All health science schools depend on community preceptors to help train their students, but community health educators are increasingly becoming a scarce resource.

THE PROBLEM
As health care moves rapidly from hospitals to community settings, clinical education in community practices is increasingly important. However, over the last five years, new health science schools and increased enrollments have led to an approximate 40 percent increase in the demand for preceptors across the state, creating a statewide crisis in the availability of community preceptors—practicing clinicians in primary care and related disciplines who teach in community settings away from academic centers.

NC AHEC PRECEPTING LOCATIONS
Each dot represents a location where one or more student rotations occurred (urban areas could have dozens of sites and hundreds of rotations), illustrating how far-reaching community-based education extends across North Carolina. In 2016-17, NC AHEC facilitated 4,118 months of student rotations at 1,429 different community precepting sites across the state.

A PRECEPTING WORK GROUP
To address the statewide crisis in precepting, the UNC Board of Governors convened a work group of educational leadership from a wide variety of institutions and professions to give recommendations for solutions.

Led by NC AHEC, the work group met with educational leaders across all disciplines, surveyed all 29 of North Carolina’s health professions schools with a 100% response rate, and explored what other states are doing.

The group’s plan, approved by the UNC Board of Governors, recommends bold action to improve the quality of community-based health professions education. Visit ncahec.net/news/the-preceptor-crisis for more information.

NOW, WE’RE ASKING FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN IMPLEMENTING THREE COURSES OF ACTION:

1) PILOT A TAX CREDIT
Implement a three-year pilot that would offer a tax credit to community-based clinicians who do not receive personal payments for precepting from any other source and who precept medical, nurse practitioner, nurse midwifery, and physician assistant students in primary care rotations from any NC higher education institution.

2) HEALTH EDUCATION PASSPORT
Students are required to repeat trainings and paperwork for each rotation, a time-consuming process for all involved. A common “passport” will streamline the onboarding process by allowing student education at any community practice or hospital anywhere in the state.

3) SUPPORT INNOVATION
NC AHEC will initiate regional and statewide projects to foster innovation in teaching and improve the quality of teaching experiences, such as: establishing a statewide community preceptor faculty development program, launching a statewide academy of community educators, and identifying and certifying exemplar teaching practices.

CONTACT US at 919-966-2461 or ncahec@med.unc.edu or contact the director of your regional AHEC at ncahec.net.