



Eastern District NCPHA

2025-26 EDNCPHA Leadership

President: Victoria Hudson
Orange County Health Dept

President-Elect: Nina Oliver
Carteret County Health Dept

Vice-President: Robert Bowen
Graville Vance Public Health Dept

Secretary: Miranda Keel
MTW District Health Dept

Treasurer: Djuana Register
NCDHHS

Past President: Trey Wright
Rockingham County Health Dept

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President's Message

Colleagues,

Imagine still water. The smallest movement, a small splash of one more drop of water, causes the rippling effects—sometimes as waves, sometimes as rings. The ripples can go far out from the disruption and way beyond



what we can see. Did you know that tiny change in the water is called the “point of disruption?” Disruption. Public health is working with some serious disruptions and ripples right now. State and federal policy shifts are sending the effects straight to our local doors such as funding uncertainty, billing pressures, reporting expectations, and actions which limit our clients and staff from getting what they need. And still, public health shows up.

We open the clinics. We visit the babies. We answer the calls. We staff the shelters. We test the water. We stretch the dollars. We protect the people. That is exactly why our 66th Annual Eastern District Education Conference, “From State to Community, The Ripple Effect in Public Health,” could not be more timely.

From May 13 to 15 in Atlantic Beach, we are tackling disruption head on. Expect direct conversation about state funds, revenue maximization, fiscal responsibility, accreditation updates, and the practical implications of policy changes. These are not theoretical discussions; they are the issues sitting on your desk right now. This conference is not just about navigating change. It is about energy, connection, and perspective.

I am most excited to see you: the side conversations, the honest exchanges about what is working and what is not, and the shared problem solving. That is where progress happens. We will also lean into some well-earned joy. Join our first Sit A Thon, face the waves and remain seated as long as possible, and raise scholarship funds while reminding us that resilience sometimes means holding steady. This year, we have switched to a classic Atlantic Beach style music bingo and a potato bar dinner, and we have the right balance of purpose and fun.

The ripples are real. So is our capacity. Mark your calendar. Bring your team. Pack your beach chair.

Victoria Hudson, President

President-Elect's Message

Welcome Spring!

It's almost that time! Almost time for the Annual Eastern District North Carolina Public Health Association (EDNCPHA) conference to convene again. This year I am sure we are all REALLY looking forward to it.

Why? At the end of January and into early February, Eastern North Carolina got walloped with a ton of snow. While this area has seen snow before, it's rare that we see this much wintry weather. Areas in Carteret County received 15-19 inches of snow! While this was welcomed by kids, most adults were happy to see it go (including me).

The Eastern District conference not only marks the beginning of beautiful weather, longer daylight hours, and the smell of ocean salt in the air, but also has you looking forward to seeing people you



haven't seen all year long, building eastern district comradery, learning new ideas, and refreshing your enthusiasm! The 66th Annual EDNCPHA conference will certainly do all of that and more! We have a robust and exciting agenda planned. Some of the conference highlights include:

- How policies and actions set by the federal and state governments shape and impact local public health systems;
- A panel discussion on the history of accreditation and changes over time;
- For the EH section, learn about SWIFT Teams and receive updates from the State EH Director Larry Michael all while earning 10 credit hours;
- A billing panel discussion moderated by Jenn Green from AppHealth and an overview on Agreement Addendums given by DPH Deputy Director Stacie Saunders.
- For evening activities, we will have our First Annual Sit-a-Thon organized by Trey Wright. Remember to bring your beach chair! All proceeds from this will go to support scholarships. Also taking place is Music Bingo and a potato bar dinner.

For the keynote session we have invited Mr. James Epps Jr. to provide a motivational and high energy message to the association. His presentation titled Stand the Watch: How to Stay Alert, Stay Connected, and Stay Focused in a Changing Environment will deliver an inspiring message, equipping attendees with tools, a renewed purpose, and clearer understanding of how to meet today's challenges with confidence and purpose.

Lastly, a HUGE thank you to the Executive Committee, Section Chairs, and to Djuana Register for all their efforts in coordinating this conference. It takes many hands to pull this event together and they have ALL done an excellent job!

I look forward to seeing everyone at the conference!

Nina Oliver, President-Elect



Treasurer's Report

We appreciate all of the recruitment and advertisement efforts of the membership. Please remember the address for EDNCPHA has changed. The correct address is 3361 Obsidian Court, High Point, NC 27265. It is going to be a great time at EDNCPHA!

REPORT DATE	February 2026
ACCOUNTS BALANCE	
CHECKING	\$11,773.27
SAVINGS	\$35,195.86
MEMBERSHIP TOTALS	
	YTD 2025-26
PAID MEMBERS	41
NEW MEMBERS	7
RENEWALS	34

Proposed Bylaw Amendments

Proposed Bylaw Amendments for Membership Consideration

The following bylaw amendments have been proposed and will be presented to the membership for review and vote in accordance with the organization's amendment procedures:

1. Treasurer Term Structure
 - Current Language: The Treasurer serves a one-year term.
 - Proposed Revision: Remove the defined one-year term and allow the Treasurer position to serve in an open-ended capacity, subject to the organization's existing election and governance procedures.
 - Rationale: To promote continuity in financial oversight, strengthen organizational stability, and preserve institutional knowledge.
2. Secretary Term Extension
 - Current Language: The Secretary may serve one term.
 - Proposed Revision: Allow the Secretary to serve up to two consecutive terms.
 - Rationale: To support leadership continuity, maintain consistency in recordkeeping, and enhance operational stability.

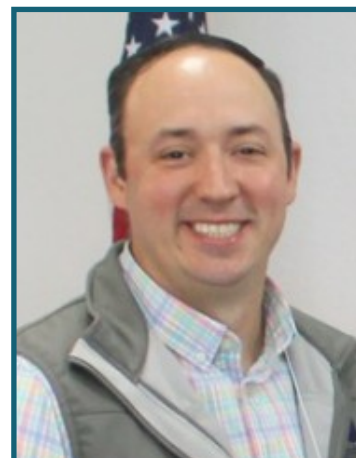
Members are encouraged to review these proposals carefully and participate in the upcoming vote.

Thanks,
Robert Bowen, Vice President

Awards and Scholarships

It is an honor to nominate worthy Health Departments, Programs, and professionals for their hard work. The **Awards Committee** has begun to accept nominations for 2026.

For additional details about the awards, please see: <https://easterndistrictpublichealth.org/awards/>. The link to submit award applications is: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8586267/EDNCPHA-2026-Awards>.



Contact Trey Wright, EDNCPHA Awards Committee Chair, at fwright@rockinghamcountync.gov with any questions or concerns.

The **Scholarship Committee** has begun accepting nominations for academic year 2026-27. Applications are due by April 21, 2026.

Members can learn more about each award, eligibility, and the fine details at <https://easterndistrictpublichealth.org/scholarships/>.



Please submit questions to Trisha Tant, EDNCPHA Scholarship Committee Chair at ttant@orangecountync.gov.

Thank you!

-Trey Wright, Awards Committee

-Trisha Tant, Scholarship Committee

Door Prize Committee



We are asking each section and each county to provide a door prize for the conference. Share something that represents your community!

Karen Prince, Door Prize Committee Chair

Special Projects Committee

We will have **t-shirts** again this year with the district logo. Shirts will be available for sale for **\$15** during the conference. We are asking all participants to wear current or past EDNCPHA t-shirt or your county's t-shirt on Friday for a PUBLIC HEALTH group photo.

We will also continue the **50/50 raffle** with the winner winning half of the proceeds. If you have questions, please contact Rhonda Mushaw, committee chair, by emailing rhondamushaw@warrencountync.gov.



Rhonda Mushaw, Special Projects Committee Chair

Environmental Health Section

The Environmental Health Section has been busy finalizing some very exciting speakers for conference this year. Our goal was to make sure there was something for everyone, regardless of your particular area of authorization. Conference attendees will be able to secure two-thirds of their required continuing education units just by attending this conference. That is a grand total of **10 REHS hours** for this fun and informative event!

Amanda Cabiness, Environmental Health Section Chair

Keynote Speaker

Keynote Title: Stand the Watch: How to Stay Alert, Stay Connected, and Stay Focused in a Changing Environment

James Epps Jr. is a Motivational Speaker, Leadership Trainer, Marine Corps Veteran, and Marine Corps JROTC Instructor who brings more than 22 years of distinguished military service and leadership to audiences across the country. Retiring as a Master Gunnery Sergeant—a rank achieved by less than one percent of Marines—James spent his career shaping culture, developing leaders, and standing the watch through some of the most demanding environments imaginable.



Growing up in Lake City, South Carolina, James overcame significant adversity, including poverty, academic struggles, and personal trauma. His journey from hardship to the highest enlisted rank in the Marine Corps fuels his mission today: helping individuals and organizations build resilience, strengthen culture, and lead with purpose.

As a speaker, James is known for his high energy, authenticity, humor, and powerful storytelling. His signature message, “Greatness Does Not Need Approval,” challenges audiences to believe in themselves, stay focused in adversity, and lead with intention—no matter the obstacles.

James currently serves as a Marine Corps JROTC Instructor at High Point Central High School, where he mentors and develops the next generation of leaders. He brings that same commitment to every stage, equipping professionals with the tools to remain alert, connected, and mission-focused in rapidly changing environments.

At this year’s conference, James will deliver his keynote, “Stand the Watch: How to Stay Alert, Stay Connected, and Stay Focused in a Changing Environment,” empowering public health professionals to recognize their influence in the ripple effects of policy, advocacy, and community well-being.

Attendees will not just be inspired; they will be strategically equipped to meet today’s challenges with confidence and purpose.

First Annual
SIT-A-THON

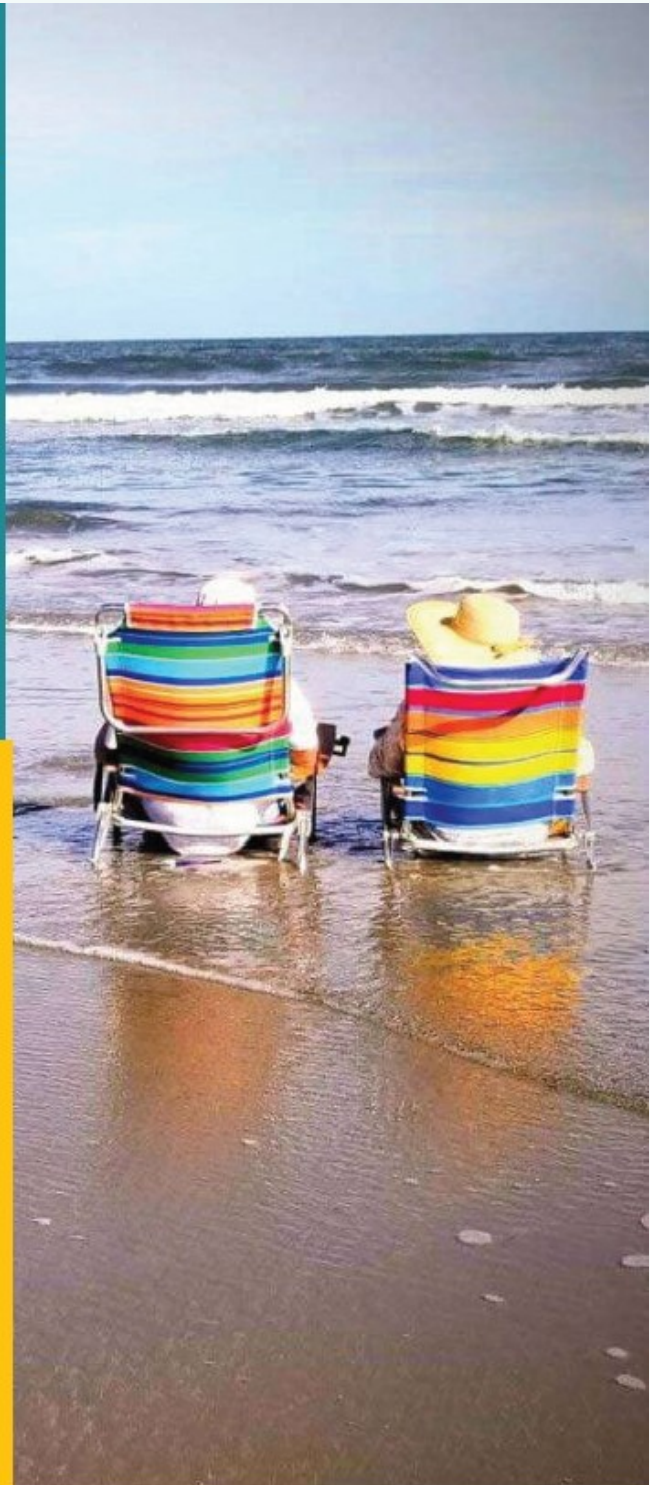
May 14, 2026

***Beginning
at 5:30PM***

DoubleTree Beach Access

Set your beach chair at the water's edge and stay put until the tide gives you a little nudge! The last one sitting wins epic prizes and legendary bragging rights for the year!

Supporting future public health leaders, proceeds go to the EDNCPHA Scholarship Fund!



**Entry Fee: \$10
BYOC!!! (Bring your own chair)**

For more information contact:
Trey Wright, fwright@rockinghamcountync.gov



How You Can Join or Volunteer

Since 1961 EDNCPHA has provided professional development, mentoring, and networking for public health in the eastern part of North Carolina. We work to educate, promote, and improve the health of all North Carolinians. In addition to your valued membership, there are opportunities to serve on committees and special projects.

Membership questions can be directed to the membership chair, Djuana Register, at edncpha@yahoo.com. The Membership Application Form can be found at <https://easterndistrictpublichealth.org/membership/>.

Nominations for future leadership and committee appointments are being accepted. Nominations may be submitted to Trey Wright, nominations chair, at fwright@rockinghamcountync.gov.

Registration Committee

Greetings from the Registration Team! We are looking forward to seeing everyone again this year at Atlantic Beach. We encourage everyone to Pre-Register. By pre-registering, it will make things smoother for all. Packets will be ready for pick up at check in. As a reminder we will be accepting credit card payments for registration by contacting Djuana Register.

Looking forward to a wonderful conference and fellowship with friends!
Traci Bruce and Yulonda McLean



Conference Information

This year's annual conference will be held in Atlantic Beach and the dates are **May 13– 15, 2026**.

Conference information:

<https://easterndistrictpublichealth.org/events/>

The 2026 conference theme is **“From State to Community: The Ripple Effect of Public Health.”**

Conference Accommodations

This year's annual conference will again be held at the DoubleTree Atlantic Beach!

DoubleTree by Hilton Atlantic Beach

2717 West Fort Macon Road
Atlantic Beach, North Carolina 28512

For reservations, please call the hotel directly at 252-222-4010 or book online at <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/oajtdt-90f-8b6c0d95-7c3a-4744-99e9-4c1e9148170f/>

Ask for the conference rate using the code **90F** which is \$169.00 per night. Get your room before it is too late. The cut off for making your reservations is April 12th.





**Eastern District
NCPHA**

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

STAY INFORMED, VISIT www.easterndistrictpublichealth.org

MEMBERSHIP YEAR: JULY 1, 2025 - JUNE 30, 2026

ANNUAL DUES: \$35.00

NAME: _____

New Member Renewal

If new, name of person or organization you were recruited by: _____

Agency Position: _____

Email Address: _____

Home Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Employer: _____

Employer Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone #: _____

Please complete the Membership application and make check payable to EDNCPHA. To pay by credit card, please call 910-876-2510. You will need to scan and email your membership form to edncpha@yahoo.com

EDNCPHA
Djuana Register, Treasurer
3361 Obsidian Ct.
High Point, NC 27265
910-876-2510

EDNCPHA is composed of Six (6) Sections. An individual must be a member of EDNCPHA to qualify for membership in a Section. Please circle the Section or Sections to which you wish to belong.

Environmental Health FAMI Health Directors
Health Education Communicable Disease Nursing/Physician Extenders/Laboratory

Will you be eligible for Life Membership Yes No. (Life Membership requires retirement as of December 31, 2025, and twenty years of service in public health)

If you will be eligible, complete this section and return it to the Treasurer by March 1, 2026

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Afternoon Session

1:45 pm -2:45 pm **Panel Discussion: “From State to Community: The Ripple Effect in Public Health”**
Moderated by Stacie Saunders, MPH
Deputy Director, Division of Public Health

Panelists

Dan Gerlach, MPA, Consultant

Larry Michael, MPH, REHS, State Environmental Health Director Section Chief

Ashley Stoop, MPH, Health Director, Albemarle Regional Health Services

Marianne Waldrop, Carteret County Commissioner

2:45 pm- 3:00 pm Stretch Break

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm **Panel Discussion: Changes in Accreditation Standards**
Moderated by: Jerry Parks, MPH
Retired Health Director, Albemarle Regional Health Services

Panelists

Tommy Jarrell, PhD, Retired Health Director, Richmond County
Accreditation Site Coordinator

Margaret Nemitz, Accreditation Administrator, Senior Program Manager
NC Local Health Department Accreditation Board

Daniel Ortiz, REHS, Environmental Health Director II
Cumberland County Health Department
Accreditation Site Visitor

4:00 pm – 4:15 pm Break

4:15 pm – 5:00 pm **Business Meeting**

Presiding	Victoria Hudson, President
Secretary’s Report	Miranda Keel, Secretary
Treasurer’s Report	Djuana Register, Treasurer
Bylaws/Handbook Changes	Robert Bowen, Vice President
Slate of Officers	Trey Wright, Past President
Door Prizes	Karen Price, Door Prize Chair

5:00 pm **Dinner on your own**

7:00 pm – 10:00 pm **Networking Social**

Thursday, May 14, 2026

8:00 am – 9:30 am. Morning Java Junction

Health Education and Nursing Section

8:00 am – 8:30 am	Java Junction and Networking
8:30 am – 9:00 am	Welcome/Icebreakers and Introductions Jamika Lynch, BA Alliance for a Healthier Generation
9:00 am – 9:45 am	Convening as Intervention: Strengthening Rural Health Through Connection Nicole Crews, MPH, PMP, Senior Program Manager Rachel Marquez, BA, MPH, Senior Director Foundation for Health Leadership & Innovation
9:45 am – 10:00 am	Break
10:00 am – 11:15 am	Health Educators as Translators: Turning State Guidance into Local Change Amy Smalls, Opioid Program Coordinator Onslow County Health Department
11:15 am – 11:45 am	Section Business Meeting
11:45 am – 1:00 pm	Lunch on your own
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	2025-2030 North Carolina Cancer Plan Travis Greer, BA Comprehensive Cancer Control Program Coordinator Cancer Control and Prevention Branch NC Department of Health and Human Services
2:00 pm – 2:45 pm	Well-Being: Whose Job is it Anyway? Danielle Jusko, MPH, Coordinator of Prevention and Recover UNC-Wilmington Daniel Passonno, MPH, Health Educator NC State University
2:45 pm – 3:00 pm	From Campus to Community: Starting the Ripple Early in Public Health Education Tanya M. Bass, PhD, Med, CHES, CSE, Clinical Instructor NC Central University – Department of Public Health
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Break – Spotlight on Exhibitors
3:30 pm – 4:50 pm	From Campus to Community: Starting the Ripple Early in Public Health Education – Cont. Tanya M. Bass, PhD, Med, CHES, CSE, Clinical Instructor NC Central University – Department of Public Health
4:50 pm – 5:00 pm	Closing

Environmental Health Section

8:00 am – 8:30 am	Java Junction and Networking
8:30 am – 9:30 am	Food Safety has a Personality: Aligning Traits with Retail Program Standards Melissa G. Ham, REHS Cabarrus Health Alliance and NC Retail Program Standards Network Coordinator
9:30 am – 10:15 am	Legislative, Section, and Branch Updates Larry Michael, MPH, REHS State Environmental Health Director Section Chief NC Division of Public Health, Environmental Health Section NC Department of Health and Human Services
10:15 am – 10:30 am	Break – Meet the Exhibitors Silent Auction Begins – Make your Bids!!
10:30am – 11:15 am	Use of Technology in Onsite Wastewater Site Evaluations Erik Severson, PhD, Biology Onsite Wastewater Management Training Program Director North Carolina State University
11:15 am – 12:00 pm	What happens When Things Go Wrong: Common Septic Installation Problems and Solutions Scott Green – REHS, LSS Regional Soil Scientist Division of Public Health, Onsite Water Protection NC – DHHS
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch on your own
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	S.W.I.F.T. Team as a Resource Wilson Mize, REHS Branch Head, On-Site Water Protection Andy Blethens, REHS SWIFT Team/Private Well Program Team Leader
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Groundwater Education/Outreach Programs for the Public and Realtors Michael Ranck, PG Groundwater Program Manager Wake County Government
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Break – Spotlight on Exhibitors Silent Auction – Make your Bids!! Open to Everyone
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Foodborne Illness Investigations Michael Roberson, REHS, Environmental Health Regional Specialist Southeastern NC Division of Public Health Food Protection and Facilities Branch NC-DHHS

4:30 pm – 5:00 pm **Business Meeting/Awards/Door Prizes**

5:00 pm **Adjourn**

Health Director’s Section combined with FAMI

8:00 am – 8:30 am **Java Junction and Networking**

9:00 am - 9:50 am **Agreement Addendums – Importance, Improvements, and Future**
Stacie Saunders, MPH
Deputy Director, Division of Public Health
NC Department of Health and Human Services

10:00 am-11:30 am **Utilization of State Funds – Panel Discussion**
Moderator – Battle Betts, Jr. MPA
President and CEO, Obici Healthcare Foundation

Panelists:

Lisa Macon-Harrison, MPH., Health Director
Granville Vance Public Health

Steve Strickland, Assistant Health Director
Johnston County Public Health

Nicole C. Barnes, MPH, Health Director
MTW District Health Department

Cinnamon Narron, MPA, Health Director
Wilson County Health Department

11:30 am- 1:00 pm **Lunch on your Own**

1:00 pm- 3:00 pm **County Billing and Revenue Maximization**
Moderator – Jennifer Greene, MPH, DrPH
Health Director, AppHealthCare

Panelists:

Ashley Stoop, MPH, Health Director
Albemarle Regional Health Services

Billie James, Lead Biller
Granville Vance Public Health

Andrea Freeman, MPA, CLGFO, Administrative Officer III/Finance Officer
MTW District Health Department

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm **Break-Spotlight on Exhibitors**

3:30 pm – 3:45 pm **Section Business Meeting**

3:45 pm – 4:30 pm

**Regional Collaboration Round Table Discussion
NE Partnership for Public Health**

JaNell Octigan, MPH, Health Director
Beaufort County Health Department

Nicole Barnes, MPH, Health Director
MTW District Health Department

Megan Vick, MPA, BSHed, Health Director
Northampton County Health Department

Wes Gray, MPH, Health Director
Pitt County Health Department

Ikisha Mullen, Program Coordinator
NENCPPH

Finance, Admin., Management, and Information Technology (FAMI) Section combined with Health Directors

8:00 am – 8:30 am

Java Junction and Networking

9:00 am – 9:50 am

Agreement Addendums – Importance, Improvements, and Future

Stacie Saunders, MPH
Deputy Director, Division of Public Health
NC Department of Health and Human Services

10:00 am- 11:30 am

Utilization of State Funds – Panel Discussion

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Steve Strickland, Assistant Health Director
Johnston County Health Dept.

Nicole C. Barnes, MPH, Health Director
MTW District Health Department

Cinnamon Narron, MPA, Health Director
Wilson County Health Department

11:30 am- 1:00 pm

Lunch on your own

FAMI cont.

1:00 pm- 3:00 pm

County Billing and Revenue Maximization

Moderator – Jennifer Greene, MPH, DrPH
Health Director, AppHealthCare

Panelists:

Ashley Stoop, MPH, Health Director
Albemarle Regional Health Services

Billie James, Lead Biller
Granville Vance Public Health

Andrea Freeman, MPA, CLGFO, Administrative Officer III/Finance Officer
MTW District Health Department

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Break-Spotlight on Exhibitors

3:30 pm-4:30 pm

**Billing Risk, Revenue, and Batch Reporting Readiness
What Health Directors & Billing Staff Need to See Together**
Brandy Lanier, Public Health Consultant
NC Department of Health and Human Services

4:30 pm-5:00 pm

Section Business Meeting/Debriefing

Evening Activities

5:30 pm – until

**First Annual Sit-A-Thon (Depending on Tide Table)
Proceeds to support Scholarships**

7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

**Dinner – Potato Bar
Music Bingo**

Friday, May 15, 2026

8:30 am – 9:30 am Breakfast Buffet

9:30 am – 10:00 am Closing Session

Presiding Victoria Hudson, President

Recognition of Section Award Winners

Announcements Victoria Hudson, President

Installation of Officers Trey Wright, Past President

Plaque Presentation Nina Oliver

Incoming President Nina Oliver

Past President Comments Victoria Hudson, Past President

10:00 am – 10:15 am Break and Hotel Check Out

10:15 am – 11:15 am **“Stand the Watch: How to Stay Alert, Stay Connected, and Stay Focused in a Changing Environment”**

James Epps, Jr., Master Gunnery Sergeant, US Marine Corps Veteran
Leadership Trainer, Marine Corps JROTC Instructor

11:15 am – 12:00 pm Closing Remarks Nina Oliver, President

Door Prizes Karen Prince, Door Prize Chair

Adjourn Nina Oliver, President

****Mandatory Training for New Officers and Section Chairs will be conducted at the conclusion of the conference.**

