



## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE FOR HEALTH CARE FACILITY REPRESENTATIVES

### PANDEMIC HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE STUDY

Thank you for your interest in participating in a research study examining how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the health care workforce and the facilities where they work. To gather in-depth information about these issues, the North Carolina (NC) General Assembly has requested a study of key stakeholders across different types of health care settings to gather information in 15 key areas related to the COVID-19 pandemic. **You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a leader in a health care facility, and one who oversees and actively employs health care employees.** We believe that your views on how COVID-19 affected the health care workforce and your facilities will make this study meaningful. The study is being carried out by the NC AHEC Office (Lead: Hugh Tilson, Director), in collaboration a research team from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Lead: Cheryl B. Jones, PhD, RN). Leaders in AHEC regional offices are serving as a liaison between the research team and regional leaders, and facilitating the gathering and conveyance of information to the research team.

Participation in the study by the facility leader (or designee), will either involve completing a voluntary, confidential online survey (through Qualtrics) or responding to interview questions. Both the survey and interviews include the same questions developed from the 15 key areas designated by the General Assembly about how COVID-19 has affected the health care workforce and the facilities where they work. Participation in the survey or interview is voluntary and withdrawal can occur at any time without penalty. Furthermore, the individual participating in the interview can refuse to answer any question(s) without penalty. If you do not want to participate in this interview or if you would like to stop the interview at any time, you may do so. It will in no way affect you, your organization, or your health care workforce.

As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, we are taking several precautions to minimize this risk. To minimize the risks to confidentiality, we will code responses to the online surveys or interview questions using numbers and store these data in a separate file. The file that links individuals and their responses will be maintained separately in a locked electronic file. Only members of the research team will see responses to the survey or interview; data access requires the principal investigator's permission and two-step login information. We will not identify individuals personally or the organizations they represent in any public reports; individual names will never be associated with any information that is shared in the survey or interview. The information gathered from all health care leaders from across NC will be combined and reported as a group. We will compile and share aggregate findings in a report to the General Assembly, and also with our key stakeholders. In all cases no personally identifying or organizational-specific information will be reported. The survey or interview data and all study materials will be kept on file for 5 years at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, after which time the data will be destroyed.

There are no costs to you or others for participating in this study, and there are no expected risks to your participation. Neither participants nor their organizations will be compensated for participating in the study. Although there is no direct benefit for participating in this study, the

information provided may help the NC General Assembly, other state leaders, and organizational decision-makers better understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the health care workforce and the facilities that rely on them. This information, in turn, may benefit the workforce and facilities in the future by improving our understanding of factors that both aid and impede care delivery in NC during a pandemic, and developing strategies to address them

All research involving human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to [irb\\_subjects@unc.edu](mailto:irb_subjects@unc.edu) and reference IRB number 20-2337. You may also contact the study investigator, Dr. Cheryl Jones, by email at [cbjones@email.unc.edu](mailto:cbjones@email.unc.edu), or by telephone at 919-966-5681.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please give your consent to participate by either: 1) opening the Qualtrics survey at [https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_d1lo06mlejBUmot](https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d1lo06mlejBUmot) and responding to the survey; or 2) giving your verbal consent to the person conducting the interview. Completing the survey or agreeing to participate in the interview will serve as your consent.

Verbal consent given by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Participant)

Verbal consent given to: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Interviewer)

On: \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. or p.m.  
(Date) (Time)