

# ANNUAL REPORT



# 2020

## North Carolina Institute of Medicine

### Shaping Policy for a Healthier State

The NCIOM is an independent organization focused on improving the health and well-being of North Carolinians by

- ▶ Providing analysis on the health and well-being of North Carolinians
- ▶ Identifying solutions to the health issues facing our state
- ▶ Building consensus toward evidence-based solutions
- ▶ Informing health policy at the state and local level

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We last convened as supporters and partners of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine in September 2019. Since then, our state, and indeed the world, has been impacted by a global pandemic and economic recession touching every part of our work in health policy, public health, and beyond.

At the NCIOM, we went fully remote in March 2020, continuing work on existing projects while also navigating how to adjust new projects to remote work. We learned how to run task forces and other work groups over Zoom and how to work within our advisory capacity to help the state with aspects of response to the pandemic. We also continued to support our staff as they balanced demands of work, family, and other obligations amidst incredible uncertainty.

We have also seen transitions in leadership at the NCIOM this year. Berkeley Yorkery, associate director since 2015, left the NCIOM in January 2020. Adam Zolotor, who led the organization as president and CEO since 2015, stepped down from this role in July. Starting in August, Michelle Ries, associate director, assumed the role of interim director, while Board Chair David Sousa and an expert and dedicated committee conducted the search for our next president and CEO. For Michelle, it has been a challenge as well as an honor to step into this role for the last several months, and she is incredibly grateful to the staff, board, and other partners who have been so generous with their time and expertise. We look forward to continuing the work of the Institute with the leadership of our new president and CEO, Kathy Colville, MSPH, MSW, beginning on January 4, 2021.

Despite the challenges over the past year, we completed an unprecedented four task forces and published full reports from each. These included Healthy NC 2030; the Task Force on Serious Illness Care; the Task Force on a Risk-Appropriate Perinatal System of Care; and the Task Force on Access to Health Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. We continue to serve in a backbone role for Essentials for Childhood, in partnership with the Division of Public Health, and to offer

the Legislative Health Policy Fellows Program to members and staff of the General Assembly.

The North Carolina Medical Journal continues to grow. In May 2020 the National Academy of Medicine sponsored our Vital Directions issue, and the Carolinas Center sponsored our July issue on serious illness care. Timely upcoming issues include COVID-19's impact on drivers of health and the historical and present context of vaccination in North Carolina.

Since the pandemic began, we have worked with NC DHHS to convene state experts, identify diverse perspectives, facilitate discussion, and synthesize feedback to inform the state's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan and Scarce Critical Care Resource Allocation Advisory Group. We have also worked to develop analyses of state and federal legislative responses to the COVID-19 crisis.

We want to sincerely thank our members and partners who continue to support the work of the Institute, and who turn to us as a trusted organization to inform and identify strategies to improve health for all North Carolinians. In this year of immense challenges, we continue to be inspired by the incredible dedication of the people in this state who are doing the hard work of improving health, and we are grateful every day for your partnership in this work.

Our budget is 85% dependent on grants, contracts, and contributions. Please consider a gift to the North Carolina Institute of Medicine and be assured your contribution will be put to good use as we continue to produce timely and relevant research and analysis to inform stakeholders about health policy and population health in North Carolina.

Sincerely,



Michelle G. Ries  
Interim Director



David Sousa  
Board Chair

## Make a 100% tax-deductible donation to the NCIOM:

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Make checks payable to the NCIOM.  
Drop off or mail to 630 Davis Drive, Suite 100  
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# ▶ Our Impact

## Recently Completed Projects

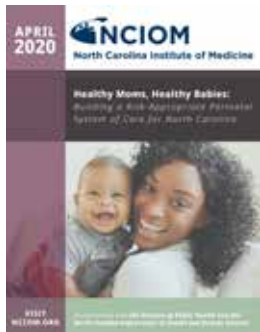


### Healthy North Carolina 2030

The final report of the Healthy North Carolina 2030 (HNC 2030) Task Force was published January 2020 with 10-year objectives for improving public health across the topics of health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment. HNC 2030 was completed in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health (DPH). NCIOM also assisted DPH in preparing the State Health Improvement Plan by hosting discussions on programs, initiatives, and policies being considered or implemented in North Carolina that could address the HNC 2030 objectives.

### Task Force on Serious Illness Care

The Task Force on Serious Illness Care published recommendations in June 2020 to improve the quality of living for individuals with serious illness, their families, and their communities. The task force identified recommendations to ensure that individuals achieve goals for care, including improving advance care planning and supporting family and communities as they care for those with serious illness, as well as recommendations to develop the serious illness care workforce. The task force was guided by principles of health equity, with a special consideration for the disparate impacts of serious illness among vulnerable populations, both in rates of specific conditions as well as in access to services and experience of receiving care.



### Task Force on a Risk-Appropriate Perinatal System of Care

The Perinatal System of Care Task Force was convened, in partnership with the North Carolina Division of Public Health and NC DHHS, to respond to Session Law 2018-93 and Goal 3E of North Carolina's Perinatal Health Strategic Plan. This task force developed actionable and evidence-based recommendations outlining a process for implementing a regionalized and risk-appropriate perinatal system of care. The task force recommendations, published in April 2020, use this approach as a tool for decreasing the occurrence of infant and maternal mortality and morbidity in the state, as well as addressing health disparities in infant and maternal mortality.

### Task Force on Access to Health Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The final report of the NCIOM Task Force on Access to Health Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was published in July 2020 with 14 recommendations for health care providers, state agencies, advocacy organizations, professional associations, and health care payers to assure more accessible communication for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in all health care and long-term settings. NCIOM convened this task force in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.



## Task Force Implementation Updates

### Update on Implementation of Affordable Care Act Task Force Recommendations

To mark the 10-year anniversary of the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the NCIOM produced an update on the implementation status of a 2013 task force convened to examine the law and make recommendations for implementing it to serve the best interest of the state as a whole. The task force included an advisory group and eight workgroups, which met for 12-18 months each beginning in August 2010. In total, 10 recommendations were fully implemented, 25 were partially implemented, and nine were not implemented.

North Carolina's successes include:

- A strong Navigator program that helps North Carolina have one of the highest rates of Health Benefits Exchange sign-ups of any state.
- State university and community college systems that are working to improve the diversity and distribution of our future health care workforce.
- A Health Information Exchange - NC HealthConnex – that continues to expand the use of health care data for quality improvement.

Yet, one of the greatest opportunities that the ACA offered states to increase access to care is the ability to expand Medicaid eligibility, and North Carolina has yet to do so.

### Update on Implementation of Children's Preventive Oral Health Services Task Force Recommendations

The Task Force on Children's Preventive Oral Health Services was convened to help the North Carolina Division of Medical Assistance (DMA), now called the Division of Health Benefits (NC Medicaid), develop a plan to increase the proportion of children who receive any preventive dental services, and those who receive a dental sealant on a permanent molar tooth. This work came in response to a 2012 request from CMS. The North Carolina Oral Health Action Plan for Children Enrolled in Medicaid and NC Health Choice, published in June 2013, included 14 recommendations that could be pursued and promoted by both public and private stakeholders. Two recommendations have been fully implemented; 11 have been partially implemented.

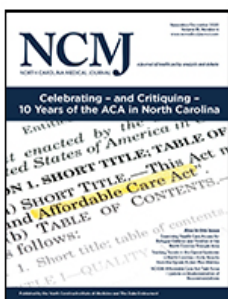
Successes related to the action plan include an increase in reimbursement rates for dental services that became effective on January 1, 2019, as well as a temporary 5% reimbursement rate increase for all fee-for-service providers that was retroactively implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, a school-based pilot program offering a full dental exam to children at participating schools and preventive services to maintain oral hygiene after the initial exam began in 2016 using grant funding from the Duke Endowment.

## NCMJ Informing Health Policy

The North Carolina Medical Journal continues to reach approximately 170,000 readers electronically and about 4,000 in print with each issue. In 2020 the NCMJ experienced a spike in interest from authors wishing to contribute scientific articles, with more than 50 submissions as of December 1 - a new record.

Recent issues covered perinatal health, youth behavioral health, serious illness care, and the impact of climate change on public health. Upcoming issues will cover the impact of COVID-19 on public health in North Carolina, the successes and challenges of immunizing our state's residents, and public health achievements of the past 50 years.

Current Issue:



Recent Issues:



# ▶ Our Impact

## COVID-19-related Work

### North Carolina COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee

NCIOM is convening this Advisory Committee to provide feedback to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) on its COVID-19 Vaccination Plan. The committee is comprised of public health experts, health care providers, advocacy organization leaders, and representatives of essential workers and at-risk populations. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to provide expert guidance on the development of the plan, support its successful operationalization, and increase public awareness about vaccination activities, especially among prioritized and historically marginalized populations.

### COVID-19 Legislative Issue Briefs

The North Carolina Institute of Medicine and the South Carolina Institute of Medicine & Public Health have partnered during the COVID-19 pandemic to monitor state and federal actions to address the health, economic, and social fallout of the crisis. Together, we have published two issue briefs that provide information on potential effects of state and federal legislation on the Carolinas.

The first brief, published April 8, detailed three major pieces of legislation passed by Congress in March to fund public health efforts to stem the spread of the virus, help those impacted by the economic slowdown, and support an economy in freefall. The second brief, published May 20, described the federal recommendations for phased reopening, state-specific actions, the status of funds allocated by previous federal actions, and a summary of the federal Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act.

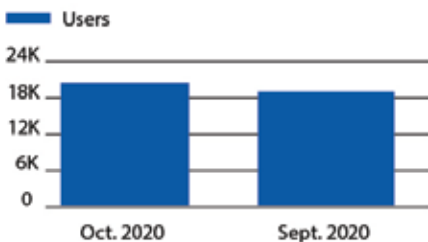


### COVID-19 Analysis


Through the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, NCIOM has provided analysis of the challenges facing North Carolinians across a variety of topics via blog posts. These posts have also included data and analysis on the ways that key issues and recommendations identified by recent NCIOM task forces and stakeholder groups have been impacted by the pandemic, including telehealth access, advance care planning, paid leave policies, health insurance coverage, and financial impact on rural hospitals.

## Analytics

Our website reached 20.6K unique users in October 2020 - a new record.



Our blog saw an 18% increase in visits year-over-year.

18.10%   
372 vs 315

COVID-19 analysis blog posts drove much of our blog traffic this year. The most-read posts included:

- 1 COVID-19 and Sick Leave Policies
- 2 NCIOM Convenes State COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee
- 3 What the 2007 NCIOM Pandemic Flu Task Force recommendations can tell us about the ethics of handling COVID-19
- 4 Update: COVID-19 Legislation Signed by Governor Cooper

# ▶ Ongoing Task Forces and Projects

## Maternal Health Task Force

In the summer of 2020, the NCIOM convened the Task Force on Maternal Health in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health. The task force's goal is to identify evidence-based solutions to improve maternal health outcomes, reduce maternal health disparities, and promote maternal health equity in North Carolina. The task force will guide and develop a Maternal Health Strategic Plan for the state, which will include policy recommendations based upon the evidence-based solutions identified by the task force. The task force will also build upon the work of the NCIOM Perinatal System of Care Task Force and will align with the state's Perinatal Health Strategic Plan and Early Childhood Action Plan.

## Child Health Report Card

The NCIOM, in collaboration with NC Child, produces the Child Health Report Card bi-annually to assist health administrators, legislators, and child and family advocates in their efforts to improve the health and safety of children statewide. Staff is working with NC Child currently on data collection for the 2021 Child Health Report Card. In addition to the standardized indicators, the Report Card will also include a special focus on the impact of COVID-19 on drivers of health for children and families. A brief of the Report Card will also be published in the North Carolina Medical Journal.

## Essentials for Childhood – Backbone Organization

Since 2015, the NCIOM has convened workgroups, coordinated and aligned work across partnering agencies, and participated in statewide initiatives to support the implementation of recommendations of the initial Task Force on Essentials for Childhood. In 2020, NCIOM partners have prioritized strategies to promote family-friendly workplace policies with the goal of strengthening families' economic stability and promoting child and family well-being.

Before the onset of the pandemic, to support our partners in promoting family-friendly workplace policies, the NCIOM convened a learning collaborative event with presentations by Beth Messersmith and Tina Sherman from MomsRising, Lisa Finaldi from the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation, Sharon Hirsch from Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina, Dr. Alison Stuebe from UNC Health Care, and Dr. Anna Gassman-Pines from Duke University. Presenters discussed research on the benefits of family-friendly workplace policies including paid family leave, shared information on the current policy landscape, and highlighted efforts to promote awareness and build consensus by engaging businesses and other stakeholder groups.



Dr. Alison Stuebe of UNC presents on the landscape of family-friendly workplace policies.

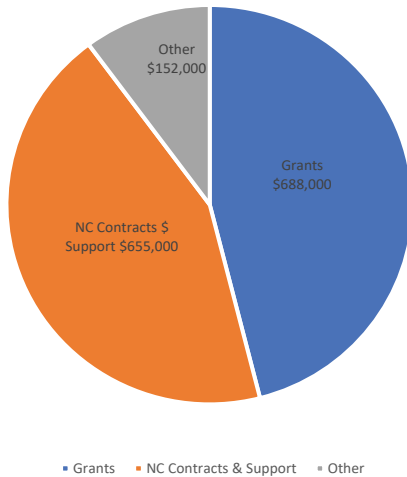
As part of Essentials for Childhood and in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, the NCIOM is also facilitating the Stakeholder Workgroup on Strengthening the North Carolina Child Fatality Prevention System. This workgroup builds upon recommendations from the Child Fatality Task Force to strengthen the statewide child fatality prevention system through the development of a transition plan for consolidating teams that review child deaths and creating a centralized data and information system for the statewide prevention system. The workgroup's final report, which provides input and feedback on the restructuring of the statewide child fatality prevention system, is currently under review by workgroup members before its final approval and publication.

## Health Policy Forums

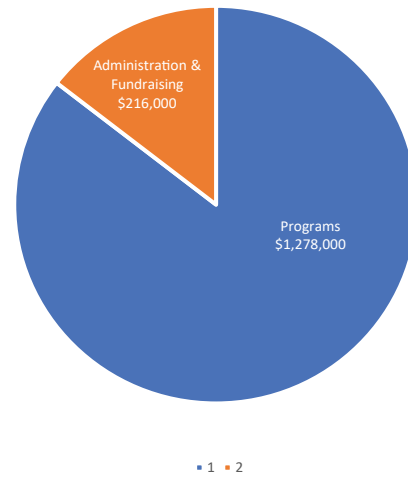
NCIOM hosted two separate series of health policy forums in 2020: one for legislative staff that included four two-hour sessions and another for AARP staff and key volunteers that included six two-hour sessions. These sessions covered a range of topics relevant to health care and health policy in North Carolina.

# ▶ 2021 Expected Revenue and Expenses

2021 Revenue



2021 Expenses



## Supporters (October 1, 2019 - November 30, 2020)

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The Duke Endowment  
State of North Carolina  
Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust

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