



DESTINATION 2023

October 11-13

The Cherokee Convention Center
123 Harrah's Service Drive
Cherokee, North Carolina

WELCOME

Welcome to Destination 2023, Benchmarks' groundbreaking conference on mental health, substance use disorders, intellectual/developmental disorders, and child welfare! We are thrilled to gather together experts, practitioners, researchers, and advocates to address the critical issues that intersect these domains.

This conference serves as a platform for sharing knowledge, fostering collaboration, and advancing innovative approaches to enhance the well-being of individuals and families impacted by these interconnected challenges. With a focus on empathy, inclusivity, and best practices, we aim to create a supportive environment where attendees can engage in transformative discussions, gain valuable insights, and collectively work towards improving the lives of those in need.

We invite you to join us on this enlightening journey, as we strive to create a brighter future for mental health, substance use disorders, intellectual/developmental disorders, and child welfare.



DESTINATION 2023

INTRODUCING PATCH ADAMS

After he graduated from the Medical College of Virginia in 1971, Patch Adams began what would become his life-long mission: The Gesundheit Institute. The pilot project, which ran from 1971 through 1983, saw over 15,000 patients visiting his large 6-bedroom communal home, shared with friends, fellow doctors, and patients. To support this radical hospital, friends took outside work to support the love that comes from helping others.



As the pilot drawn to a close, Patch realized he needed to make his dream hospital a reality. No one was going to “give” him a hospital –Patch had to go out into the world and find the hospital of his dreams. After 36 years, Patch remains energized and ready to take on the medical cure-focused for-profit industry. Imagine:

- a free hospital that eliminates 90% of the cost of healthcare
- a hospital that isn't filled with anxiety about how to treat patients
- a hospital that allows the doctors to connect with the patients at an intimate level
- a hospital that treats the care-givers and care-receivers as friends
- a hospital that welcomes complementary practices, rather than shuns them.

Patch lectures and performs over 200 days of the year. He has travelled throughout the world delivering his message of peace and love while challenging the audience to love and care about themselves, their community, and our planet. Every year, Patch leads 9 different missions to lead clowns into impoverished communities, war zones, refugee camps, and disaster areas. Patch's dedication toward clowning has sparked a movement that has grown to independent clown groups in 120 countries.

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

October 11, 2023

5:00 pm Member-Only Cocktail Hour

6:00 pm Member-Only Dinner & Business Meeting

October 12, 2023

7:30 am Breakfast

9:00 am Opening & Keynote Speaker – Patch Adams

11:15 am State Leadership

12:00 pm Lunch

1:30 pm Keynote Speaker

2:30 pm Breakout Sessions

3:30 pm Breakout Sessions

5:00 pm Poster Session

October 13, 2023

7:30 am Breakfast

9:00 am Federal Partners

11:30 am Final Keynote Speaker

12:30 pm Raffles

1:00 pm Adjourn

let's get in touch

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about benchmarks

Benchmarks is a non-profit association of provider agencies advocating for quality and accountability among human service providers so that North Carolina's children, adults and families can realize their full potential, contribute to their communities and live healthy lives.