# NCCARE360 Quarterly Report • February 2021

## NCCARE360 2020

As we started 2020, the NCCARE360 team was focused on the lofty goal of launching the critical platform that enables health and communitybased organizations to make electronic referrals, communicate in real time, securely share client information, and track outcomes together in all 100 counties.

With COVID-19, the NCCARE360 team not only had to change its model of onboarding and launching networks, but it had to accelerate its rollout to meet the needs of responding to the global pandemic and its economic and social consequences.

#### Improving the linkages in community networks.

Since the start of NCCARE360 rollout in 2019, the Community Engagement team has had great success working with organizations in their communities and onboarding them to the NCCARE360 network. This process helps to build relationships, and develop a sense of community, which leads to trust. When doing the work of assisting vulnerable individuals and populations, trust is the most valuable resource in achieving successful results.

However, the NCCARE360 team was nimble to shift to a virtual onboarding process and expediting the onboarding process, all which enabled the platform to launch statewide in June 2020 — six months ahead of schedule.

**Meeting the scale of need.** The economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has already led to devastating consequences for thousands of North Carolinians who are struggling to put food on the table, pay rent, or find employment. NCCARE360 has worked to be a part of the solution by expanding its community networks statewide.

### NCCARE360 Overview

When we pose the question, "What do people really need to be healthy,?" the answer is pretty consistent and intuitive. Yes, access to high-quality medical care is critical; but so is access to healthy food, reliable transportation, a safe place to live, and a good job. However, people face a fragmented system of health and human services that can be hard to navigate. Providers often operate in silos, are disconnected, and have no meaningful way of coordinating services for local residents.

When a primary care physician notes that a patient needs a visit to a medical specialist, there are mature systems for the physician to make the referral and track the progress and outcomes of that referral. No such system existed to address the non-medical drivers of health. In addition, no systems existed to connect communitybased organizations and social service agencies to each other.

NCCARE360 addresses this gap — and more. NCCARE360 is the first statewide, coordinated care network to electronically connect people with identified resource needs to community-based organizations like food pantries, and allow for a feedback loop on the outcome of that connection.

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Since January 2020, NCCARE360 has grown its network to more than 2,000 organizations with over 4,200 programs. In 2020, NCCARE360 was able to serve more than 41,000 unique individuals and families, compared to just 1,200 the year prior. As the need for services hasn't slowed, neither has the work of the organizations who use NCCARE360. These organizations have made referrals on behalf of more than 12,300 individuals and families who needed services in January 2021 alone.

Moving into 2021, it is our commitment to continue to build on the work accomplished during 2020, and through strong, local partnerships, help North Carolinians connect to the resources they need to be healthy and well.

We look back in reverence to 2020, and we look forward to 2021 with a renewed spirit of hope.

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NCCARE360 is a statewide network that enables health care and human service providers to not only send and receive secure electronic referrals, but also to seamlessly communicate in real time, securely share client information, and track outcomes through a shared technology platform.

Since its launch in three counties in April 2019, NCCARE360 has been connecting people with the resources they need to be healthy, safe and well. Local health departments, social service agencies, and community providers are using NCCARE360 to assist with identified needs, such as housing, employment, food, interpersonal safety and transportation, among others.

# NCCARE360's Impact: "The First Block to a New Beginning!"

COVID-19 and its economic impacts have affected thousands of households, many of whom had never sought assistance before.

One individual called the Community Health Worker who referred them to community resources to say, "This is the first time I had ever experienced this type of hardship and had no idea the type of community-based organizations that are out there or what they could provide. I received a financial assistance check before the holidays."

Between the financial assistance check, and the additional referrals to employment and housing agencies, the person said this was, "the first block to a new beginning!"

# North Carolina COVID-19 Community Health Workers Linking Communities to Resources Using NCCARE360

To support individuals through COVID-19 isolation and quarantine, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) launched two critical programs: Community Health Worker Initiative and the COVID-19 Support Services Program.

**The Community Health Worker Program** has employed over 400 Community Health Workers (CHWs) to work in historically underserved areas with high COVID-19 cases. The Community Health Worker program supports community health workers in 55 counties to connect North Carolinians with medical and social supports such as diagnostic testing, behavioral health services, and education about vaccines. A community health worker is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of the community or who has a close understanding of the community served. This program will continue through June 30.

**The COVID-19 Support Services Program** provides assistance such as home-delivered meals and groceries, financial relief payments, COVID-related supplies, transportation to medical or vaccine appointments, and medication delivery to individuals in 29 of the 55 counties served by the Community Health Worker program. The Support Services program helps people who need support to be able to quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19.

**NCCARE360** is a foundational component of both critical programs. NCCARE360 was fast-tracked to help support the state's COVID-19 response and is now available in all 100 counties. Community Health Workers use NCCARE360 to connect individuals and families to services provided in the COVID-19 Support Services Program, as well as other community resources they need, and track the outcomes of their referrals. To date, Community Health Workers have made more than 65,000 referrals through NCCARE360.

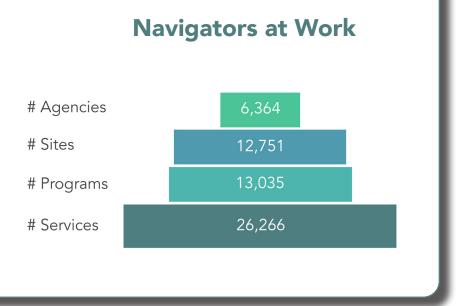
For more information, visit <u>NC DHHS COVID-19:</u> <u>Support Services Program</u> or call **844-628-7223**.

# NCCARE360 By The Numbers

NCCARE360 is now active in all 100 North Carolina counites. NCCARE360 has connected more than 50,000 unique clients to resources for their over 130,000 unique service needs. New partnerships with health care partners like UNC Health and Duke Health, as well as community partnerships like the Community Health Worker Program, will continue to grow the network to be a useful tool for individuals in our state.

# NCCARE360: Growing Community Partnerships to Make Change

NCCARE360 can be a valuable tool to create new community partnerships. When looking for resources for a client, one organization learned of another agency in their community that performs home repairs—a frequent issue in their community. The organization reached out to partner with the organization, which has already led to repairs for two older adults that had not previously been fit for habitation. NCCARE360 enabled the organization to learn of these new community resources that are already making a big impact. NCCCARE360 navigators have had a busy year responding to 7,743 requests for care coordination services by hospitals, health care practitioners, community health workers and local community-based organizations. The most frequent requests for assistance from the NCCARE360 navigators include complex housing needs, multiple needs that require ongoing support, transportation, and financial assistance. Referrals to NCCARE360 navigators can be within the platform or through the www.nccare360.org Request for Help web form.



### NCCARE360: A Key Tool for North Carolina Medicaid Transformation

Since its launch in 2019, NCCARE360 has been building a public health infrastructure to knit together health care and human services and connect people to the community resources they need to be healthy and well. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, this mission became even more critical and the team took immediate action to accelerate NCCARE360's statewide rollout 6 months ahead of schedule. This acceleration allowed NCCARE360 to serve as the infrastructure for the rollout of new COVID-19 recovery programs, which have connected over 25,681 households to over 120,000 services including economic relief payments, food boxes, transportation, and more.

NCCARE360 will continue growing this critical infrastructure. This year focusing on a new challenge: enabling North Carolina's innovative Medicaid Managed Care transformation to truly address both medical and non-medical drivers of health. While NCCARE360 is and will continue to be available for all North Carolinians, regardless of healthcare payor, NCCARE360 will be a critical tool for the Medicaid Managed Care program. Currently, the NCCARE360 team is working to onboard the Local Management Entities – Managed Care Organizations (LME-MCOs) and Medicaid Standard Plans and their partners who will use NCCARE360 to screen all members to identify unmet resource needs and connect them to the community resources related to food, housing, transportation, and interpersonal safety.

NCCARE360 will also be used to drive investment in community services. Not only are Medicaid health plans incentivized to invest in community resources, but the Healthy Opportunities Pilots, set to launch in 2022, will actually reimburse human service organizations like food pantries and homeless service providers for Medicaid-approved Services delivered to beneficiaries enrolled in the Pilots—growing community capacity to deliver services critical to a person's health.

Through an upstream focus on all drivers of a person's health, NCCARE360—in partnership with NC Medicaid—is working to transform the current health and human services system so that all North Carolinians have the opportunity for health.

NCCARE360 is a public-private partnership between NCDHHS and FHLI, in collaboration with implementation partners that include the United Way of North Carolina/NC 211, Expound Decision Systems, and Unite Us. Partners are working together to develop guidelines and recommendations for social service departments and community-based human service agencies, as well.

For more information about NCCARE360, visit <u>www.nccare360.org</u> or contact <u>connect@nccare360.org</u>.

