WHO WE ARE:

OUR VISION is to serve as a dynamic physician/physician assistant community dedicated to a healthy, vibrant western North Carolina (WNC).

OUR VALUES are integrity, inclusion, and innovation.

OUR PARTNERS include Independent Physicians, Employed Physicians, Physician Assistants, Community Leaders, Sponsors/Businesses, Donors/Funders, Health System Leaders, Practice Managers, Patients, and Western Carolina Medical Society (WCMS) employees

OUR ORGANIZATION includes:

- **WCMS Association (WCMSA):**
  - WCMSA is the physician and physician assistant’s voice advocating to increase access to quality healthcare, fight health inequities, and promote wellness in WNC patients, providers, and WCMS employees.

- **WCMS Foundation (WCMSF):**
  - WCMSF is the charitable arm of the medical society advocating to increase access to quality healthcare, fight health inequities, and promote wellness in WNC patients, providers, and WCMS employees.

WHAT WE DO:

- The WCMSA’s mission is to advocate for the health of WNC patients, providers, and communities.

- The WCMSF’s mission is to increase access to healthcare, fight health inequities, and promote wellness in WNC.
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**Strategies and Goals:**

❖ **Strategy 1: Increase access to affordable quality healthcare**

➢ **Goal 1. Improve access to care for medically vulnerable populations in WNC through Project Access® (PA)**
   - Engage PA patients and providers with WCMS and make them aware of our services
   - Advance the Dr. Suzanne Landis PA Fund
   - Carry out grant/contract program requirements in collaboration with funders and community partners
   - Screen, navigate and find resources for PA patients in areas that address social determinants of health, such as employment, transportation, food security, interpersonal safety and housing
   - Expand specialty services available to Project Access patients
   - Train Health Access Navigators as Community Health Workers

➢ **Goal 2: Advocate on behalf of uninsured patients who are experiencing barriers to care due to unanticipated healthcare bills**

➢ **Goal 3: Utilize Certified Application Counselors to provide ‘in-reach’ counseling to current PA patients to determine their eligibility for the Health Insurance Marketplace (HIM)**

➢ **Goal 4: Conduct outreach and raise awareness about WCMSF programming available to the general public, providers, and community based organizations**

❖ **Strategy 2: Fight health inequities**

➢ **Goal 1. Reduce health inequities among limited English proficient and Deaf populations in WNC via WCMS Interpreter Network (WIN) Program**
   - Engage and educate the community regarding the importance of in-person interpretation by qualified interpreters
   - Expand presence in rural counties
   - Continue strengthening ASL interpreter services by incorporating suggestions from the Deaf Community
   - Explore new business opportunities for interpreter/translation business outside of traditional health care services that address social determinants of health
   - Partner with Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) to offer high quality interpreter training opportunities
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➢ Goal 3: Advance WCMSF’s Dr. Charles Blair Health Scholar and Endowment Funds

➢ Goal 4: Support efforts to address public health crises as they arise and work to prevent them (ex: Opioid epidemic, nicotine vaping/tobacco use, the impact of climate change on health, racism as a public health crisis, Covid-19 pandemic)
  ■ Advocate for effective policies/regulations locally and in Raleigh
  ■ Support and connect local/regional efforts
  ■ Promote educational resources
  ■ Engage providers

❖ Strategy 3: Promote wellness in WCMS employees, WNC providers, and patients

➢ Goal 1: Promote well-being by providing physician/provider support systems
  ■ Engage WCMS members and make them aware of their benefits
  ■ Continue evolving the WCMS’ Healthy Healer Program
  ■ Offer Affinity Groups, as appropriate, for membership and further their development
  ■ Organize community volunteer projects
  ■ Serve as a clearing-house for important health care trends to enhance the practice of medicine in WNC
    ● Publish weekly Vital Signs and monthly Community Pulse
    ● Conduct and share innovative practice interviews
    ● Share Electronic Health Records innovations that enhance the patient experience

➢ Goal 2: Promote wellness and work-life balance for WCMS employees through our Wellness Program, policies, benefits (as resources allow)
  ■ Encourage employees to participate in wellness initiatives including weekly meditations, on site exercise, daily walks, and monthly wellness challenges
  ■ Promote a workplace culture that supports WCMS employees leading by example in prioritizing their personal health

➢ Goal 3: Promote patient wellness by continuing to develop the WNC Colorectal Cancer Screening Initiative in collaboration with key partnerships
Strategy 4: Engage physicians/providers across the region in federal, state and local advocacy to improve the health of patients and providers of WNC

➢ Legislative/policy Priorities:
  ■ Patient and provider protections in new Medicaid Reform law
  ■ Medicaid expansion/affordable health care access for all
  ■ Mental Health Access
  ■ Keeping legislation out of the exam room
  ■ Public Health Crises (e.g., Opioid/substance abuse, Vaping, Climate change and its impact on health, racism as a public health crisis)
  ■ Health disparities in communities of Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color

➢ Goal 1: Continue in-person visits to State and Federal legislators with local physicians and providers, both in WNC between sessions and in Raleigh during sessions (e.g., White Coat Wednesdays)

➢ Goal 2. Conduct in-person visits/communications to organizational leaders that impact health care delivery in the region