Vidant Health continues its support for NCEast Alliance

Greenville, N.C. - June 7, 2019 - Vidant Health continues its support this year marking the fifth straight year the health care system has partnered with NCEast Alliance in an effort to boost economic development in eastern North Carolina.

NCEast Alliance is a regional economic development organization strongly advocating on behalf of regional communities and institutions in the East to drive growth. The Alliance recruited four companies to eastern North Carolina over the last 24 months with the help of its investors/partners and has a pipeline of over 40 companies interested in the region.

"One of the best ways we can support our mission to improve the health and well-being of eastern North Carolina is to support healthy economic development," said Dr. Mike Waldrum, chief executive officer for Vidant Health. "NCEast Alliance is a mission-driven organization focused on creating the right environment for business and pursing initiatives to improve the skills gap."

NCEast Alliance has assisted 17 public school districts secure more than $15 million in grants from private foundations to acquire technology and provide professional development for teachers to advance science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) competency. The goal is to boost student performance and interest in STEM-based jobs while elevating career exploration.

"Having a workforce of qualified candidates with STEM backgrounds is essential for economic growth," said John D. Chaffee, president and chief executive officer of NCEast Alliance. "Filling the skills gap and enabling employers to find talent is absolutely vital to growing our regional economy."

NCEast Alliance's STEM East and STEM Northeast Networks were created to elevate student performance and expand their knowledge of career opportunities in the region through partnerships between school districts and employers. Vidant is a charter member of the STEM East Network and is represented on the ENC Employers and Superintendents Advisory Council.

"Ensuring the Vidant team is comprised of the most qualified people is vital to our mission," said John Marques, chief human resources officer for Vidant Health. "The STEM East Network elevates middle school science and math and helps put students on a career path that we hope

not only improves the quality of their lives, but stimulates growth in the economy by ensuring we have the talent needed to meet the demands of area employers, including Vidant Health."

STEM East has espoused the notion of 'Strategies That Engage Minds' coined by Sam Houston of the NC Science, Mathematics and Technology Education (SMT) Center to emphasize that project-based learning is a better way to elevate learning and prepare students for work. STEM East and its partner school districts provide students qa   w21with exposure to education pathways that lead to careers in the region. The result has been an overall improvement in student achievement and a statistically significant improvement in the performance of minority students in math and science according to the NCSU Friday Institute.

"The foundation of our success is our partnerships," said Mark Hamblin, board chair for NCEast Alliance. "We are doing everything we can to support economic growth for our region and we can only achieve this mission with great partners like Vidant and a shared vision for eastern North Carolina."

Media contact: John Chaffee, 252-689-6496 or chaffee@nceast.org

About NCEast Alliance
NCEast Alliance is a regional economic development agency serving 28 counties in eastern North Carolina from the fringe of the Research Triangle to the Atlantic Coast. The organization, and its many partners, is involved in marketing and advocacy that supports company recruitment/retention, entrepreneurship, workforce development, and STEM education through STEM East, and a recently organized STEM Northeast. (www.nceast.org and www.stemeast.org).