

Chris Budnick - Allied Health Professional

Health Care Heroes

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Chris Budnick, far right, greets visitors to talk about Wake County's program.

Photo by Staff of Triangle Business Journal

Chris Budnick

Allied Health Professional

The [Healing Place](#) of Wake County/Recovery Communities of North Carolina

What motivates you in your everyday work?

The most rewarding aspect of my work is seeing how addiction recovery transforms the lives of individuals, families and communities. It is highly motivating to see people give of their time and talents out of gratitude for their new life.

What are your chief responsibilities?

My chief responsibilities as the vice president of programs with The [Healing Place](#) of Wake County are overseeing the operations for our 180-bed men's campus and 99-bed women's campus. This involves making sure that we adhere to our guiding principles (removing barriers to recovery, providing services on demand and operating from a chronic care framework of recovery management) while being responsive to the growing and frequently changing needs of the community. My chief responsibilities as board chair for Recovery Communities of North Carolina

include advancing our mission, organizing the annual Capital Area Rally for Recovery, cultivating recovery community organizations across North Carolina and hiring our first executive director. What do you enjoy most about what you do? I enjoy advocating for system changes that impact how people access recovery, sustain recovery and live full and productive lives.

What do you consider some of your major accomplishments?

Being part of an organization that has consistently focused on finding the best ways to help individuals, families and others impacted by addiction. A major accomplishment with Recovery Communities of North Carolina has been leading a grassroots community effort to establish our state's first recovery community organization.

How does your work impact patients and others in the health care community?

Addiction recovery is associated with health and wellness that extends beyond the individual. The [Healing Place](#) of Wake County grew out of a need for alternatives to emergency departments for individuals who are homeless and have a substance use disorder.

If you could change one thing about health care, what would it be?

The one thing I would change about health care is to change the perception that substance use disorders are self-inflicted problems and that failure to sustain recovery is an individual failing. Achieving this shift would place substance use disorders on par with other chronic illnesses that emerge from genetic, environmental and societal risk factors and will result in treatment shifting from an acute care model of intervention to a recovery-oriented system of care.

Why did you choose health care for a career?

I chose social work as a career based upon my own experience as a person in sustained recovery from addiction.

What do you do to relax and have fun?

Many of my friends and family would say I don't relax enough, but I do enjoy playing basketball and baseball, watching movies and doing archive research into the history of addiction recovery.

What do you like most about living in the Triangle?

The people – those I have worked with and those who are my friends.