

UNC Health Nash Board Chairman's Annual Update



Kenneth Arrington,
Chairman of the
Board of Commissioners,
UNC Health Nash



January 2026 – It is time for the annual UNC Nash Board of Commissioners update, and as the new Chairman, I am excited to provide this update on behalf of our board for the first time. As we start each new year, we like to look back on the previous year as a team to see what we accomplished together for our patients, their families and our community as a whole. As we continued to prioritize quality, safety and the patient experience, it allowed us to accomplish many notable items together while experiencing much growth along the way.

As we seek to better meet the needs of our community and position UNC Nash as the region's healthcare leader, along with beginning construction on our new seven-story inpatient tower, UNC Health Nash broke ground on two outpatient expansion projects in Nashville and Middlesex. Each facility will house eight primary care providers, opening in summer 2026, with plans to

later open urgent cares at both locations as well. Details continue to be posted to the UNC Nash website (www.unchealthnash.org/construction) and social media channels as the projects progress.

The UNC Nash Emergency Department completed renovations to enhance patient flow and operations. Upgrades include new patient care areas that allow for more patient privacy and increased efficiency in treating patients in the appropriate setting based on their medical need. The renovated space includes a results lounge that has comfortable seating, dedicated family areas, and a staffed nurses' station to support continuous monitoring and communication. This space allows patients with minor ailments to receive care upright, while beds are reserved for higher-acuity patients. Early results show reduced wait times, faster patient flow and a more streamlined, patient-centered experience.

As a key part of the UNC Nash strategic plan, we worked to expand our transfer-in program for surrounding community hospitals. UNC Health Nash received nearly 1,000 transfer-in patients over the last year to provide medical and specialty services unavailable in their home communities. Our transfer-in network now spans North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia, underscoring our growing role as a regional access point for advanced care. This growth has allowed us to invest in Gastroenterology (GI) and



Interventional Radiology (IR) capabilities, strengthening the high-acuity services available to our community.

Generous donations to the UNC Health Nash Foundation from our staff, medical providers, and community members continued to help the hospital invest in life-changing programs that benefit the health and wellbeing of our community beyond the walls of our hospitals. Programs like the community paramedic program, inpatient food pantry, patient assistance fund, and recovery support services, which address social drivers of health, improving



medical outcomes for our most vulnerable neighbors and reducing medical costs overall.

To further improve those program offerings, during our annual Employee Giving Campaign our team members donated and pledged more than \$135,500 this past year. Funds went to the aforementioned programs, various UNC Nash service line funds to expand resources for patients, as well as the United Way Tar River Region. For those interested in supporting these partnerships and programs through the UNC Health Nash Foundation, or learning more about the programs mentioned, visit: www.unhealthnashfoundation.org or contact Kathleen Fleming at kathleen.fleming@unhealth.unc.edu or 252-962-8583.

We worked diligently to recruit new providers and establish key partnerships that allowed us to stabilize, strengthen and expand service line offerings in primary care, orthopedics/spine, heart,

cancer, ENT, general surgery, infectious disease, and maternity care. We also continued our partnership with the OIC Family Medical Center to help provide new pediatrics and OBGYN practices, as well as expanded our partnership to include a mobile primary care clinic bus to better meet the needs of the community.

UNC Health Nash achieved several notable milestones that reflect our continued commitment to delivering safe, high-quality care to the communities we serve. The hospital earned an “A” Leapfrog Safety Grade and was recognized as a Leapfrog Top General Hospital. We were also honored by the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) as a Center of Excellence in Surgical Safety: Prevention of Retained Surgical Items, becoming the first hospital within the UNC Health system and one of only three in North Carolina to receive this distinction. In addition, UNC Health Nash achieved its third consecutive Pathway to Excellence® re-designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center, placing us among only 10 hospitals statewide. Our clinical excellence was further recognized by U.S. News & World Report, which again named UNC Health Nash “High Performing” in Heart Failure and, for the first time, “High Performing” in Stroke in its 2025–26 Best Hospitals report. U.S. News & World Report also recognized the Nash Women’s Center as one of their Best Hospitals for Maternity Care.

Looking to the future for UNC Health Nash, an exciting time of growth, expanded services, and a much larger impact on our community and region lies ahead of us. We are thankful for our staff, medical providers, leadership, and our Board of Commissioners for working together to help Nash achieve our strategic vision of becoming our region’s market leader. Everything outlined in this update aims to improve ease of access to care, expand our service line offerings, provide exceptional quality care, strengthen patient resources, improve the patient experience, bolster our workforce and engage our community. We do not take the obligation we have to the communities we serve lightly, and we will continue to work hard to provide exceptional care for every patient, every time while offering the best services right here at home.