
North Carolina's Constitutional Right to Education and the Benefit to Health Care Providers

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In discussing education, Brenda Berg, President and CEO of BEST NC said *“if we are not failing, we are not trying, but let’s try to fail as little as possible.”* Education is a pillar of our society, and in no other industry is that more true than in the healthcare industry. In 1789, the University of North Carolina, my alma mater, was chartered and became the first

public university in the United States. North Carolina was the first state in the union to recognize the right to an education as a constitutional right. The foundation of every healthcare practice is the quality education and experience of its staff.

North Carolina is fortunate to be the home of some of the best medical and dental schools in the nation: University of North Carolina School of Medicine and School of Dentistry, Duke University School of Medicine, Bowman Gray School of Medicine at Wake Forest University, and Brody School of Medicine and School of Dental Medicine at East Carolina University. Raleigh is also home to the impressive Perry Health Sciences Campus of Wake Technical Community College, which I was fortunate enough to tour on Education Day of Leadership Raleigh. I had the opportunity to check the vital signs of a manikin in the nursing simulation suite, take an impression in the dental assisting lab, and learn from a paramedic in the EMS bay. Wake Tech offers simulation labs in medical assisting, nursing, radiography, emergency medicine, dental assisting, and dental hygiene to prepare their students for a successful transition into patient care.

Healthcare providers in North Carolina have a distinct advantage in that they have the opportunity to staff their practices with qualified graduates of the North Carolina education systems. Students who have the opportunity to participate in simulations, like those offered at Wake Tech, have valuable experience to offer on the first day of the job. In staffing a practice, healthcare providers should consider each candidate's education and experience, especially his or her technical knowledge and clinical skills including procedures, methods, equipment, and materials.

The healthcare industry is built on a foundation of individuals compelled to pursue a quality education, a right guaranteed by the North Carolina Constitution. By hiring a staff who has received such an education, healthcare providers and their practices can fail as little as possible.

About Madeleine M. Pfefferle

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