



NEW RESTRICTIONS: On July 1, the window in which to end a pregnancy in North Carolina narrowed when Senate Bill 20 criminalized abortion after 12 weeks of gestation. It was one of the many changes to health care that locals faced in 2023. Photo by Vicki Catalano

their health care needs met while others must self-manage abortions.”
— **Kim Roney**,
Asheville City Council member

What have your experiences with regional health care providers been like in 2023?

“I continue to hear stories from people who are very frustrated with the lack of options and quality of care. We need to have a variety of high-quality health care options across our region in order to ensure that our residents are able to obtain the best quality care at the most affordable price.”
— **Terri Wells**,
Buncombe County commissioner

“I’m very privileged in my own access to health care and for not having encountered any major health problems recently. There have been quite a few cracks in my experience with mental health care this year, however, and that’s something that I see reflected in

a lot of my loved ones’ experiences as well. There’s a mental health crisis in adolescents and young adults especially, and our health care system doesn’t have the infrastructure to improve it.”
— **Allie Daum**,
senior at UNC Asheville

“I am a veteran and receive most of my health care at the Charles George VA, and it is outstanding. It truly stands out for friendliness, efficiency and compassion. Employees seem to enjoy working there, and the positive vibe is palpable.”
— **Monica Walsh Blankenship**,
veteran

“On a personal and professional level, I have found the waitlist for most services to be extensive and overwhelming. Behavioral health care is abundant in this area, and yet it is very difficult to get an appointment and even to get some providers to call you back. The wait for specialty medical care was so extensive in this area that I traveled to South Carolina for an appointment a month earlier than I could get it in the Asheville/Hendersonville area.”
— **Sherrie Pace**

“I have had some of the best experiences with regional health care providers in 2023.”
— **Michael Harney**

“The school system is blessed with outstanding partnerships with a variety of regional health care providers. From support in providing school nurses and athletic trainers to the opening of our first school health center at Clyde A. Erwin Middle School, health care providers have been responsive and proactive in supporting the needs of our students and staff. We look forward to opening our second school health center early in the new year at Enka Middle School.”
— **Rob Jackson**,
superintendent,
Buncombe County Schools

“In my limited experience, I think the regional providers have done well. I had a recent experience with the Mission ER, and they provided great care to my loved one. I work routinely with Decedent Affairs at Mission and they have dramatically improved in

their communication and support over the last six months. I do think there are significant gaps in mental health care for children and adults, and limited supports and placements for children who need higher levels of supportive care. The wait times for appropriate levels of care and mental health supports are entirely too long.”
— **Mick McGuire**

If you had an emergency, would you go to HCA or elsewhere? Why?

“Faced with a medical emergency, I would avail myself of the closest available care, and if that happened to be HCA, I would seek care there. Two years ago, I was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation and received excellent care from the doctors at Asheville Cardiology Associates, including a successful cardiac ablation performed in the Heart Tower at HCA.”
— **Terry Roberts**,
author

“Anywhere else. I recently took [a loved one] to the ER. After six hours waiting, we scrambled to get an urgent care appointment and went there. What HCA has done to Mission is criminal and is a shining example of how basic human rights, such as access to quality health care, can’t be trusted to executives in faraway boardrooms. WNC requires a nonprofit, comprehensive health system that prioritizes people, preventative care and long-term health over profit.”
— **Ben Williamson**,
nonprofit administrator

“Definitely not, unless I had a heart attack. I would go to Pardee or Advent for better quality care and to try and ensure a better outcome for myself.”
— **Helen Hyatt**,
activist and South Asheville resident

“Profit-driven health care creates outcomes like we’re seeing at HCA.

HCA continues to have many services that other local hospitals nearby do not. What has happened with HCA is an example of a larger systemic problem we’re facing in our country. I’ve been extremely inspired by the organizing of the workers at HCA as they advocate for better working conditions and better care for patients.”
— **Grace Barron-Martinez**

“I’ve gone to the ERs at St. Joseph’s and Mission, but thankfully, not for many years. More recently, however, I’ve read and heard too many horror stories to go to Mission’s ER if I had a choice. If it wasn’t a heart attack or stroke, I’d drive the additional 15 minutes to Advent.”
— **Jake Quinn**,
chair,
Buncombe County Board of Elections

“Excluding the confusion with various groups changing their relationship back and forth with Mission, my care has been good. I do feel like a viable alternative to Mission in the area would be good for all. There are great departments at Mission, and some not so great. But, again, my personal exposure has been limited.”
— **Monica Walsh Blankenship** X

ASHEVILLE CENTERED INTEGRATIVE MASSAGE
Marissa A Gross NCLMBT 12281
Restore, Unwind, Replenish
Schedule Online
avlcenteredintegrativemassage.square.site
avlcenteredmassage@gmail.com
252-588-0011
24 Sardis Rd. Unit F Asheville, NC 28806
@avlcenteredmassage



KIM RONEY



ASHANTI TERNOIR



TERRI WELLS



BEN WILLIAMSON

Happy Holidays
From: The Partnership for Substance Free Youth
To: You