

Tarheel Footprints in Health Care

Recognizing unusual and often unsung contributions of individual citizens who have made health care for North Carolinians more accessible and of higher quality

Flo Stein, MPH



Don't let her small stature and soft-spoken nature fool you. Flo Stein leaves a large footprint wherever she goes as an innovator, leader, and advocate for people with substance abuse problems, as well as those with mental health concerns and developmental disabilities. As chief of Community Policy Management in the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (DMHDDSAS), Flo's responsibilities extend to all aspects of community services planning, development, and evaluation within the state's Local Management Entities (LMEs) and in the local provider system.

A proud Washington state native from a military family, Ms. Stein moved to Wilmington, North Carolina, and began her career here in 1971 as a substance abuse prevention specialist with the New Hanover County Drug Abuse Committee. She graduated with a BA degree in social sciences from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and subsequently completed her master's of public health (MPH) degree in Health Policy and Administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). Flo is a passionate UNC supporter and "bleeds blue" like most true Tarheels.

While completing her education, Flo founded and was the first director of Open House, Inc., a 24-hour crisis center providing counseling, shelter, and free medical care in New Hanover County. Flo subsequently served as the clinical director, deputy director, and executive director of Cape Fear Substance Abuse Center, Inc., a not-for-profit comprehensive drug prevention and treatment program where she developed the Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC) program and established a nationally recognized prison treatment program.

Moving her efforts to the state level in 1987, Ms. Stein began her work in DMHDDSAS's "Challenge 87" Substance Abuse Community Coalition Initiative and the early development of statewide adolescent substance abuse services. This work was closely coordinated with the work of Dr. Jonnie H. McLeod, chair of the Governor's Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse and the Governor's Interagency Advisory Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse among Children and Youth. Since then, Flo has taken on an ever-increasing amount of responsibility within DMHDDSAS from assistant chief to chief of the Substance Abuse Services Section to her current position as chief of the Community Policy Management Section. In this capacity, Flo is responsible for overseeing all aspects of community care for individuals and their families affected by substance abuse, mental illness, and developmental disabilities.

Flo has served on numerous statewide and national commissions, task forces, expert panels, and advisory groups, and has impacted services for persons with substance abuse and other disabilities, including funding and policy development, community corrections, AIDS services, welfare reform, women's services, and national outcomes measures. Within the state, Ms. Stein has been recognized for her leadership and service as a recipient of the Norbert L. Kelly Award, presented by the Addiction Professionals of North Carolina, as well as awards from the North Carolina Substance Abuse Professional Practice Board, the North Carolina Association of Behavioral Health Care, and the North Carolina Association of Drug Abuse Directors.

On the national level, Flo has provided outstanding leadership and advocacy for substance abuse, mental health, and developmental disabilities for many years. In November 2008, she was appointed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to its National Advisory Council. The SAMHSA National Advisory Council is a 12-member panel of experts who advise the US Department of Health and Human Services Secretary and SAMHSA's administrator on a wide range of public health matters related to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

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Throughout her career, Flo has prominently supported services to persons in the criminal justice system. She was awarded the 2003 State Leadership Award from National Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities "for her exceptional leadership, unprecedented partnership, devoted service, and outstanding contributions to improve the lives of substance abusing individuals in the criminal justice system." Flo has been recognized repeatedly for her many years of service to the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD) and currently serves as its president. NASADAD is the substance abuse single state authority membership organization that works to foster and support the development of effective alcohol and other drug abuse prevention and treatment programs across the nation. NASADAD also serves as the focal point of the states and territories in the examination of alcohol and other drug-related issues with federal agencies and other national organizations.

Two outstanding North Carolina women who have inspired Flo are Johnnie Horn McLeod, MD, of Charlotte, and Nancy Bryan "Lady" Faircloth. Dr. McLeod is a tireless advocate for drug treatment services in this state and recipient of the US National Library of Medicine "Local Legends Award: Celebrating America's Local Women Physicians." "Lady" Faircloth, a 1982 "Tarheel of the Week," mentored Flo in her early years within the North Carolina Department of Human Resources.

Flo is married to L. Worth Bolton, a fellow UNC graduate employed by the UNC School of Social Work and himself a longtime advocate and professional counselor for people with substance abuse problems and other disabilities. Flo is also the proud mother of one daughter, Kim Stein-Hoppin, a practicing attorney, and a granddaughter Emma, the charm of Flo's life. Flo loves to garden and is a long-time member of the Friends of the JC Raulston Arboretum at North Carolina State University. She celebrates her Danish heritage through involvement with Raleigh's Friends of Scandinavia, loves antiquing, and when traveling, loves to have the opportunity to visit local museums.

North Carolina is privileged to be the home of such a tireless and influential advocate for the citizens of our state and of our nation.

Contributed by

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