NORTH CAROLINA Children's™

Wesley Burks, MD

Dr. Wesley Burks is an accomplished seasoned healthcare executive and academic leader who currently serves as Chair of the NC Children's Board of Directors. He most recently served as Chief Executive Officer of UNC Health, Dean of the UNC School of Medicine, and Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs at the University of North Carolina at- Chapel Hill. Known for advancing with a proven track record in expanding healthcare networks and strengthening research and educational excellence, Dr. Burks brings a proven commitment with his drive of strategic growth, innovation, and excellence across in academic health systems and beyond.

Dr. Burks led UNC Health from 2019 to 2025, overseeing the expansion of its network to include 17 hospitals, 20 hospital campuses, and over 900 clinics. His mission-driven leadership is marked by the establishment of new clinical, research, and educational partnerships, with a focus on unifying the statewide system to better serve the people of North Carolina. At UNC Health, he led with an unwavering focus on patients and teammates, creating a world-class workplace culture marked by a strong sense of purpose and belonging.

Prior to his current roles, Dr. Burks dedicated over 30 years to patient care, research, and education, joining UNC-Chapel Hill in 2011 as Physician-in-Chief of the North Carolina Children's Hospital. As Chair of the Department of Pediatrics and Curnen Distinguished Professor, he emphasized pediatric research, rural health initiatives and primary care education. Prior to his current role he was the Executive Dean of the UNC School of Medicine.

An internationally renowned expert on allergic disease and food allergies, particularly peanut allergy, Dr. Burks has led pioneering translational science work on the proteins of peanut and also immunotherapy clinical studies. His foundational work in this area has informed potential treatment regimens that have already been developed and are in current development.

Dr. Burks is particularly interested in developing and nurturing new and emerging leaders in academic medicine and healthcare.

Dr. Burks resides in Chapel Hill, NC, where he actively engages with the academic and medical communities. An advocate for healthcare innovation and education, he continues to influence the future of medical practice and training.

NORTH CAROLINA Children's™

Thomas Owens, MD

Thomas Owens, MD, is Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer of Duke University Health System (DUHS) and NC Children's Administrator.

With more than three decades of experience at Duke Health, Dr. Owens serves as the principal senior leader overseeing health system operations, working with enterprise leaders across Duke Health to deliver outstanding clinical outcomes and remarkable patient experience across Duke's network and the full continuum of care, from the hospital to ambulatory settings to care in homes and the community.

In his previous role as Senior Vice President, Dr. Owens managed DUHS-employed physicians, Duke Primary Care, Duke HomeCare and Hospice, Graduate Medical Education, population health management programs, and payer value-based contracts through Duke Connected Care.

As President of Duke University Hospital, our academic medical center was consistently ranked as North Carolina's No. 1 hospital for quality. In 2021, he and his DUH team opened the 350-bed, Duke Central Tower. In 2020, Dr. Owens played a critical role in leading DUHS's COVID response, collaborating with state government officials, operational leaders and frontline team members to care for our community, patients, and team during the pandemic.

In partnership with colleagues in the Private Diagnostic Clinic, community practices and the Duke University School of Medicine, Dr. Owens served as DUHS's lead executive in planning the Duke Health Integrated Practice.

Previous roles at DUHS and DUH include Chief Clinical Officer and Senior Vice President, Chief Medical Officer and Vice President, Chief of Duke Hospital Medicine Programs, Co-Director of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics Residency programs, and more.

Dr. Owens received his M.D. with honors from the University at Buffalo School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. He completed his Internal Medicine and Pediatrics training at Duke University Medical Center.

NORTH CAROLINA
Children's™

Ian Buchanan MD, MPH

Ian Buchanan is the Chief Operating Officer for North Carolina Children's (NCC). He co-leads the planning and development of North Carolina's first free-standing children's hospital, a $3.0 billion project that includes a 500-bed acute care pediatric teaching hospital, a separate adolescent behavioral health hospital, and an academic research enterprise on a 150–300-acre campus in the Research Triangle Region. His responsibilities also include securing financing, philanthropic efforts, service line development, and strategic pediatric partnerships across the state.

Buchanan is an experienced healthcare executive with a track record of operational, financial, and strategic success and extensive expertise in the clinical, academic, and industry spheres. For over 15 years, he has held a variety of positions within UNC Health, most recently serving as Chief Care Innovation Officer.

After graduating from Davidson College (1998), Buchanan earned his medical degree at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Medicine (2004). He then continued his education at UNC-Chapel Hill with a master's in public health (2006), focusing on Public Health Leadership and Healthcare Administration. Following a stint in the private sector at Optum, a UnitedHealth Group Company, Buchanan returned to UNC to hold a number of different executive positions within UNC Health.

Over the course of his career, Buchanan has and continues to serve on a number of boards and panels, including as a member of the North Carolina Advisory Committee on Cancer Coordination and Control, a position to which he was appointed by the Governor of North Carolina in 2015.

NORTH CAROLINA
Children's™

Morgan Abbott, JD

Morgan Abbott is the President of the North Carolina Children's Foundation, where she leads philanthropic, engagement, and strategic advancement programs for North Carolina Children's. She also serves as a strategic advisor to North Carolina Children's leadership on the intersections of philanthropy, engagement, governance, strategic planning, and operations.

Abbott joined the North Carolina Children's Foundation in December 2025, coming from Duke University and Duke Health. Prior to Duke, she was in private legal practice at Robinson Bradshaw & Hinson, P.A., where she represented early-stage nonprofit organizations on business and legal matters, including the creation and operationalization of the largest per-capita health conversion foundation in the United States. Before her legal career, Abbott founded and led an international nonprofit organization supporting a network of infant rescue and care centers in East Africa. Throughout her career, she has drawn on her experience as both a legal advisor and nonprofit founder to build sustainable programs and cultivate relationships grounded in trust.

Abbott earned her undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her law degree from Duke University School of Law. The mission of North Carolina Children's holds special meaning for Abbott as a North Carolina native and mother of three young children. She lives in Chapel Hill with her spouse, Matt Fox, their children, and an energetic goldendoodle.