



**NORTH CAROLINA
AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTERS**

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Dear Leaders of North Carolina's Health Sciences Schools and Programs:

I write to thank you for all you are doing to train the next generation of health professionals, to inform you of work the NC AHEC Program (AHEC) is doing to advance Interprofessional Education and Practice (IPEP) and to request your on-going and expanded support for IPEP as you continue your important work.

IPEP is essential to providing the highest quality of care for the people of North Carolina (NC). Interprofessional education (IPE) is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2010) as learning that "occurs when two or more professions (students, residents, and health workers) learn from, with, and about each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes". Interprofessional education leads to interprofessional practice, which has been shown to ultimately improve the care for the patients we serve.

In 2019, AHEC launched the Interprofessional Education Leaders Collaborative (IPELC), an academic leadership consortium for IPE with representatives from every health sciences education program in North Carolina. Most of you have one or more representatives on the IPELC – thank you so much for supporting your faculty in this role and please consider appointing one if you have not already.

IPELC is committed to improving the education of our future health workforce through IPEP and asks leaders of North Carolina's health sciences programs to support their students and faculty by:

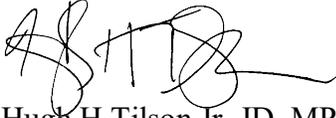
- **Formally indicating support by incorporating IPEP into the overall mission, vision, and/or strategic plan.** IPEP needs the explicit support of top level leadership at colleges and universities to succeed.
- **Integrating IPEP across and throughout the health professions curricula and requiring that faculty include IPEP content in all courses.** The [Health Professions Accreditors Collaborative/ National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education document](#) provides a framework for a systematic approach to IPEP that aligns with accreditation boards/commissions across professions.
- **Supporting faculty to develop IPEP opportunities with protected time, compensation, faculty development opportunities, and promotion and tenure.** According to a recent survey of IPELC members, nearly two-thirds of faculty in IPEP across the state of NC are volunteering their time beyond formal responsibilities in academic programs.

Through this collaboration, NC AHEC and the IPELC members are also working to create clinical learning environments that provide a model for interprofessional teamwork and collaboration. AHEC supports incentivizing the environments to incorporate students through a model that not only creates an effective learning experience for the students and health care professionals, but also produces an efficient, beneficial model with tangible outcomes for the organization.

We will continue our efforts to foster inclusive clinical environments for all professions and students in academic and technical programs across the state and welcome your support for this work as well.

For more information on NC AHEC's commitment to and work on IPEP, please contact Jill Forcina at jill_forcina@ncahec.net.

Thank you for all you do to advance the education of NC's future health care professional workforce.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Tilson Jr.', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Hugh H. Tilson Jr., JD, MPH
Associate Dean and Director
NC AHEC Program