

FEBRUARY 2017

DEFINING QUALITY & SETTING THE PACE FOR EXCELLENCE IN HEALTHCARE



## John S. White to Retire in March

“His passion for the mission of RHA has never waived.”



John S. White

As Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer, John White exemplifies the type of quality leader that employees respect and strive to emulate not only as a professional but also as a person, who is dedicated to improving the lives of others. Since coming to RHA in 1987 as a Psychologist, John White has moved the company from a typical “needs-based” community provider to a truly person-centered organization that excels in high quality and compassionate service provision in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia.

John is known throughout RHA as kind and caring and has a personal and professional commitment to the principals of advocacy. He is highly respected for the quality and the inspiration of his leadership. Known for his “approachable style”, he encourages others to always seek opportunities for personal growth and career development. “John truly believes in what he teaches” says one employee. Another employee noted that “his passion for the mission of RHA has never waived”.

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“His support to RHA staff and the people we support has been unprecedented.”

“I have the highest regard for Compliance and Risk Management as it relates to all aspects within RHA Health Services. Having John White guide and protect our company as Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer for the past 19 years has truly been an honor. John has exhibited the highest level of professionalism and performance with every job he has held with this company. The longevity of his support to RHA staff and the people we serve and support has been unprecedented. His loyalty and compassion will be missed but he has set an example for how all employees can set the PACE for excellence in supporting people, and for that I say Thank You.” -Gordon J. Simmons CEO, RHA Health Services

“We stand on the shoulders of giants like John White.”

“It is my vision that the compliance department will continue to focus our energy on the most effective ways to positively impact our company culture and to constantly evaluate whether our compliance program is working. If we are able to obtain these objectives, it will certainly be because we stand on the shoulders of giants like John White.”

-Danny F. Fulmer, II, Incoming RHA Chief Ethics,  
Compliance, and Privacy Officer

“I will truly miss John as he moves into his next phase of life. His contributions to the people we support, our employees, and the entire field of services to individuals with intellectual disabilities is immeasurable. He has been a wonderful colleague and friend for close to 30 years. I wish him the best that retirement has to offer.”

-Jeanne Duncan, President  
RHA Health Services

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# Caregiving Costly For Special Needs Families

By Shaun Heasley | January 4, 2017

Families of children with special needs provide billions of dollars in unpaid medical care each year, researchers say, significantly compromising their own ability to earn a living.

Data collected from more than 40,000 parents or guardians of those with special needs across the country suggests that about half of these kids — some 5.6 million children — need assistance at home with managing everything from feeding to breathing equipment and physical therapy.

“If parents did not provide this care at home, children would need to stay in the hospital longer, professionals would need to come to the home or children might not get the care that their physicians prescribe,” said Mark Schuster, chief of general pediatrics at Boston Children’s Hospital and a senior investigator on the study which was published recently in the journal *Pediatrics*.

“Parents want to do everything they can for their children, but it can be a real challenge to juggle their ill child, their other children and sometimes their job,” he said.

All told, families provide nearly \$36 billion worth of care annually, the study found. On average, kids with special needs received 5.1 hours of medical care from family members each week, but that figure grew to 11.2 hours weekly for those with intellectual disability and 14.4 hours for those with cerebral palsy.

These estimates don’t factor time families spend helping with daily activities like bathing and dressing, researchers said.

The findings come from an analysis of data collected through the 2009-2010 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs.

Families lose out on an estimated \$3,200 in earnings per year related to their medical caregiving responsibilities for each child, the study found, or over \$17 billion collectively. If they were to hire aides to provide medical care, it would run between \$2,100 and \$6,400 annually per child, costs that researchers said can be prohibitive for many families.

Beyond the financial toll, those behind that study noted that the added responsibilities of providing medical care for a child can also bring emotional stress.

“We need to do a better job of training family caregivers in how to take care of their children at home, and we need better supports for them,” Schuster said.



## About the Author

*Shaun Heasley is a creative problem solver and the idea man behind Disability Scoop. Prior to venturing into the world of new media and online publishing, Heasley worked as an editorial and commercial photographer documenting the inner-workings of the White House in addition to portraits of business leaders and celebrity personalities. His pictures have been published worldwide by Reuters, Forbes, Newsweek, People and Time and in advertising campaigns for major Fortune 500 companies. Heasley holds a degree in visual communication from Ohio University.*



Tony Crawley, left, administers medication through his son Rowan's feeding tube. Crawley shifted his work hours to help care for his son who has severe autism. (Bettina Hansen/Seattle Times/TNS)

“Parents want to do everything they can for their children, but it can be a real challenge to juggle their ill child, their other children and sometimes their job. We need to do a better job of training family caregivers in how to take care of their children at home, and we need better supports for them.

-Mark Shuster, Chief Of General Pediatrics at Boston Children’s Hospital

## From Our Corner

Parents with children that have special needs often find themselves overwhelmed with the challenges of being a full time employee, a full time caregiver, and a full time spouse/partner. The RHA Community Alternative Program for Children (CAP/C) is proud to be there for these families by serving as their link to support systems in an effort to provide the emotional and functional needs of the family unit.

-Lena Robertson  
Manager – RHA Health Services CAP/C

# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Submitted by Lena Robertson



## Crystal Garman Community Alternative Program for Children

During the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, many people found themselves without the basic necessities of food, water and even housing. The flooding that ensued in the eastern part of North Carolina proved devastating to so many, including those that

receive supports from RHA Health Services. One family discovered that they would be without power for several days and called their CAPC Case Manager, Crystal Garman, for assistance. Their child needed electricity to operate her feeding equipment and breathing equipment (ventilator). Without these vital pieces of equipment this child would have been required to travel by ambulance for a hospital admission, not only exposing her to illnesses but also to great expense. In the middle of this state of emergency, Crystal personally contacted community resources and found a generator for this family to borrow. She made sure the generator was delivered to the family and they were able use it until power was restored. Thanks for your selfless act of kindness to this family. We salute you Crystal!

For more information about this program contact: John Gibbons, Director of Case Management Office: 919-803-2960 [John.gibbons@rhanet.org](mailto:John.gibbons@rhanet.org)



## Team Player Extraordinaire

Submitted by Rachel Hergenrother

### Renee Reece Neil Dobbins Center

Renee Reece is the Administrative Coordinator for the Neil Dobbins Center. Renee consistently displays integrity and enthusiasm for the work that she does. Among the long list of duties Renee performs for her team, she always finds room for more when she is called upon. "When we are faced with a team problem, Renee is quick to assist the group with her presence as well as with innovative solutions" says RN Director, Rachel Hergenrother.

Although she does not work directly with clients on the unit, Renee shows tremendous support with her knowledge and persistence on the administrative side of things with authorizations and record keeping.

She is a shining model of what it means to be a team player and exudes an abundance of positivity to all those around her. The Neil Dobbins Center is lucky to have Renee and we thank her!

For more information about this program contact:  
Rachel Hergenrother, RN Director, Neil Dobbins Center  
Office: 828.398.2266 [Rachel.Hergenrother@rhanet.org](mailto:Rachel.Hergenrother@rhanet.org)

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## John S. White to Retire in March



John and Denise

"I think that after John retires he will want his average day to be: working out at the gym (albeit a later starting time!!) and doing some community work. As an avid sailor he will definitely be on the water as much as possible and I'm sure he will "piddle" in his garden or work on projects in his workshop with his dog, Gracie, at his side. .

John loves "Our State" magazine, so it's a good bet he and his wife, Linda, will take lots of interesting side trips. We are sad to say goodbye to John at RHA, but we are thrilled about his new adventure! "

- Denise Turner, VP of Human Resources

## Community Also Mattered During Hurricane Matthew

Submitted by Lisa H. Bass



Administrator Vanessa Burden with the  
Rare Breed Motorcycle Club

Hurricane Matthew caused devastation in many areas of North Carolina in October 2016 and Lumberton was especially hit hard. Many RHA Lumberton employees lost everything – houses, cars, and all personal belongings. We were blessed in a mighty way when Rare Breed Motorcycle Club from Fayetteville stepped in to help. They reached out to Vanessa Burden, Director of Operations, for RHA Lumberton, Fayetteville, and Benson. In November they provided full Thanksgiving meals to five employees and their families who had lost everything and in December returned with Christmas gifts. We were honored to present a plaque to Rare Breed Motor Cycle Club in recognition of their ongoing commitment and dedication to community service on December 20, 2016.

For more information about this program contact: Vanessa Burden,  
Administrator Office: 910.739.1468 [vburden2@rhanet.org](mailto:vburden2@rhanet.org)



## Three Babies Go Home From RHA Tar River

Submitted by

Amanda Conrad, MSW, LCSW QP/Case Manager

Greenville, NC

Located in Greenville, North Carolina the RHA Tar River Center is a unique pediatric unit for children with complex medical needs providing 24 hour continual medical monitoring and technological support. Tar River is also a teaching facility partnering with East Carolina University and the Brody School of Medicine.

Since April 2015, nine children from Tar River have gone home and we continue to work towards sending children home as they become more medically stable. Our staff works very closely with home health agencies and medical equipment companies to ensure the discharge is a smooth transition for the families. Here are three of their stories.

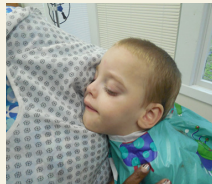
### Evan



Vivian and Evan

Evan was born premature and required ventilator use shortly after he was born. The Department of Social Services (DSS) obtained full custody of Evan as his parents' rights were terminated by the court. He was admitted to Tar River in 2013 from a hospital in Virginia. With the

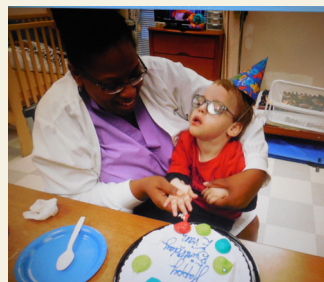
exceptional care provided to him at Tar River, he became stable and his Social Worker at DSS soon started seeking foster care placement for him.



Evan's first haircut

Enter Vivian. Vivian has worked for RHA for 20 years in many different roles, but is currently the Supervisor for Direct Support Professionals at Tar River. She and Evan formed a close relationship, and she soon realized she wanted to be his foster mom. So she took Evan home with her! She enrolled Evan in public school, obtained CAP/C services for him and continues to be his biggest advocate. *"I couldn't be any prouder to be his mother. Adoption proceedings are in the works!"*

For more information on the RHA Tar River program contact Administrator, Tonya Lyons at [tlyons@rhanet.org](mailto:tlyons@rhanet.org) or 252-758-1101



### Al

Al came to Tar River in 2015 as a vent dependent little baby after being born at 25 weeks. His parents wanted him placed at Tar River, so the staff could work towards weaning him off the ventilator. Their plan



all along was to take him home and soon after his admission they inquired about training. Over the course of several months, mom and dad completed training and began working with staff to prepare for his discharge home. Al was discharged in 2017 and is now home with his parents and siblings. He is walking, babbling, and eating by mouth, and doing great!! He has come

a long way since his admission. His parents, Al's paternal grandmother, and aunt were very supportive and involved the entire time he was living at Tar River. On the day of his discharge, his family brought cupcakes and a card to express their gratitude to staff; *"We are so appreciative of all the kind gestures,*



*acts of love, time spent nurturing and playing with him."* – The Family of Al Jr.

### Baby "G"

*We are not able to show you a picture due to Department of Social Services (DSS) regulations,*

A precious little girl, Baby "G", was admitted to Tar River in 2015 from Vidant Medical Center. She has a very complex heart diagnosis and a Gastrostomy-tube (Gtube). Due to lack of involvement from her birth parents, DSS obtained full custody and began to seek foster care placement for her. Soon after, a couple visited with her at Tar River and fell in love immediately. They completed their training and took her out on Therapeutic Leave, (TL). These foster moms quickly discovered that they wanted this baby to come home with them, so they began the process of working with the Tar River team to have her discharged. In 2016, she was discharged to her forever home with her foster mothers who are working towards adoption. She is now *"talking up a storm and walking like crazy"; "There is no holding her back!"*

## RHA Continues Leadership Momentum with New CCO

*Danny F. Fulmer, II takes over as Chief Ethics, Compliance and Privacy Officer as 30 year RHA veteran, John S. White retires*



Danny F. Fulmer, II

Asheville, NC – RHA Health Services, a leader in supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, behavioral health, and substance use challenges, is pleased to announce the addition of Danny F. Fulmer, II as the new Chief Ethics, Compliance and Privacy Officer (CCO). He succeeds 30 year RHA veteran, John S. White, who is retiring. In his new position Mr. Fulmer will oversee the activities of the Ethics and Compliance, Privacy, Continuous Quality Improvements (CQI) and Safety departments.

RHA Health Services CEO, Gordon J. Simmons, says “Danny Fulmer will be taking over as Chief Ethics, Compliance, and Privacy Officer on March 27th 2017. He comes to RHA with a wealth of knowledge and a diverse professional background, including his work as an attorney and most recently, as the Provider Relations Manager with Vaya Health. Our Executive Team has the utmost confidence in Danny and firmly believes our Ethics, Compliance, and Privacy department will be in great hands for years to come.”

The Georgia native graduated from the University of Georgia in 1994. He received his Executive MBA at UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School in 2005, and his Juris Doctorate at Campbell University in 2008. After law school he worked in Raleigh for five years litigating insurance defense and workers compensation cases with Cranfill, Sumner, and Hartzog, LLC. Fulmer moved to Asheville in 2013 where he concentrated on medical malpractice defense and business litigation at Northrup McConnell & Sizemore, PLLC. Fulmer most recently served Vaya Health (formerly Smoky Mountain LME/MCO) as the Ancillary Provider Network Manager.

As Fulmer settles in at RHA, he reflects, “As our organization faces issues such as increased investigations, ever-changing privacy and security concerns caused by the evolution of technology, and the looming start date for Stage 3 Meaningful Use requirements by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (January 2018), it is more important than ever to realize that compliance has to be everyone’s concern. The continued success of RHA will depend on our ability to collaborate effectively across all departments and continue to keep compliance and improvement at the forefront of all we do. It is my vision that the compliance department will continue to focus our energy on the most effective ways to positively impact our company culture and to constantly evaluate whether our compliance program is working. If we are able to obtain these objectives, it will certainly be because we stand on the shoulders of giants like John White.”

Media contact: [dvalentine@rhanet.org](mailto:dvalentine@rhanet.org)

## New RHA Website Goes Live

[www.rhahealthservices.org](http://www.rhahealthservices.org)



Raleigh, NC-

RHA Health Services is unveiling a new website with a totally different look! Check us out at [www.rhahealthservices.org](http://www.rhahealthservices.org).

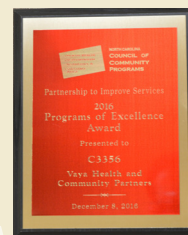
We are taking a Lean Six Sigma approach in development of this new site. What is Lean Six Sigma? It is defined as a systematic approach to identifying and eliminating non-value added activities through continuous pursuit of improvement in consumer/client satisfaction.

We strive to attain the principles of Lean Six Sigma in the improvement of our processes and, most importantly, in the pursuit of continuous improvement in satisfaction of the people we support.

For more information about the RHA Health Services website please contact [dvalentine@rhanet.org](mailto:dvalentine@rhanet.org) or [Richelle.mitchell@rhanet.org](mailto:Richelle.mitchell@rhanet.org)

## Asheville Community Partnership Wins Award

C3356, the community partnership behind Asheville’s new behavioral health treatment and crisis center, has received statewide honors for its work to improve health care services in the Buncombe County region. The N.C. Council of Community Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Programs honored Vaya Health, and key partners including RHA with a “*Programs of Excellence Award for Partnerships to Improve Services*” shown here.



An excerpt from a Vaya Health Press Release written by Rachel Leonard-Spencer 828-225-2785

## AROUND THE COMPANY



Approximately 95% of those that enter the PLR do so alone.

"The ruler is left outside" meaning everyone in the PLR comes in as equals.



*Dan Grunau, NCCPSS*

I am the Team Lead for the Peer Living Room. I helped developed it, teach all the classes and hold all groups, assist in bridging consumers to resources, and do one-to-one support. Yes I do work an incredible amount of hours but I love it so much that I joke that if I had a bed here I'd sleep some nights in my office!



RHA Health Services  
Peer Support Services  
356 Biltmore Ave., Ste. 200  
Asheville, NC 28801  
Phone: 828.254.2700

RHA Health Services  
Clear Creek  
11950 Howell Center Drive  
Charlotte, NC 28227  
Phone: 704-545-7200



## Peer Support Services

Asheville, NC

### Greetings from the Peer Living Room!

Submitted by Dan Grunau, NCCPSS  
Peer Living Room Team Lead

The Peer Living Room (PLR as it's known internally) is a safe and welcoming place where people can share their experiences about their recovery journey together. Simply put, the PLR promotes human connection by slowly eroding the desire to isolate.

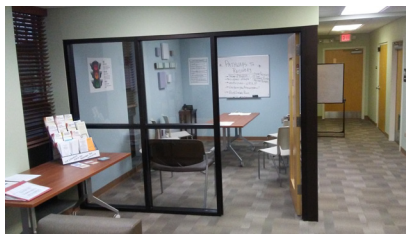
The PLR is a starting point for people and their peers to practice venturing out and connecting with one another in a secure and safe place. Approximately 95% of those that enter the PLR do so alone. Peers sit amongst those that have also come and here they can shed social phobias, build a natural support network, share stories of recovery and healing, learn how to be vulnerable and re-kindle their self-esteem.



*The Peer Living Room at C3356*

Peers become a fellowship in recovery supporting each other in a judgement free environment. All visitors respect a key understanding: "The ruler is left outside"-meaning everyone in the PLR comes in as equals. No one is measured by gender identity, money, class, race, religion, diagnosis, disability or substance use history. As a result the PLR becomes a place where peers can safely connect through shared experiences.

The PLR is a place of learning where a visiting peer need not verbally contribute, but is required to participate. Scheduled "Recovery Activities" include therapeutic groups and recovery related classes such as Boundaries, Healthy Relationships, Pathways to Recovery, Life Skills, Art of Emotions and more. We have a scheduled video TED talk with a feedback discussion everyday. A one-to-one with a Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) can also be scheduled. Needless to say, PLR is a very busy place!



*PLR Classroom at C3356*

## Clear Creek Celebrating Black History Month

"HIDDEN FIGURES" By: Gillette Johnson

The Hunter M. School at RHA Health Services LLC/Clear Creek in Charlotte, NC is commemorating Black History Month in February with an exhibit called "Hidden Figures in Black History". The exhibit is inspired by the movie "Hidden Figures" currently in theaters. The movie tells the incredible untold story of Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson - brilliant African-American women mathematicians working at NASA in the early 1960's who served as the brains ("human computers") behind one of the greatest operations in history: the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit, a stunning achievement that restored the nation's confidence, turned around the Space Race, and galvanized the world. The visionary trio crossed all gender and race lines to inspire generations to dream big. "Hidden Figures" the movie (and our exhibit on a much smaller scale) pays heartfelt tribute to remarkable women who broke color and gender barriers out of the spotlight, with no headlines proclaiming their achievements.





## Employment Services

Raleigh, NC

Submitted by Monika LaPrad



### Six Years On The Job!

When Robert was referred to RHA, he was 39 years old and had never held a job longer than three months. Because of all the challenges that Robert faces with his disabilities, we decided to specially tailor or “carve” out a career path just for him.

Within two weeks we were able to secure employment for Robert at Hungry Howie’s Pizza. The restaurant owner desperately needed someone to pre-make their pizza boxes which was being done by the delivery drivers, so he decided to give Robert that task! This job would allow Robert to work independently, but more importantly gave him the opportunity to be part of the Hungry Howie’s family. RHA worked closely with Robert to learn his new duties and to help build relationships with his coworkers. Fostering these natural supports are important for long term employment success. Because of Robert’s outgoing personality and a smile that can light up a room, he quickly became a great addition to the team and was well received by customers and coworkers.

Robert works as a “professional boxer” four days a week and enjoys his weekly paycheck and free meal after each work shift. With a great relationship with his employer and support from the Raleigh RHA Employment Services Team, January 2017 made it 6 years of employment for Robert at Hungry Howie’s Pizza!

See Robert at work on this video link:

<http://rhahealthservices.org/all-about-outcomes/>

for more information about Employment Services contact:

[mlaprad@rhanet.org](mailto:mlaprad@rhanet.org) or 919-803-2760.

## Employment Services Charlotte partners with VR to host 2nd Annual Joint Career Fair

The career fair was well attended by over 70 job seekers and 15 employers. They had a chance to speak directly to the human resource managers from various industries represented and participate in on-site job interviews. The event received high reviews across the board and three people participating in our Employment Services Program got jobs! The next job fair will be scheduled in the spring.

for more information about Employment Services/Charlotte contact:

[grichardson@rhanet.org](mailto:grichardson@rhanet.org) or 980.406.3847.

## CALDWELL C3 COMPREHENSIVE CARE CENTER

### Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Marks Grand Opening of Caldwell C3 Comprehensive Care Center in Lenoir

On Tuesday, February 21, the Caldwell C3 Comprehensive Care Center, located at 2415 Morganton Blvd. in Lenoir, NC will host a ribbon-cutting to announce its grand opening. The Caldwell C3 Center offers crisis stabilization services and a wide range of outpatient treatment and recovery support for people with behavioral health needs, all under one roof. This innovative new center will serve the residents of Caldwell, Alexander and McDowell counties and is the result of close collaboration between community stakeholders across these three counties, including Vaya Health MCO, RHA Health Services, Caldwell County, The NC Housing Finance Agency and the Foothills Foundation.

The ribbon cutting ceremony will begin at 2:00 pm and includes presentations by: Jason Vogler, Ph.D., Interim Senior Director of the NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services; Caldwell County Commissioner Mike LaBrose; Brian Ingraham, CEO of Vaya Health MCO; Gordon J. Simmons, CEO, RHA Health Services; Rich French, Board Member of the Foothills Foundation; Margrit Bergholz, NC Housing Finance Agency and Rebecca T. Smith, COO of Caldwell WNC Healthcare. Two NC General Assembly Members – Sen. Ralph Hise, District 47, and Rep. Josh Dobson, District 85, have also submitted statements of support which will be read during the ceremony.

Contact: Please contact Derrick Jordan, Director @ 828-394-5563 for more information



The Behavioral Health Jacksonville Unit Christmas Party.  
Jacqueline Holcomb – Receptionist  
Paula Valles – Clinician  
Rose Centeno – Medical Records



Newton, NC



Submitted by  
Samantha Smith

Fifty children at New Beginnings Learning Center were entertained on December 15, 2016 by a choir from RHA Health Services-Maiden Unit led by Samantha Smith. Choir members; Santa, Scott Brown, Elf, Judy Wilcox, Jingle Bell, Samantha Smith, Elf, Emilie Phillips, Christmas Joy, Adrienne Mayfield, Gift Box, Aaron Shuford, and Reindeer Cheryl Niemczura were all eager to start tuning up their voices!

### Governor Roy Cooper Chooses Dr. Mandy Cohen to lead NC Department of Health and Human Services



RALEIGH —

Gov. Roy Cooper's choice to head the state's Department of Health and Human Services is Dr. Mandy Cohen, a physician, and a former top official in the federal agency that runs Medicare and Medicaid. Cohen, who lives in Washington and served as the chief operating officer and chief of staff at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

If confirmed by the state Senate, she will lead North Carolina's largest department, with around 16,000 employees. The sprawling state agency covers public health, mental health, social services, and early childhood education. "Clearly, we're going to be entering difficult times in the area of health care," Cooper said. "We need a good manager, someone who understands health-care policy in the health-care arena. We are lucky to get Dr. Cohen to agree to come and head up our department in North Carolina." Cohen pledged to work with legislative leaders and other interests in the health-care debate.

I know there is a lot of work ahead of us, but it's work that I know well," she said. "I've done it at the federal level and look forward to doing it here in North Carolina." Rep. Nelson Dollar, a Republican from Cary involved in health-care legislation, said Cohen's strong qualifications and experience should benefit the state, especially as North Carolina is separately asking the federal government for permission to privatize Medicaid.

Dr. David Hill, an N.C. Pediatric Society board member, was encouraged that Cooper chose someone with deep knowledge of Medicaid. Most of the 1.9 million people enrolled in the state Medicaid program are children. Pediatricians were excited to see someone with a "wealth of experience and knowledge" chosen to run DHHS, he said. "Anything to do with Medicaid in the state will have an inordinate impact on our children," Hill said. "The sooner the state has a leader in place who understands the ins and outs of health care management, the better off all our children and providers will be."

Dr. Marvin Swartz, a professor of psychiatry at Duke University, said having a leader with Cohen's experience will be an asset. "She will also be an excellent liaison with CMS with whom we will negotiate the path forward with Medicaid," he said in an email. "It is hard to imagine a more qualified applicant and one with a relatively gentle learning curve."

Craig Jarvis: 919-829-4576, @CraigJ\_NandO

Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article126348819.html#storylink=cpy>

## Veterans Day is Everyday

*Written by one of our own—John Garland, ED.S, M.Ed. LPC  
USAF 1983-1987. John is an Outpatient Therapist with Behavioral Health.*

Many have come before us. Too many more will follow after us. Most will come home, some will not. Take the time to thank the ones who are still with you. We were first your children, brothers, sisters, parents, aunts, uncles and cousins. For whatever personal reason, known only to us but for a cause we believe in, we chose to serve our country. While we may smile, nod and look down and modestly deflect your attention, we are more likely to comment on the ones still serving here and abroad, then redirect your thanks to them. Alone in a more private moment, we will reflect on your thanks and secretly wish more were like you. Your recognition means far more than you may ever realize.

Whether in the sky, in space, on the ground, at sea or under the oceans . . . only God and our commanding officers know where our Special Forces are. While we may come from different tribes and there are many of us. Though the colors of our war paint, head dress and uniforms vary widely, we are the men and women who volunteered or were drafted but made a personal decision to serve. We are your brothers and sisters. For veterans everywhere, everyday is Veterans Day. Thank your veteran today and be content in knowing, we believe in you too.

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