



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact**

Melanie Lux  
803-331-4794

Jeri Krentz  
704-927-2260

**The Duke Endowment Awards \$15.3 Million to Health Sciences South Carolina to Advance South Carolina-North Carolina Health Collaborative**

COLUMBIA, S.C., June 2, 2015 - - South Carolina and North Carolina have many things in common: southern heritage, a love of good food and family, beautiful beaches and mountains. The two states also share burdensome health issues like unacceptably high rates of diabetes, stroke, obesity, heart disease, and health disparities.

Today, the Carolinas have a new commonality: a first-in-the-nation, dual state health collaborative made possible by a \$15.3 million grant to [Health Sciences South Carolina](#) (HSSC) awarded by [The Duke Endowment](#), a private foundation based in Charlotte, North Carolina.

HSSC was established in 2004 by leaders of South Carolina's largest research universities and health systems who shared the vision of improving health through research. As a result of The Duke Endowment grant, HSSC is collaborating with the health systems and medical schools of University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (UNC), Duke University, and Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in efforts to build upon the infrastructure and enable the use of data to improve health in both states.

HSSC [supported organizations](#) include research universities Clemson University, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), the University of South Carolina (USC), as well as health systems AnMed Health, Greenville Health System, McLeod Health, MUSC Health, Palmetto Health, Self Regional Healthcare, and Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System.

Minor Shaw, chair of The Duke Endowment Board of Trustees, said the award is the third multi-million dollar grant made to HSSC by the foundation. The Endowment awarded HSSC \$21 million in 2006 and \$11.25 million in 2011 to support the establishment of several SmartState® Centers, including the Healthcare Quality Center and Clinical Effectiveness and Patient Safety Center; statewide research-enabling information technology infrastructure and tools; and the creation of a nationally recognized Learning Health System. The new grant brings The Duke Endowment's total funding of HSSC to \$47.55 million.

"Health is our most precious commodity, and chronic diseases such as diabetes, stroke, and obesity threaten not just health, but also the economic and social health of North Carolina and South Carolina," Shaw said. "These problems are solvable, which is why The Duke Endowment has made a third investment in HSSC to further efforts to convene the best and brightest researchers, clinicians, and strategic partners across the two states. This grant empowers them with the technical infrastructure, information, and analytical resources needed to identify and implement meaningful solutions to the health-related challenges facing us today," said Shaw.

HSSC President and CEO Dr. Helga Rippen said the grant heightens HSSC's ability to enable research alongside clinical and community collaboration by providing actionable information and collaborative tools to accelerate learning and innovation and track progress.

"HSSC has shown that in South Carolina, with the right IT infrastructure and tools, university-health system collaborations are more effective at improving health through data-driven action and research and are more competitive in securing external funding for that research," Rippen said. "We are pleased that The Duke Endowment shares our vision to expand and enhance the incredible infrastructure we've built together across South Carolina. HSSC and its supported organizations welcome the opportunity to work even more closely with North Carolina's universities and health systems to address the serious health issues that threaten our states."

Commenting on the announcement on behalf of Duke University, UNC and Wake Forest, Dr. Iain Sanderson, vice dean of Research Informatics for Duke University School of Medicine said, "Our two states face major public healthcare challenges, and for that we need large scale solutions. This award from The Duke Endowment significantly expands the capability to share health information and learning health initiatives between North Carolina and South Carolina. Building on the infrastructure and governance that has been created by HSSC, three of the major research universities and health systems in North Carolina will now partner with those in South Carolina to share information, methods, tools, opportunities and expertise with the goal of improving health and healthcare for the populations of those states and beyond."

The Duke Endowment grant will also expand HSSC's Learning Health Community to other health and social service entities that can benefit from data and analytics. "There are no easy answers to today's complex health problems. HSSC looks forward to expanding our role by providing tools and infrastructure to those eager to make good health possible for all in the Carolinas," Rippen said.

#### **About The Duke Endowment**

Based in Charlotte and established in 1924 by industrialist and philanthropist James B. Duke, The Duke Endowment is a private foundation that strengthens communities in North Carolina and South Carolina by nurturing children, promoting health, educating minds and enriching spirits. Since its founding, it has distributed more than \$3.3 billion in grants. The Endowment shares a name with Duke University and Duke Energy, but all are separate organizations. Visit [www.dukeendowment.org](http://www.dukeendowment.org).

#### **About Health Sciences South Carolina**

Established in 2004, Health Sciences South Carolina (HSSC) is powering South Carolina's learning health community and is one of the nation's first health research collaborations. Today its supported organizations include seven of the state's largest health systems, including AnMed Health, Greenville Health System, McLeod Health, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) Hospital Authority, Palmetto Health, Self Regional Healthcare, and Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System, as well as the state's largest research-intensive universities, including Clemson University, MUSC, and the University of South Carolina with its Schools of Medicine at Columbia and Greenville. In 2014, HSSC was presented with the AAMC Learning Health System Champion Research Award and, as a national model, and through this award is mentoring academic health centers in several states on how to achieve Learning Health System capabilities. The unique collaboration was formed with the vision of improving South Carolina's public health and economic wellbeing through research. Visit [www.healthsciencessc.org](http://www.healthsciencessc.org).

###