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Access to Medications as a Political and Social Determinant of Health

Prepared for NC MedAssist

EY Center for Health Equity

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What is Health Equity?

Principle of health equity

Health equity is the principle underlying a commitment to reduce – and, ultimately, eliminate – disparities in health and in its determinants, including social determinants.¹

Pursuing health equity means striving for the highest possible standard of health for all people and giving special attention to the needs of those at greatest risk of poor health, based on social conditions.¹



How health equity is achieved

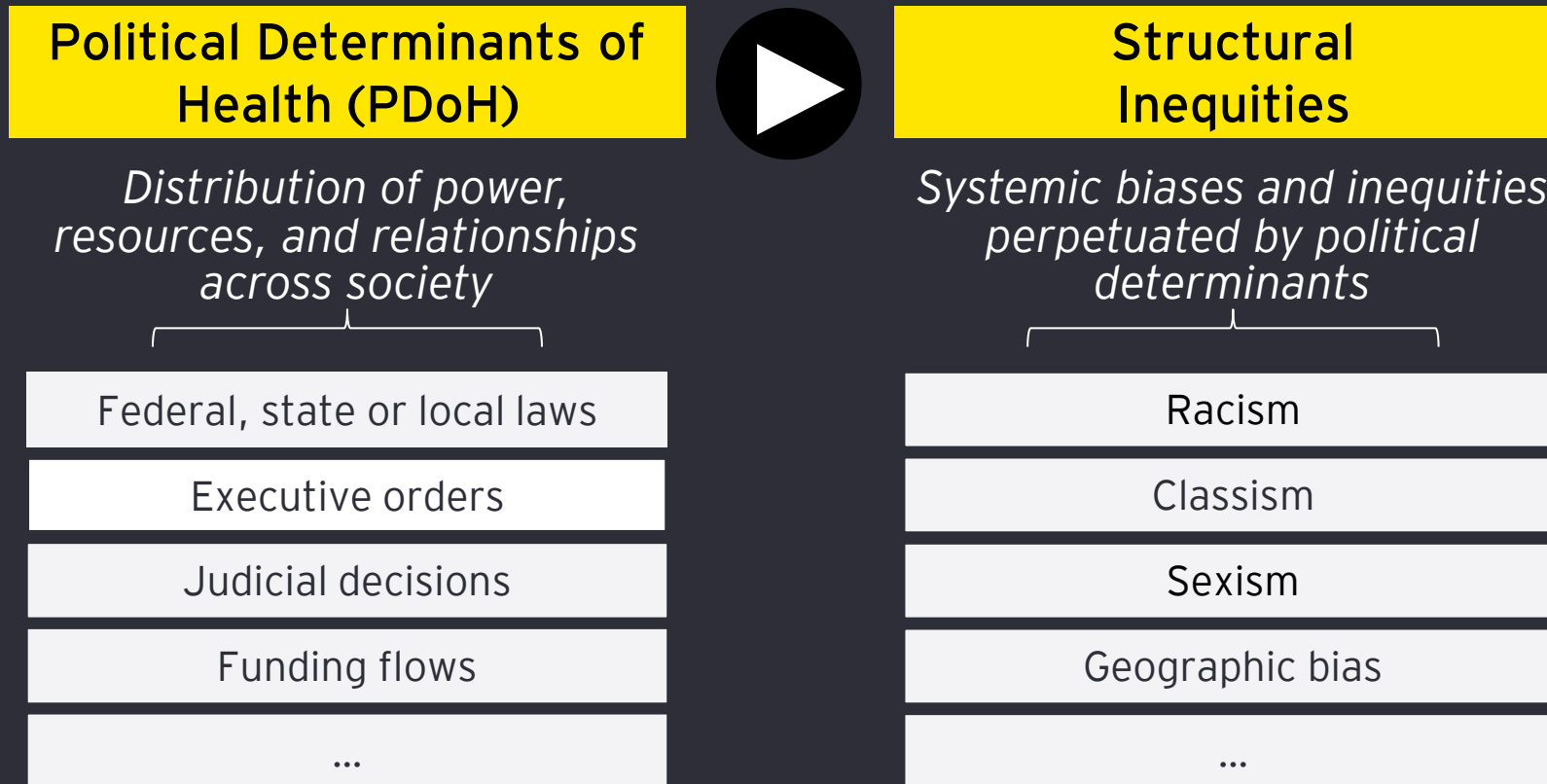
Health equity is achieved when every person has the opportunity to “attain their full health potential” and no one is “disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances.”²

¹ “What Are Health Disparities and Health Equity? We Need to Be Clear,” *National Institutes of Health website*, accessed November 2, 2020.

² “Attaining Health Equity,” *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website* accessed November 2, 2020.

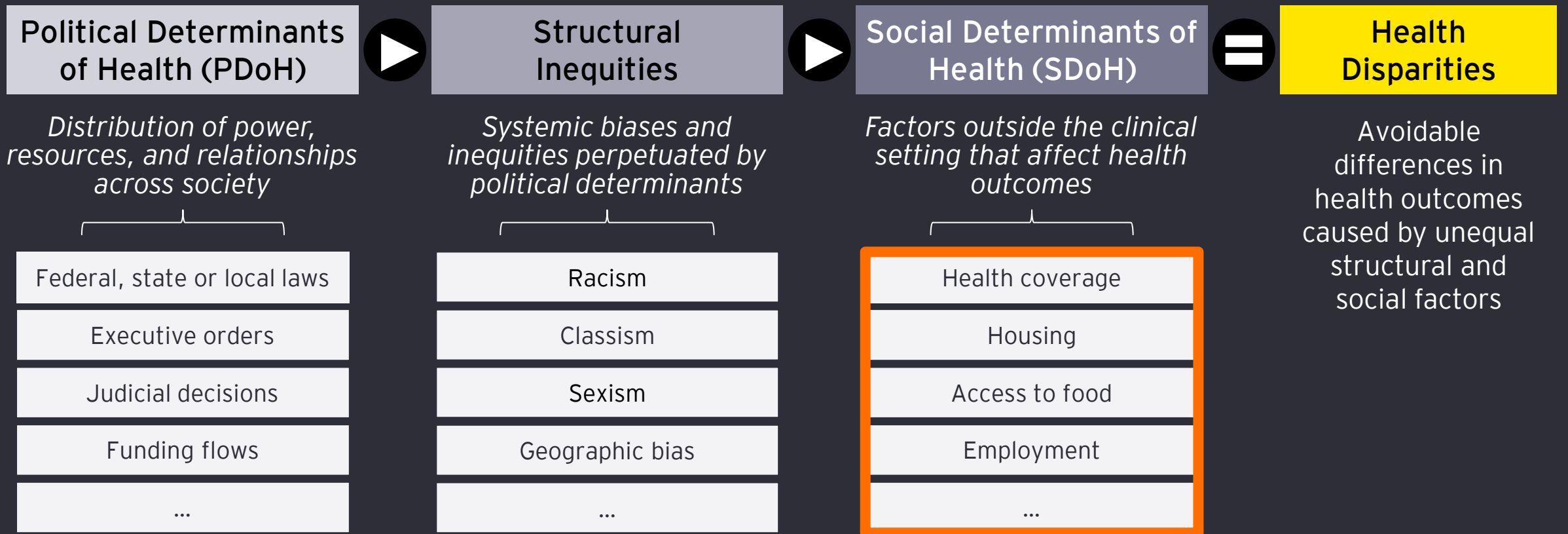
The political determinants of health perpetuate structural inequities

Health inequities persist through a **complex system of upstream root causes, structural biases, and social factors.**

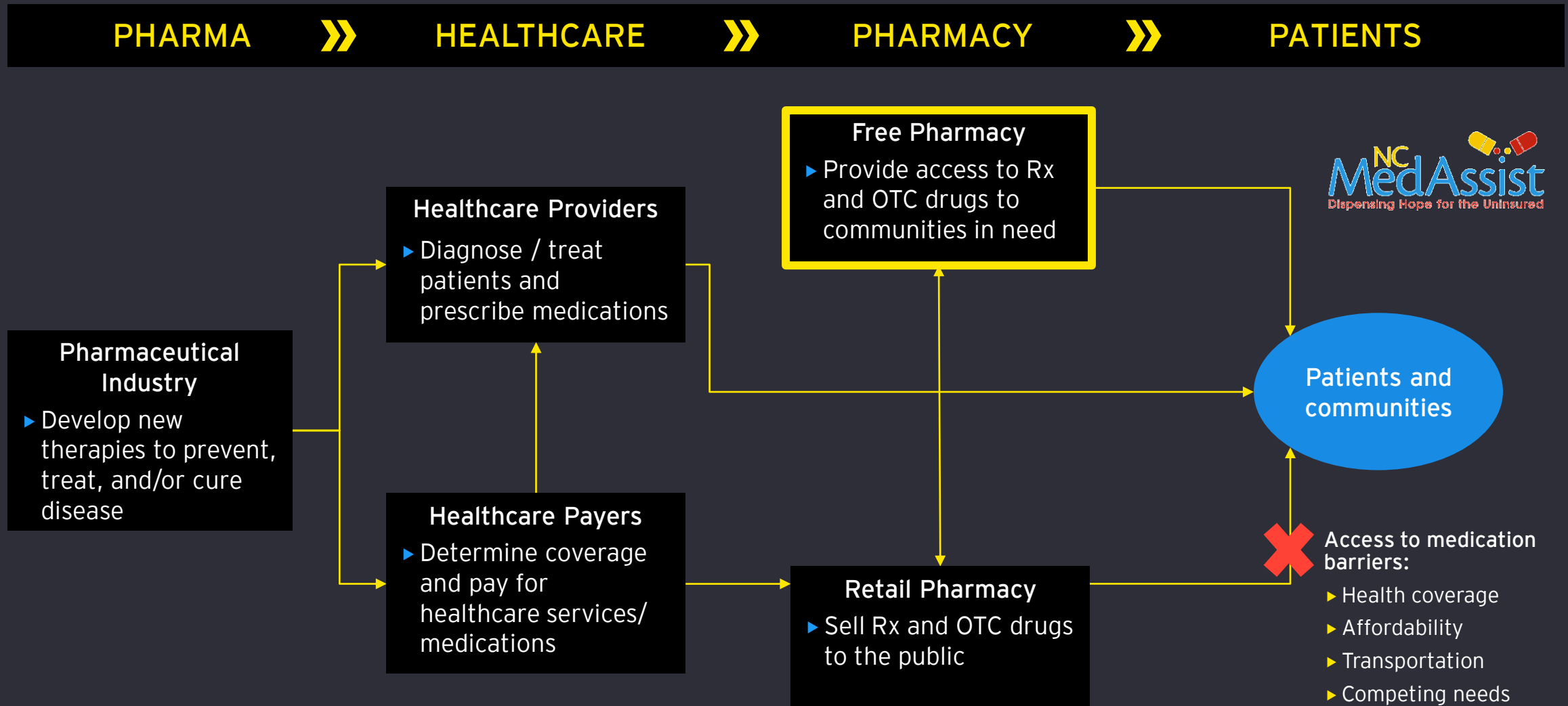


Health disparities, and the political and social determinants of health

Health inequities persist through a **complex system of upstream root causes, structural biases, and social factors.**



The role of the pharmaceutical and retail pharmacy industries in healthcare



Since its 1997 inception, NC MedAssist has sought to bridge the gap to connect all eligible NC residents to affordable medications

Mission & Purpose

- ▶ To dispense opportunities through improved health¹
- ▶ Ensure no eligible person in North Carolina must choose between purchasing food or their required medications
- ▶ Improve health outcomes and reduce health care costs by addressing barriers to medication adherence



Organization Overview¹

- ▶ **501(c)(3) non-profit organization**
- ▶ **Free pharmacy model with delivery across NC**
- ▶ **Beneficiary eligibility:** Up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level
- ▶ **Financial support:** Grants, donors, government funding, volunteer assistance and partnership organizations

Key attributes:

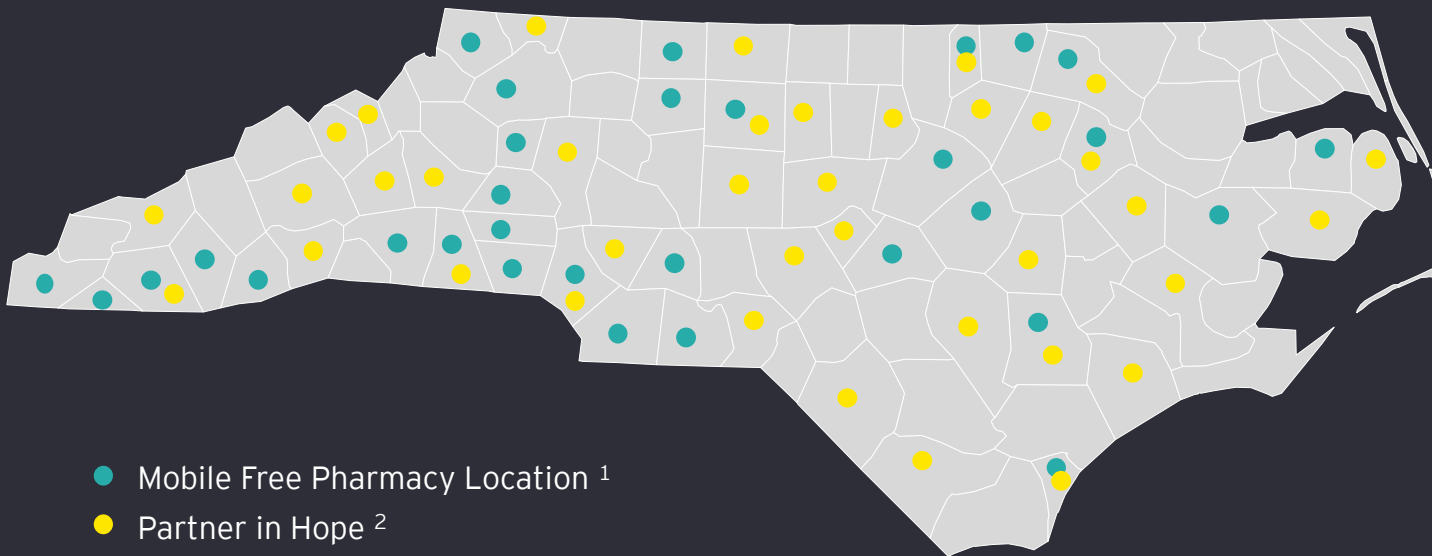
- ▶ Extensive formulary of prescription medications to treat chronic conditions
- ▶ OTC medications available through NC MedAssist store or Mobile Free Pharmacies throughout the state
- ▶ ~ 70% of patient referrals from Partners of Hope

¹ "NC MedAssist: Dispensing Hope throughout North Carolina", *North Carolina Medical Journal (NCMJ) Website*, Accessed April 3, 2024

² FY23 Annual Report, *NC MedAssist*, Accessed April 4, 2024

NC MedAssist's footprint spans across North Carolina, with Partners in Hope and Mobile Free pharmacies touching every region of the state

NC MedAssist - Footprint by County



- Mobile Free Pharmacy Location ¹
- Partner in Hope ²

Partners in Hope

- Access East
- Alleghany Cares
- Alliance Medical Ministry
- Appalachian Mountain Community Health Centers
- Blue Ridge Community Health Services
- Burke Health Network
- Cape Fear Clinic, Inc.
- Care Ring
- Catholic Charities of Wake, New Bern
- Charlotte Community Health Clinic
- Charlotte Rescue Mission
- Chatham CARES Community Pharmacy
- Christian United Outreach Center
- Cleveland County Health Department
- Community Care Clinic of Dare County
- Community Care Clinic of Franklin
- Community Clinic of High Point
- Community Free Clinic
- Cone Health - Care Connect
- Duke Outpatient Clinic
- Duplin County Health Department
- FirstHealth of the Carolinas, Inc.
- Franklin County Partners in Health
- Free Clinic of Rockingham County
- Good Samaritan Clinic
- Goshen Medical Center
- Guilford Community Care Network
- Halifax Medication Assistance Program
- HealthReach Community Clinic
- Helping Hand Clinic
- Hoke County Senior Services (MAP)
- Hope Community Clinic of East Charlotte
- Lake Norman Community Health Clinic
- McDowell MATCH Program
- Moore Free and Charitable Clinic
- Neighborhealth Center
- New Hope Clinic
- Open Door Clinic
- Randolph Health
- Richmond County Health Department
- Rural Health Group, Inc.
- Samaritan Health Center
- Southeastern Integrated Care
- Southeastern Regional Medical Center
- Swain County Caring Corner
- Toe River Project Access
- TROSA, INC.
- UNC Nash
- Vidant Health Access Care Management

¹ Mobile Free Pharmacy Events, NC MedAssist, Accessed April 11, 2024
² Partners in Hope, NC MedAssist, Accessed April 11, 2024

The organization's impact on the NC healthcare ecosystem is massive, and its ongoing operations are crucial for the well-being of its participants

Value Delivered - FY23¹



\$70.1m

*Value of Medication
Dispensed**



\$60.8m

*Healthcare Cost
Avoidance**



\$131m

*Total Economic
Benefit**



183,466

*Number of 90-day
prescriptions dispensed*



19,360

Volunteer hours



57,012

*Individuals + families served
through the Free OTC
Medicine Program*



73,501

*Total individuals and
families served*

** Values are approximate*

Is Medicaid expansion good or bad for NC MedAssist?

Looking Ahead: Medicaid Expansion¹

- ▶ As of April 1, 2024, NC enrollment under Medicaid expansion has surpassed **400,000** in the first four months of its launch
- ▶ Officials project enrollment will reach **600,000** within two years
- ▶ Many enrollees are either young adults or people that live in **rural communities**
- ▶ Those that have benefitted from the expansion have received over **700,000 prescriptions** and generated more than **\$11 million in dental service claims** to date
- ▶ As Medicaid expansion continues, there will be a **shift to fewer numbers of uninsured North Carolinians, to greater numbers of underinsured** consumers across North Carolina

The Future of NC MedAssist

To continue delivering meaningful impact for North Carolinians in need, **NC MedAssist can double down on its core mission, while innovating on its business model:**

NC Med Assist has an opportunity to expand its reach to amplify its position as a credible nonprofit partner, **enabling execution of CSR and ESG ambitions of partner organizations.**

- ▶ Expand philanthropic and foundation funding streams
- ▶ Develop an expanded portfolio of corporate partners and donors

¹ "Medicaid expansion coverage enrollment in North Carolina now above 400,000," *Spectrum Local News Website*, Accessed April 5, 2024

As Medicaid expansion shifts the landscape of uninsured NC residents, it is A Win-Win for both our residents, and for NC Med Assist

Although Medicaid expansion will decrease the number of uninsured NC residents by ~ 600,000, **it leaves ~400,000 residents uninsured.**

A sizeable number of North Carolinians remain who don't qualify under Medicaid expansion or are underinsured and face ongoing challenges to affording medications.¹

NC MedAssist Catchment Population:

Uninsured and Underinsured



MedAssist can sustain its role in NC's healthcare ecosystem to support medication access for the **uninsured** and expand its role and offerings to the **growing underinsured population.**

¹ "NC MedAssist: Dispensing Hope throughout North Carolina", *North Carolina Medical Journal (NCMJ) Website*, Accessed April 3, 2024

Why support NC MedAssist?

Individuals and organizations within and beyond the health industry value chain are well positioned to support access to free medications.

Mitigate access barriers to life-sustaining medications

- ▶ Enable access to medications
- ▶ Address affordability challenges for vulnerable patient demographics
- ▶ Provide medication safety net for those not currently served by health care delivery system

Address other social determinants of health

- ▶ Provide health education and promote health literacy
- ▶ Address transportation access barriers
- ▶ Offer job training and employment opportunities to bolster long-term financial security

Strengthen the health care delivery system in North Carolina

- ▶ Realize health system ROI through increased medication adherence
- ▶ Enable health equity progress for North Carolinians
- ▶ Invest in the future of healthcare where upstream SDoH are addressed to create equitable health outcomes

Invest in long-term value for North Carolina businesses and society at large

- ▶ Expand pathways for effective CSR investments
- ▶ Minimize workforce impacts due to medication access and adherence barriers
- ▶ Accelerate state and local advocacy and ambassadorship to impact political determinants of health

Call to Action: Become a Force Multiplier of the Mission of NC MedAssist. Become a Scalable Economic and Societal Impact Multiplier across the Region

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Volunteer Time

Give your Time and Expertise:

Individual and group volunteer opportunities are available through sign up on NC MedAssist's website

▶ Example volunteer activities:²

- Sorting medications
- Assisting the Mobile Free Pharmacy program
- Performing office tasks

Donate Money

Contribute to MedAssist's Operations:

One-time or recurring donations made through the NC MedAssist website or by mail¹

- ▶ Diverse donation types accepted, including those made through assets, gift annuities, wills, and retirement plan benefits¹

Partner in Hope

Become a Partner in Hope:

Support NC MedAssist's mission and ongoing operations by becoming a corporate partner

- ▶ Partner with other organizations that address root causes of health disparities (i.e., social determinants of health)

Advocate with Intention

Advocate for Systems Change to address PDoH:

Seek opportunities to re-engineer health industry business and care models toward achieving health equity delivery and accountability

- ▶ Utilize public platforms to elevate awareness and catalyze action with ecosystem stakeholders

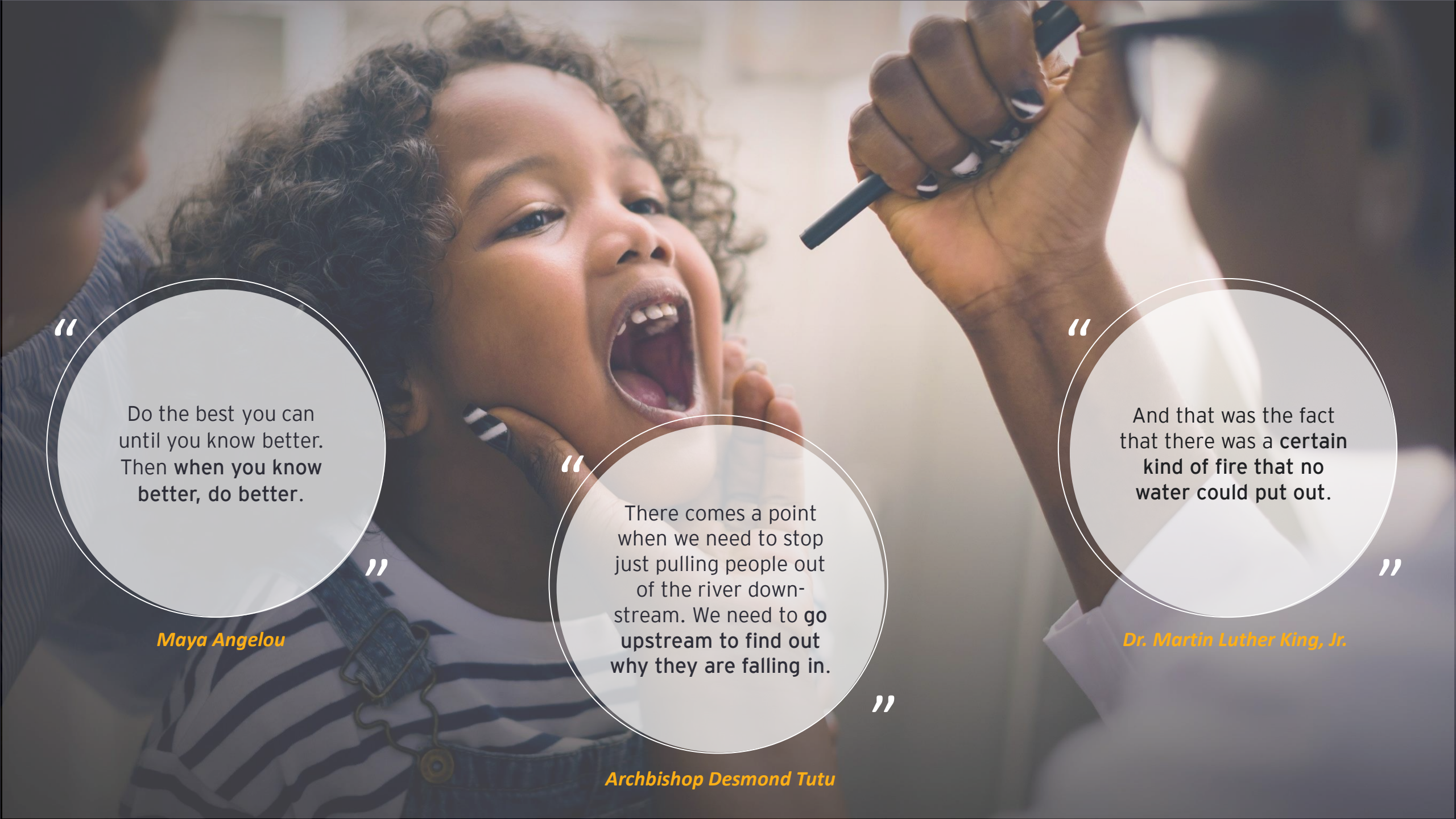
Your support sustains NC MedAssist's critical work to improve medication access across North Carolina.

INDIVIDUALS

ORGANIZATIONS

COMMUNITY

¹"NC MedAssist: Donate," NC MedAssist website, Accessed April 4, 2024
²"NC MedAssist: Volunteer," NC MedAssist website, Accessed April 4, 2024



“

Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.

Maya Angelou

”

“

There comes a point when we need to stop just pulling people out of the river downstream. We need to go upstream to find out why they are falling in.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

”

“

And that was the fact that there was a certain kind of fire that no water could put out.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

”



THANK YOU