education and engaging our legislative members on the value of telehealth services.

Atrium Health has over two decades of experience in deploying telehealth services for our patients across our footprint. As a national leader in this channel of care delivery, Atrium Health has developed the muscle required to provide support and expertise to NHRMC in the following areas:

- Technology infrastructure and support
- Coding, billing, reimbursement expertise and support
- Clinical workflows and protocols
- Providers, clinicians
- Legislative leadership

Moreover, as we solidified our partnership with Navicent Health in late 2018, our teams formed a virtual health integration team, which meets on a weekly basis to work through each of the above components, specifically as they relate to both North Carolina and Georgia. We would envision NHRMC being an engaged participant on this team if Atrium Health is chosen as NHRMC’s strategic partner.

We believe that Atrium Health’s capabilities can be leveraged at scale to augment NHRMC’s telehealth program. By working together, Atrium Health and NHRMC can reduce provider shortages, provide better access to care, improve outcomes, enhance the patient experience and reduce costs for healthcare providers and consumers.

Lastly, in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, payers and regulators have released multiple waivers and exemptions to allow for expedited spread of telehealth services to keep patients and teammates safe. This has allowed Atrium Health to scale existing services and prove new models, which we believe should be available beyond COVID-19. In fact, Atrium Health was able to assist NHRMC in standing up its own virtual capabilities during the pandemic, ensuring that appropriate coding was used within the EPIC system at NHRMC to be able to accurately bill and receive payment for these services. We are sharing our experience and outcomes with payers and legislators to promote the ongoing approval and/or pathways for these technologies and services. Atrium Health believes our experience demonstrates the value and necessity of continuing to expand telehealth services and are committed to leading the way for our patients and partners.

2. Please detail how Atrium Health would support advancements in NHRMC technology to develop an omni-channel, retail-like consumer experience. Please provide specific technology and timelines for implementation that would be deployed at NHRMC.

Atrium Health believes that the best healthcare is delivered with compassion. We are uniquely positioned to take this on, with our organizational drive to innovate and evolve. Our strategy begins with understanding the consumer – their wants, needs and desires – and how they would like to research, select and receive care. Atrium Health is building a best-in-class ‘voice of the consumer’ platform that allows us to listen, engage and learn from our consumers. From this aggregated platform, we can pinpoint service enhancements and identify new product or service opportunities, all with the consumer in mind.

Additionally, we are continuing to evolve and improve our virtual front door so that it delivers a consumer-focused digital experience that effectively converts consumers into patients and maintains patient loyalty. Atrium Health approaches the virtual front door by creating differentiated, personalized experiences for high-value consumer segments, built on an integrated, scalable technology toolset, across all digital platforms. These include:

- **Provider and location search:** Consumers can find up-to-date information on our providers and facilities in the places that matter most to them, be it Google, Apple or our website.
- **Provider directory:** Consumers can search for providers based on the criteria of their choice, including location, specialty, available appointments, ratings, etc. The advanced logic and technology in these tools help drive optimal provider selection.
- **Virtual triage:** Consumers can enter their symptoms online and receive personalized care recommendations. We educate them about care options and then let them make the final choice.
- **In person and virtual care capabilities:** Consumers can choose to have in-person, e-mail, video or phone visits, allowing them to choose the care delivery channel that works best for them.
- **Simple and transparent scheduling:** Consumers can book an appointment online, through chat or over the phone – we make it an easy and consistent experience.

Atrium Health has a best-in-class marketing technology stack, specifically built to support an omni-channel, retail-like consumer experience. We have strategic partnerships with Sitecore for our website and CMS, Epic, Reputation.com for our voice of the consumer initiative; LivePerson for conversational commerce; and Salesforce for our CRM, e-mail and text marketing capabilities. This is all supported by a group of in-house and agency partners that are experts with each technology.

As part of our proposed partnership, Atrium Health will work with NHRMC leadership to develop a plan to scale these capabilities appropriately with NHRMC in Southeastern North Carolina and in a timeframe that both organizations believe makes sense for the local market.

3. The Atrium Health Proposal references care coordination and patient satisfaction programs that would benefit NHRMC including comprehensive care management, ED MVP / High-Utilizer Program, Behavioral Health Primary Care Integration and Telepsychiatry, Nurse Leader Rounding Program, Interactive Patient Care, Data Management and Reporting. Please clarify if Atrium Health commits to providing NHRMC access to all above programs, provide detail on any limitations that may be placed on the roll out of these programs at NHRMC based upon location, contractual expectations, capacity, or other factors, and specify the timeframe for implementation of these programs at NHRMC.

Atrium Health is committed to working with NHRMC to understand what care coordination and patient satisfaction programs are currently in place. Together, we will evaluate these programs and, through sharing best practices, identify areas in which we can enhance outcomes for both organizations. NHRMC will have full access to the programs mentioned and many more that are used throughout Atrium Health. We hope to learn which existing programs have worked well for NHRMC and understand if they can be adopted to improve patient care across the enterprise. Atrium Health understands that developing timeframes can differ because of several factors such as program type and resource availability. As a result, Atrium Health will work with NHRMC leadership to develop the most appropriate timeline when enhancing or implementing these programs.

As described throughout **Sections 2.2 and 2.3**, Atrium Health has extensive experience in establishing programs with our partners, designed to empower clinical leaders, while enhancing the personalized care we provide our patients.

- Since 2017, Atrium Health has seen a reduction of \$16.6 million in ED charges and a 40% reduction in ED use through the ED High Utilizer Program. We also extended this program to Navicent Health in 2019.
- Atrium Health worked with Navicent Health to extend the eSitter program into Navicent’s hospitals, which are expected to realize a first-year cost savings of \$62,000.

- In December of 2019, behavioral health integration teams were launched at two of Navicent Health's primary care centers and, since then, have acquired 99 referrals, 424 patient interventions and eight real-time video assessments.
- A playbook has recently been developed by leaders from both Atrium Health and Navicent Health to help guide the organizations strategic implementation of Patient Ping, a real-time service that alerts clinicians when a patient presents at various points along the care continuum.
- Teams from Atrium Health and Navicent Health are working to expand an Uber/Lyft pilot from Charlotte to Macon. The program, expected to launch in 2020, is designed to provide transportation to vulnerable patients who may need help getting home after post-discharge or to-and-from clinic visits.
- Atrium Health has worked with Navicent Health to establish the Multi-Visit Patient (Readmission) Program to create a more unified and seamless experience for patients. This program is slated to launch later in 2020.

As demonstrated by the rapid deployment of these and many other programs in the first year of our partnership with Navicent Health, Atrium Health is committed to collaborating and extending these programs and capabilities to our partner organizations.

4. Describe Atrium Health's philosophy and approach to debt collection. Specifically, clarify if Atrium Health's debt collection policy prohibits the use of liens on property and garnishment of wages. Provide any other limitations Atrium Health places on debt collection.

In 2018, Atrium Health was the largest provider of community benefit in North Carolina, with \$2.07 billion in total community benefit, which includes \$339 million we provided in financial assistance to uninsured patients.

As outlined in **Sections 3.1-3.4** of our Request for Proposal response, Atrium Health's philosophy and approach in respect to charity care and collection practices is always to put the patient first. Atrium Health has worked diligently in our billing and collection practices to ensure there is an acceptable financial path for every patient with an out-of-pocket expense. Multiple programs are available to assist patients with these expenses. All uninsured patients receive an automatic uninsured discount and are reviewed for coverage opportunities by an in-house eligibility team. When coverage cannot be found, this team processes charity for patients that qualify. In addition, many patient accounts are processed through an automated financial assistance scoring process. This often provides financial assistance to patients and requires no action by the patient – not even an application. A hardship settlement discount program is also available for the underinsured. Patients who have a balance after financial assistance or hardship discounts are extended flexible, interest-free, multiple-year payment plans. All patients qualify for payment plan offerings that include both interest-free and low-interest-bearing options. Atrium Health includes a summary of these programs on every patient billing statement.

In the event that a patient balance has gone unpaid or appropriate plans have not been made through one of the many options outlined above, Atrium Health will engage a third party to assist in debt collections only after four 30-day statement cycles (or at least 120 days) have passed. Atrium Health does this with very stringent guidelines and practices. First and foremost, Atrium Health does not participate in any patient wage garnishment programs. There are some very rare situations, less than 0.0025% of all patients accounts across Atrium Health¹, where Atrium Health has worked with a third party to place a lien on a property. This is also done with some very tight restrictions.

- Atrium Health has never executed a lien on a primary residence of an individual.
- Accounts qualifying for financial assistance discounts are not considered for this type of action.
- A lien is not pursued on property less than \$100,000 in asset value.
- Prior to any action, patients are made aware of Atrium Health's financial assistance programs and are given an opportunity to apply at least 30 days prior to any action.
- It is Atrium Health's practice to subordinate our lien position to allow patients to refinance any property.

Atrium Health's strong commitment to our mission: to improve health, elevate hope and advance healing – for all, has endured throughout our 80-year history and is reflected in our approach to debt collections. As we look to partner with NHRMC, we commit to sustain or enhance NHRMC's proud history of charity care at or above the standard currently in place.

¹ Approximately 300 out of 13 million total patient accounts across Atrium Health end up with a collection action resulting in a lien in a given year, or right at 0.0023%.

5. Please provide examples of Atrium Health's Health Equity programs and demonstrated success in areas served by Atrium Health outside of the Charlotte, North Carolina area.

Diversity, inclusion and equity are central to Atrium Health's organizational culture and business practices. Every day, Atrium Health strives to be a leader in eliminating health disparities, ensuring equal quality and access to care for patients, and proactively addressing needs at the community level. Our long-standing commitment to achieving health equity has not only received numerous national awards and recognition but, most importantly, has also shaped Atrium Health into the organization it is today.

Atrium Health's Health Equity Strategy supports our 'for all' mission. Our strategy is a scalable organizational architecture that normalizes and operationalizes health equity across the enterprise and is designed to accomplish four goals:

- **Goal 1: Develop Health Equity Governance and Accountability Framework**
 - Launch health equity council to identify and monitor goals
 - Establish a health disparities action framework to support clinical leaders
 - Ensure necessary staff support, resources and operational infrastructure to accelerate health equity progress
- **Goal 2: Enhance Analytics Infrastructure and Data Integrity**
 - Partner to innovate care design and predictive analytics
 - Grow analytics platform to include service line or care division-specific metrics
 - Use push and pull reporting and dashboards to drive action
- **Goal 3: Ensure an Inclusive, Equitable Healthcare Environment**
 - Grow reach of cultural competence education strategy
 - Ensure language access for patients across the enterprise
 - Address needs of at-risk patient populations
- **Goal 4: Cultivate Healthy Communities FOR ALL**
 - Align and support community health, community impact, population health and health equity goals via:
 - New community investment strategy
 - Enhanced community partnerships
 - Healthy workforce environment strategy
 - Healthy teammate strategy
 - Bend supplier diversity strategy toward areas of economic need in each market
 - Create advocacy infrastructure for actionable change impacting social determinants of health

This framework acts as the guiding philosophy through which diversity and health equity initiatives are developed and implemented throughout the Atrium Health enterprise. Atrium Health's comprehensive approach to achieving health equity can be leveraged and scaled to build upon the efforts already underway at NHRMC.

Atrium Health's Scalable Health Equity Programs

Atrium Health is dedicated to serving the community beyond the care we provide within our hospital walls, and our commitment to health equity does not start nor stop in Charlotte, North Carolina. In every market which Atrium Health is privileged to serve, we support and develop programs that promote health and wellness in our communities and provide access to services that would otherwise be unavailable. Atrium Health strives to meet the evolving needs of every community we serve through robust community health and education programs and partnerships that are aligned with our mission and system priorities.

Below are just a few examples of Atrium Health's Equity programs and demonstrated success outside the Charlotte Mecklenburg area. These scalable programs and many more will be available to NHRMC as part of the proposed strategic partnership.

School-based Virtual Clinic

In Shelby, North Carolina, Atrium Health formed a partnership between pediatricians from Levine Children's Shelby Children's Clinic, Cleveland County Public Health Center and Cleveland County Schools that embeds a virtual clinic at a local Title 1 elementary school. This clinic connects our physicians with an onsite school nurse to provide quality medical care when and where it is needed most. This nationally recognized virtual care program is an innovative, sustainable approach to child health that has helped drive significant results including:

- Over 50% reduction in illness-related early school dismissals,
- Over 70% of students seen in the program avoided an emergency department admission after the virtual visit, and
- More than 20% of children evaluated in the virtual clinic had no medical home and were invited to establish care at Levine Children's Shelby Children's Clinic.

Since launching, Atrium Health's school-based virtual clinic has expanded throughout Cleveland County and into Lincoln County, following nearly \$1 million in grant funding from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina and Kohl's.

Mental Health

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a groundbreaking public education program that helps participants identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders.

- Over 17,000 people trained as MHFA providers by Atrium Health instructors and more than 850 classes provided across 10 counties in North Carolina including: Wilmington, Greensboro and Morganton.
- 12 months after being trained, survey results indicate:
 - 93% felt more knowledgeable about signs, symptoms and stigmas in mental health
 - 97% felt moderately to well-prepared to help someone experiencing a mental health challenge

Obesity

Healthy Together Childhood Obesity Prevention is an evidence-based childhood obesity prevention program that offers simple solutions for eating healthier, increasing physical activity, and reducing both screen time and consumption of sugary beverages. Currently, this Atrium Health program is in 45 schools, 36 pediatric practices and several childcare centers across Anson, Cabarrus, Stanly and York counties.

- Provided nutrition and physical activity educational materials for 88,000 child visits
- Increased distribution of educational information in those counties from below 1% to over 65% in just over two years
- Achieved policy and environmental changes through advocacy for 26 schools and over 10,000 students (e.g. All Anson County elementary schools achieved the highest recognition, Level Gold, as part of the Healthy Together Schools program in the 2018-2019 academic school year).

Community Paramedicine

Community Paramedicine is an at-home clinical service that reduces re-admissions and lowers costs to both patients and the healthcare system. Community paramedicine allows paramedics to function outside their traditional emergency response and transport roles to help facilitate more appropriate use of emergency care resources, while enhancing access to primary care for medically underserved populations. Atrium Health Community Paramedics follow physician-approved protocols, which has resulted in improved access to care, decreased delays in care, decreased inappropriate ED utilization and hospital admissions or readmissions, and improved patient engagement and satisfaction.

Med Assist of NC

This partnership provides free over-the-counter medications to low-income families across eight counties in North Carolina. Together, we have been able to positively impact health outcomes by supporting families needing pharmaceutical assistance. Each family receives approximately \$80 worth of over-the-counter medications during distribution. A total of 31,600 medications have been provided to nearly 4,000 community members in eight counties (Anson, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Stanly, Union).

Community Health Mobile Medicine

Atrium Health's mobile health units visit sites across the region to bring free health tests and screenings, including blood pressure and blood sugar checks, to the community. For example, our Anson mobile health unit has served 1,200 patients across Anson, Union and Chesterfield counties.

Faith Community Health Ministry

The Faith Community Health Ministry is a collaboration between Atrium Health and faith communities throughout the region that promotes health and wellness of individuals, congregations and communities. Through this partnership, Atrium Health has served over 41,000 members across eight counties in North Carolina.

Mobile Food Pantries

Atrium Health has partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank to designate a mobile food pantry at local Title 1 schools across 11 North Carolina counties. Each mobile food pantry is equipped with quality, fresh items to provide families with healthy food including meats, produce, non-perishable items and dairy products. To date, over 2,000 families have been served through our mobile food pantries.

COVID-19 Screening and Testing

During these unprecedented times, we are proud to lead the way in addressing and removing any barriers to easily access screening and testing for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), which may exist for members of underserved and minority communities.

Based on internal analytics, we noticed gaps in testing for communities of color, and Atrium Health quickly launched an aggressive set of efforts to intervene. Atrium Health set a broad array of logistical efforts into motion, including forming a site selection team, a logistics team, a staff redeployment team and a communications team – all to efficiently launch roving mobile testing sites with no referral or appointment needed.

At the mobile units, Atrium Health healthcare professionals screen for COVID-19 and immediately conduct a test when symptoms meet the testing criteria. Atrium Health also assesses other social determinants of health, including the ability to socially isolate and quarantine, and our teammates then connect patients to resources that address social needs. These expanded mobile testing sites have nearly closed the gaps in testing for African American patients. And additional workgroups have been convened to identify upstream interventions for those in danger of severe complications or mortality from COVID-19.

Atrium Health remains committed to continuing to find innovative ways to address the specific needs of each community we serve. As part of the proposed strategic partnership with NHRMC, Atrium Health would work with leaders from NHRMC to determine the most effective engagement and outreach activities to support the community. Together, we will develop a comprehensive health equity strategy that will lead the coastal Southeast to improved health and wellness.

6. **NHRMC and the community greatly value NHRMC's existing medical education footprint. Please provide extensive detail on how medical education will be maintained and improved should NHRMC pursue the proposed strategic partnership. Specifically, address Atrium Health's ability to serve as or secure an academic partner to continue the program if needed in the near term.**

Atrium Health – A Proud History as a Learning Organization

Medical education has long been a meaningful part of the history of Charlotte, North Carolina. The city's first medical school, the Davidson Medical School, opened their doors to the community more than a century ago in 1887. And as the city's medical services and education have flourished through the generations, Atrium Health has proudly shared **more than 75 years** of this highly regarded legacy.

In the 1940's, Charlotte Memorial Hospital was founded as a training institution, with the city's first residency program and the School of Nursing established shortly after opening its doors – welcoming students to become a proud part of our city's earliest generation of clinicians. Two decades later, our clinical teams at Atrium Health advanced this legacy further, when we first began training medical students with the University of North Carolina (UNC) School of Medicine in the 1960's. And, since 2010, we have served as a formal branch of the UNC School of Medicine, with **60 third- and fourth-year medical students** on campus. Atrium Health now offers **52 distinct residency and fellowship programs**, which have grown to include **490 residents and fellows across three campuses**: Carolinas Medical Center (CMC), Atrium Health Cabarrus and Navicent Health in Macon, Georgia. The programs are decorated with many distinctions, including Atrium Health's Graduate Medical Education (GME) program at CMC being recently recognized as **one of nine programs across the entire country selected to participate in ACGME's Pursuing Excellence in Patient Safety program**.

Atrium Health's rich history of training the region's future generations of clinicians has also extended across many disciplines. Last year, in 2019, our two regional, fully accredited colleges, Carolinas College of Health Sciences and Cabarrus College of Health Sciences, enrolled **more than 1,370 students** in specialized programs, including Nursing, Nurse Anesthesia, Radiologic Sciences, Medical Assistant and Occupational Therapy. And by the end of the academic year, **393 students** proudly became graduates of our colleges, making Atrium Health **one of the top producing Nursing and Allied Health education entities in the state of North Carolina**.

Atrium Health is also credited with establishing the Center for Advanced Practice (CAP), **the nation's first multidisciplinary Advanced Practice Providers (APP) fellowship program**. Launched in 2013, with five specialties, CAP remains **the largest APP fellowship program in the country with 16 unique tracks, which train more than 40 physician assistant (PA) and nurse practitioner (NP) fellows annually**. Not only is this program earning prestige in

our field, it is also helping address some of healthcare's most pressing needs today, including the growing national shortage of physicians, the rising cost of care, and the lack of onboarding education for newly hired APPs.

And as we look to the future of care, our vision for preparing the next generation of clinicians is firmly rooted in the importance of having a robust clinical enterprise at the heart of advancing the academic mission. At Atrium Health, we have always held the conviction that medical education should be at the very foundation of our strategy and commitment to be a *learning health system* – a belief which is as strong today as it was during our most formative years.

Atrium Health, Wake Forest Baptist Health and Wake Forest School of Medicine – *Creating the Next Generation Academic Health System*

Atrium Health's commitment to medical education as a community focused, highly integrated academic health system is not only unrivaled regionally, it also stands among leading organizations in the country. We attribute this incredible success to our foundational belief that advancing education, research and innovation are paramount when it comes to elevating the way we serve our communities. And this notion continues to shape our vision for the future.

In 2019, Atrium Health announced a strategic combination with Wake Forest Baptist Health and Wake Forest University to create a transformative, next-generation academic healthcare system, which will enable us to invest in the health and well-being of people throughout the region, as well as contribute ground-breaking research and innovation to the world.

Wake Forest Baptist Health is a nationally ranked academic medical center and regional healthcare system with **2.2 million patient interactions each year across seven hospitals and more than 400 care locations**. And their Wake Forest School of Medicine (WFSM) is among the most prestigious medical schools in the United States, which are preparing the next generation of health care leaders through education, research and innovation. As **one of the most selective medical training programs in the nation**, the Wake Forest School of Medicine receives **more than 10,700 applicants annually** for their **145 Doctor of Medicine positions** and maintains leading programs for physician assistants and certified registered nurse anesthetists, as well as their Doctor of Nursing Practice program. Their clinical leadership also brings differentiating translational research in Aging and Alzheimer's Disease, Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes and Obesity, Neurosciences and Regenerative Medicine.

Together, with **over 1,650 full-time and part-time faculty**, our combined organizations will educate nearly **3,200 total learners across more than 100 specialized programs every year**. In addition, we will also have the capacity to offer the largest post-graduate fellowship program for nurse practitioners and physician assistants in the nation, as well as the critical experience for medical education, within an integrated academic healthcare system – making this combined expertise in medical educational and research regionally preeminent.

Atrium Health, Wake Forest Baptist Health and Wake Forest University have the opportunity to create a world-class healthcare system, united around a single vision of improving health and making care both more accessible and affordable in the communities we serve. Combined, we will also continue building upon the excellence of Wake Forest School of Medicine and develop a second state-of-the-art campus in Charlotte. With a shared vision to further transform medical education, expand patient-centered research and innovation currently in place in Winston-Salem, and empower the next generation of clinical excellence, we are embracing the opportunity to revolutionize how people become and stay healthy, ultimately enriching countless lives and communities throughout North Carolina, the Southeast and the nation.

Medical Education – *Atrium Health's Commitment to NHRMC and Community*

As two healthcare organizations that have far outgrown our humble beginnings as community hospitals, Atrium Health and New Hanover Regional Medical Center are connected by a similar vision of the future of medical education, and we hold NHRMC in the highest regard.

Atrium Health is committed to helping NHRMC continue to develop and expand upon your already acclaimed academic programs, offering students the best our field has to offer in medical education. Our legacy of building and operating a prestigious regional medical school, as well as nationally recognized, community-focused residency and fellowship programs, would offer NHRMC a partnership that is ripe for success. And as an integrated academic healthcare system, we are dedicated to working with you to train the allied nursing and allied health workforce in a way that is unrivaled.

Our Approach and Plan for Undergraduate Medical Education

Per our previous response to this Request for Proposal, Atrium Health is committed to continuing NHRMC's educational affiliation with the UNC School of Medicine, on an exclusive basis, for a period of five years and for a minimum period of 10 years. After the initial five-year period, Atrium Health, along with our academic partner, WFSM, would look to grow a regional campus at NHRMC that would be designed specifically to serve the needs of the community and health delivery system in Southeastern North Carolina.

However, should NHRMC or the UNC School of Medicine wish to end their relationship, Atrium Health is well-positioned alongside WFSM to facilitate a seamless transition in establishing a regional campus of the WFSM in Wilmington. This campus would offer NHRMC the ability to maintain its undergraduate medical education infrastructure, along with flexibility to continue programs important to the community and the health system (e.g., pipeline programs, accelerated pathways programs, etc.). We have extensive experience in the development of pipeline programs here in the Charlotte region and would bring this knowledge to our partnership with NHRMC.

Our Approach and Commitment to Graduate Medical Education

Atrium Health is also well-positioned to help meet the needs of your community by helping NHRMC build upon your innovative graduate medical education programs. Through the years, we have grown and thrived as an academic medical center that sponsors competitive, vital and growing residencies and fellowships. And, today, we fill virtually **100 percent** of our residency slots. We also understand, firsthand, the unique struggles and benefits of GME programs that are not based in a traditional four-year medical school campus, and we have successfully built that understanding into our own GME programs. Add to this, the fact that we also have strong experience in developing community programs at three different sponsoring institutions: Carolinas Medical Center (CMC), Atrium Cabarrus, and Navicent Health (in Macon, Georgia), which we would be delighted to afford NHRMC.

Over the past five years, Atrium Health has established new core residency programs in psychiatry and urology, and new fellowship programs in geriatric medicine, female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery, hematology and medical oncology, and brain injury medicine at CMC – **all achieving ACGME accreditation on the first attempt and consistently admirable match results for their fields.** Atrium Health would be thrilled to collaborate with NHRMC, should you choose to expand your academic offerings by establishing a new residency or fellowship program in psychiatry, geriatrics, pediatrics or related specialties.

Our GME program and institutional leaders have long enjoyed collegial relationships with other programs and institutions across North Carolina and the Southeastern United States. And, within our health system specifically, we strongly encourage cross-functional collaboration, sharing of curriculum ideas and enhancements, as well as shared rotations. We would look forward to building upon these types of relationships with you as we grow toward our shared vision for the future of graduate medical education.

Our Approach and Commitment to Growing Advanced Practice Providers in the Region

Atrium Health and the Wake Forest School of Medicine are also committed to redefining and expanding educational offerings for future advanced practice providers in the region. Atrium Health currently offers the CRNA and Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP) programs, and WFSM currently offers a Doctor of Nursing Practice program, a CRNA program, as well as a dual-campus Physician Assistant Program.

Atrium's Center for Advanced Practice (CAP) is also the home of the nation's largest postgraduate training program for NPs and PAs, offering more than 16 different training tracks to students.

Together, CAP and the WFSM can help expand and formalize APP training and fellowships to meet the clinical needs of NHRMC and its affiliates through innovative distance learning and by working closely with local educators.

Training Nursing and Allied Health Professionals to meet the needs of NHRMC

Atrium Health is also poised to help NHRMC grow the nursing and allied health training opportunities offered in the region, through our proposed strategic partnership. Right now, Atrium Health is in the midst of expanding both Carolinas College of Health Sciences (Charlotte) and Cabarrus College of Health Sciences (Concord) — which currently graduate **more than 1,200 students together each year**, including A.D., B.S.N. and, recently, master's prepared nurses.

Both institutions are fully accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and licensed to offer degrees. Among the programs offered are General Studies, Nursing, Masters and Doctorate in Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesia, Medical Laboratory Science, Histology, Blood Banking, Radiologic Sciences (Radiation Therapy, Radiation Technology, CT Imaging, MRI Imaging), Neurodiagnostic Technology, Medical Assistant, Surgical Technology, Occupational Therapy, Occupational Therapy Assistant and other non-degree programs. Each program is also equipped with distance-learning capabilities and curriculum to meet the technological needs of an evolving student body population. We are well-positioned to augment training needs, should any opportunities exist beyond what is available with local colleges and universities. And we are committed to working with NHRMC to build upon the strong relationships with great local colleges and university training programs in place today in the region.

Research and Innovation – A Critical Component of Medical Education

As an organization that has long valued a strong culture of learning and growth, research and innovation have always been at the root of how we work to enhance the health and well-being of our communities. Atrium Health currently has **more than 1,000 active studies** underway across **more than 50 sites of care**, as well as an active research portfolio that has grown **nearly 40 percent over the previous two years.**

In partnership with NHRMC's Innovation Center, and when combined with WFSM, our innovative organizations would have the remarkable ability to fuel new scientific discoveries through the advancement of large-scale research within the very settings where we currently serve our communities. As part of our strategic partnership with NHRMC, Atrium Health is committed to:

- **Advancing the value of care and engaging staff:** Focusing on efficiency and innovation, we will partner with NHRMC by sharing our approach to engaging employees and implementing ideas that optimize productivity and cost savings.
- **Financial Security:** We will also engage NHRMC services lines in business model innovation by dedicating resources and sharing tools and insights for success.
- **Partnering with Providers:** In addition, we will partner with NHRMC and the physician community, sharing our approach to helping physicians with any possible ideas that may lead to intellectual property.
- **Partnering with Communities:** And we will partner with the broader civic and business community to help drive innovation in care models, while serving as a catalyst for economic growth and development in the region.

Our strategic combination with the WFSM offers NHRMC an unparalleled opportunity to help shape the future of research and innovation in North Carolina – both in the future and today. Right now, we are conducting interviews with prominent clinicians and researchers, as well as key stakeholders in entrepreneurship and business, as part of a long-term, strategic plan to build an innovation district here in the state. We would be honored to have leaders from NHRMC and the Wilmington region at the table with us to ensure that the investments made in medical education reflect the communities we serve. By working together, we will be even better positioned to not only integrate research and education into our care sites, but to also pour insights gained from those sites back into our education programs – ensuring that our efforts create ripple effects for generations to come.

Atrium Health – Providing NHRMC with the BEST solution for Medical Education

For more than 75 years, medical education has been a meaningful part of the history Atrium Health and who we are as a learning organization. And as we look to the future of healthcare, Atrium Health is uniquely positioned to help NHRMC grow and advance medical education, research and innovation opportunities for our communities, our state and our region.

As a partner, Atrium Health can offer NHRMC:

- As an integrated academic health system, Atrium Health brings a like-minded approach to medical education that is centered around serving the needs of our communities.
- Atrium Health, along with our partners Wake Forest Baptist Health and Wake Forest University, bring the community focus and academic depth together in creating the Next Generation Academic Health System, focused on elevating clinical care through academic education and research.
- Atrium Health brings strong experience in building and operating a highly regarded, regional medical school campuses, along with a rich understanding of the community needs in Wilmington.
- Atrium Health’s experience in developing and growing nationally recognized GME programs across multiple community-based campuses is both preeminent and unrivaled.
- The combined educational offerings from Atrium Health and WFSM, with **over 1,650 faculty and over 3,200 learners** across a wide array of advanced practice provider, nursing, allied health specialty areas, is scalable to meet the needs of NHRMC and Southeastern North Carolina.
- Together with the WFSM, our focus on integrating research, innovation and education will serve to elevate care across our communities, including Wilmington.

We firmly believe that Atrium Health is the clear choice for New Hanover Regional Medical Center. Not only would our unique set of broad organizational capabilities and experience be invaluable to NHRMC, our organizations are similarly driven by a bold, transformative agenda that, when combined, will far exceed the vision of what medical education could become for our communities.

7. NHRMC has a strong brand and reputation in the community. Please discuss Atrium Health’s proposed approach for the NHRMC brand. Additionally, please provide information on any marketing and brand support that will be made available to NHRMC as a result of the proposed partnership.

Atrium Health understands how the resonating power of a strong brand will drive consumer awareness, consideration, selection and advocacy. Premier brands can deliver growth more efficiently and consistently, year over year. A strong brand also can attract and retain talent, increasing the strength of the organization as employees deliver on the brand promise.

Atrium Health has the highest level of brand awareness and preference among consumers in our core Charlotte market, with the highest number of positive perceptions outpacing our competition by as much as 13 points. These attributes directly drive consumers' stated intent to come to us for care and strongly correlate with patient selection. We believe that every single touchpoint impacts our brand, which is why we continue to make investments in marketing, advertising, communications and consumer experiences that will have the greatest impact and reap the greatest return.

NHRMC has already developed a very strong brand connection with the local community and Southeastern North Carolina, and we would be honored to help amplify this position across the region. Atrium Health would support the NHRMC local brand in several ways. First, Atrium Health is a recognized leader in preferred medical care and a provider of top-tier medical services. The combination of the local NHRMC brand connection backed by the additional strength, resources and clinical expertise of the Atrium Health brand would be a powerful combination. Second, Atrium Health has a deep expertise in consumer understanding and analytics, which allows us to understand current brand performance and consumer appeal, while also pinpointing opportunities for strategic investment and efficient marketing spend. Third, Atrium Health's enterprise marketing, communications and consumer insights team is adept at taking consumer insights to develop and implement strategic marketing communications plans that focus on key, high-value audiences to drive patient conversion. As part of our proposed strategic partnership, these resources and work can be deployed quickly and at scale, helping NHRMC amplify their voice and increase brand recognition and equity.