

UNCSA and the Kenan Institute for the Arts Partner with Art Pharmacy to Launch Social Prescribing Program

Novel arts-based health treatment to be available to improve campuses' student mental health



WINSTOM-SALEM, NC, UNITED STATES,
July 22, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Art](#)

[Pharmacy](#), a healthcare services company, is proud to announce the [University of North Carolina School of the Arts \(UNCSA\)](#) in partnership with the [Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts](#) is joining its network of educational institutions as the first arts conservatory to offer its social prescription to students to address well-being beginning in the fall 2025 semester.

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*Art Pharmacy Founder and
CEO Chris Appleton*

Art Pharmacy's solution uniquely combines decades of research in the field of arts and health with the care model of social prescribing, a model of care delivery that enables health professionals to formally prescribe non-clinical community activities— including the arts, movement, nature, and service — to improve student health.

“We are proud to collaborate with the Kenan Institute for the Arts to offer Art Pharmacy's solution to UNCSA's students and appreciate the university's leadership in innovating to address student mental health,” said Art

Pharmacy Founder and CEO Chris Appleton. “The social prescribing movement is growing throughout our country as anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation rates on college campuses are at an all-time high. Introducing non-stigmatized, readily available mental health interventions is critical for institutional partners looking to implement and scale social prescribing.”

Art Pharmacy reduces wait times and improves health outcomes for participating students through its tech-enabled, human-powered social prescribing solution. By working with the university's campus partners in student health services, counseling and psychological services, and student success, the team will pursue the goal of improving student well-being and reducing the risk of crisis care.

Through Art Pharmacy at UNCSA, Student Affairs staff will receive training in social prescribing, a holistic approach that connects individuals to non-clinical resources that support mental health and well-being. The trained UNCSA staff will be able to refer college and graduate students to Art Pharmacy, where they will be matched with community-based arts experiences designed to reduce feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression. Art Pharmacy, in partnership with the Kenan Institute for the Arts, plans to collaborate with a wide range of local arts partners, including museums, galleries, performance venues, etc., to offer opportunities that foster connection, creativity, and healing.

“As the first arts conservatory to partner with Art Pharmacy, we’re excited to lead the way in integrating innovative, arts-based approaches to student support, underscoring our deep commitment to mental health and wellbeing at UNCSA,” said Laurel Donley, Vice Provost of Student Affairs at UNCSA. “Through this partnership, we’re expanding what it means to support students in a conservatory setting. Our students have shared that they’re eager for more opportunities to step beyond the campus to engage with the broader community, and explore experiences outside their disciplines. We’re thrilled to add this to Take5!, our comprehensive effort to encourage students to pause, reflect, and care for themselves amid the demands of rigorous artistic training.”

“Our collaboration with Art Pharmacy and UNCSA reflects one of several strategic initiatives the Kenan Institute for the Arts is leading to prepare the next generation of artists for creative lives centered in wellness,” said Kevin Bitterman, Executive Director of the Kenan Institute for the Arts. “Over the last three years, we have been working in partnership with a local and national network of cultural, public health, and municipal leaders to amplify the social and health benefits of the arts in the lives of everyone - including artists. At UNCSA and beyond, the Kenan Institute champions the transformative power of the arts while working to build a thriving, resilient cultural ecosystem.”

The University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA) is a top-ranked arts conservatory and America’s first state-supported arts school. The nation’s only public university of five arts disciplines on one campus, UNCSA prepares emerging artists for careers in dance, design and production, drama, filmmaking, and music at the undergraduate through post-graduate levels, as well as through a specialized high school with free tuition for in-state residents. UNCSA provides industry-leading instruction in an inclusive environment where students are encouraged to leverage the arts as a mechanism for change. Interdisciplinary opportunities arising from the unique arts ecosystem on campus at UNCSA prepare artists to enter an evolving global arts and entertainment industry. Established by the N.C. General Assembly in 1963, the School of the Arts opened in Winston-Salem (“The City of Arts and Innovation”) in 1965 and became part of the University of North Carolina System when it was formed in 1972. For more information, visit www.uncsa.edu.

The Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts was established in 1993 to strengthen the arts by

initiating and incubating new ideas within the various constituencies and settings of UNCSEA. The Kenan Institute believes that artists and cultural organizations can contribute their creative ideas, visionary leadership and novel strategies to strengthen our culture, build businesses and generate innovative ideas. The Kenan Institute advances this vision by fostering new knowledge, developing capacity and forging strategic alliances across the arts and other sectors. To learn more visit www.uncsa.edu/kenan/.

To learn more about Art Pharmacy, reach out to Art Pharmacy at hello@artpharmacy.co or visit www.artpharmacy.co.

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