



MERIDIAN
HEALTHCARE

Press Release

For Immediate Release | August 10, 2026

For more information, contact advancement@mbhci.org

Meridian Healthcare Marks 30-Day Countdown to 10th Annual Steps to Wellness Luncheon

Celebrating a decade of Steps to Wellness and more than 50 years of serving our communities throughout North Central Florida.

Gainesville, Fla. (Monday, August 10, 2026) - Today marks just 30 days until Meridian Healthcare's 10th Annual Steps to Wellness Luncheon, a special milestone event that will celebrate both a decade of Steps to Wellness and more than 50 years of Meridian Healthcare serving North Central Florida. The fundraiser luncheon will be held on September 10, 2026, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Best Western Gateway Grand, 4200 NW 97th Blvd., Gainesville, FL 32606. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available online at MyMeridianHealthcare.org/steps-to-wellness.

North Central Florida is invited to celebrate this milestone event with Meridian. Alachua County and surrounding communities are encouraged to participate as anticipation builds for this historic event. Community members, local businesses, and corporate partners are invited to secure their ticket and sponsorships while opportunities remain available. This annual fundraiser is Meridian's signature event that brings together community leaders, healthcare professionals, local supporters to advance and recognize the importance of mental health and wellness.

"This year's Steps to Wellness is especially meaningful as we celebrate two important milestones," said Lauren Cohn, CEO of Meridian Healthcare. "For over 50 years, Meridian has been dedicated to improving lives throughout North Central Florida, and for the last decade, Steps to Wellness has united our community around the importance of mental health, recovery, and hope. We invite everyone to join us as we honor our past and invest in a healthier future."

The 2026 event will feature inspiring speakers, stories of impact, unique raffle items, and a look at how Meridian continues to meet the growing behavioral health needs of the region. Guests will also have the opportunity to participate in an exclusive auction benefiting The Retreat campaign at Meridian's Gainesville campus. As the first sponsor of The Retreat Campaign, [First Federal Bank](#) has demonstrated extraordinary leadership in supporting mental health and wellness across our region. Meridian is proud to recognize their continued partnership and generous support of the 10th Annual Steps to Wellness Luncheon, helping advance a future where individuals and families have access to the care, resources, and hope they deserve.



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Be Part of the Celebration

Attendees can choose from single tickets, table(s), and various sponsorship levels. Businesses and organizations looking to demonstrate their support and promotion of mental health and community wellness can participate through sponsorship levels ranging from \$250 Supporter Sponsorships to the \$5,000 Presenting Sponsor opportunity. Sponsorship benefits include event recognition, media exposure, website visibility, social media promotion, and additional engagement opportunities based on sponsorship level. Thank you to [WellFlorida Council](#) for becoming the first sponsor of Meridian's 2026 Steps to Wellness event. We are grateful for their partnership and shared commitment to promoting health and wellness in our community.

Every Step Counts. Every Year Matters.

Join us as we celebrate more than five decades of service at the 10th Annual Steps to Wellness, on September 10th from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. This inspiring fundraiser will feature meaningful conversations, powerful community impact stories, chef-prepared brunch and lunch selections, and motivational speakers. Guests will connect with community leaders, advocates, and supporters who share a commitment to advancing mental health and wellness throughout North Central Florida. Meridian Healthcare invites the community to help continue a legacy of hope, healing, and compassionate care for generations to come. Visit MyMeridianHealthcare.org/steps-to-wellness to learn more.

About Meridian Healthcare

[Meridian Healthcare](#) is a comprehensive community behavioral healthcare organization located in North Central Florida. With services available throughout North Central Florida, Meridian provides services over [14 counties](#) including: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Putnam, Marion, Lafayette, Levy, Nassau, Suwannee, and Union. Meridian is [CARF](#) accredited and licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families and the Agency for Healthcare Administration. It is our mission that together we'll transform communities from the inside out, by providing life-changing behavioral healthcare. For more information, please visit mymeridianhealthcare.org/ and follow us on social media.

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