Buncombe County Commissioner Briefing Presentation

Angie Garner

Community Relations Regional Director

November 18 , 2025

Who We Are

- Vaya Health is a local political subdivision of the state of North Carolina and a Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization (LME/MCO) governed by Chapter 122C of the North Carolina General Statutes.
- Vaya Health is one of 4 **Tailored Plans** in NC which manages publicly-funded mental health, substance use disorder, intellectual/ developmental disability, and traumatic brain injury services in 32-county region.
- NCGS § 122C-115.4(a): “Local management entities are responsible for the management and oversight of the public system of mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse services at the community level. An LME shall plan, develop, implement, and monitor services within a specified geographic area to ensure expected outcomes for consumers within available resources.”

What is a Tailored Plan?

July 2024 - The launch of Standard Plans (Healthy Blue, AmeriHealth Caritas, United Healthcare, and WellCare) and Tailored Plans

- Plans are a new kind of NC Medicaid Managed Care health plan. They cover mental health, severe substance use, I/DD, TBI and medical, and prescriptions in one plan.
- The assigned Tailored Plan is based on the county that manages the Medicaid benefits for the member. You cannot choose a different Tailored Plan.
- With a Tailored Plan, your physical, mental, severe substance use, intellectual/developmental disability or traumatic brain injury needs are not separate.



Serious Mental Illness (SMI)



Severe Substance Use Disorders (SUD)

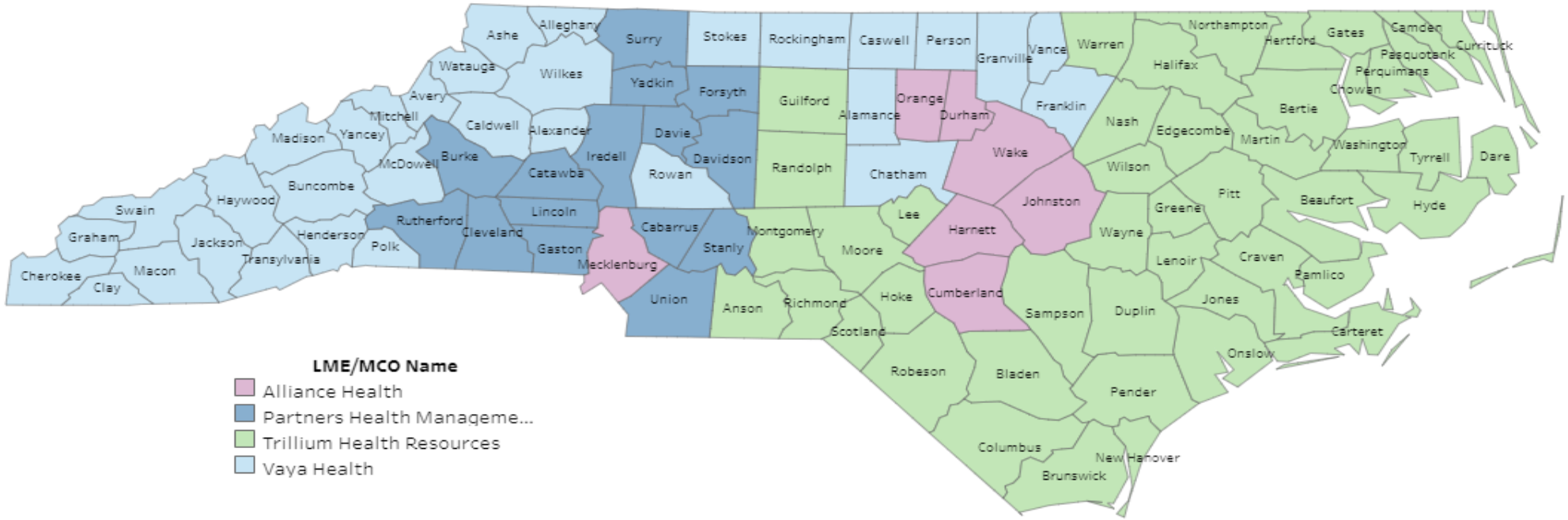


Intellectual/ Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)



Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI)

Who Manages Tailored Plans?



This map shows LME/MCO configuration effective 2/1/24.

Co-Responder Program

- Vaya received funding from answering an RFA in the Spring of 2024 from the Bi-Partisan Safter Communities Act: Developing Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention Models in NC. Buncombe was one of the three counites identified.
- Sheriff Office and RHA provide community outreach and timely response to community members who may be in crisis with a mental health and/or substance use emergency, overdose, or other issues, with trained and coordinated response personnel and other resources.

Child Recovery Programs

- In May 2025, Vaya received an allocation for summer recovery camps in counties impacted by Hurricane Helene.
- Vaya worked with NCDHHS to expand the allocation to support summer camp and after-school oriented recovery efforts this fiscal year.

Summer Camps supported in 2025

  - Eliada Homes, Buncombe County, **65 campers per week**
  - Mountain Roots Inc., Transylvania County, **average of 49 campers per week**

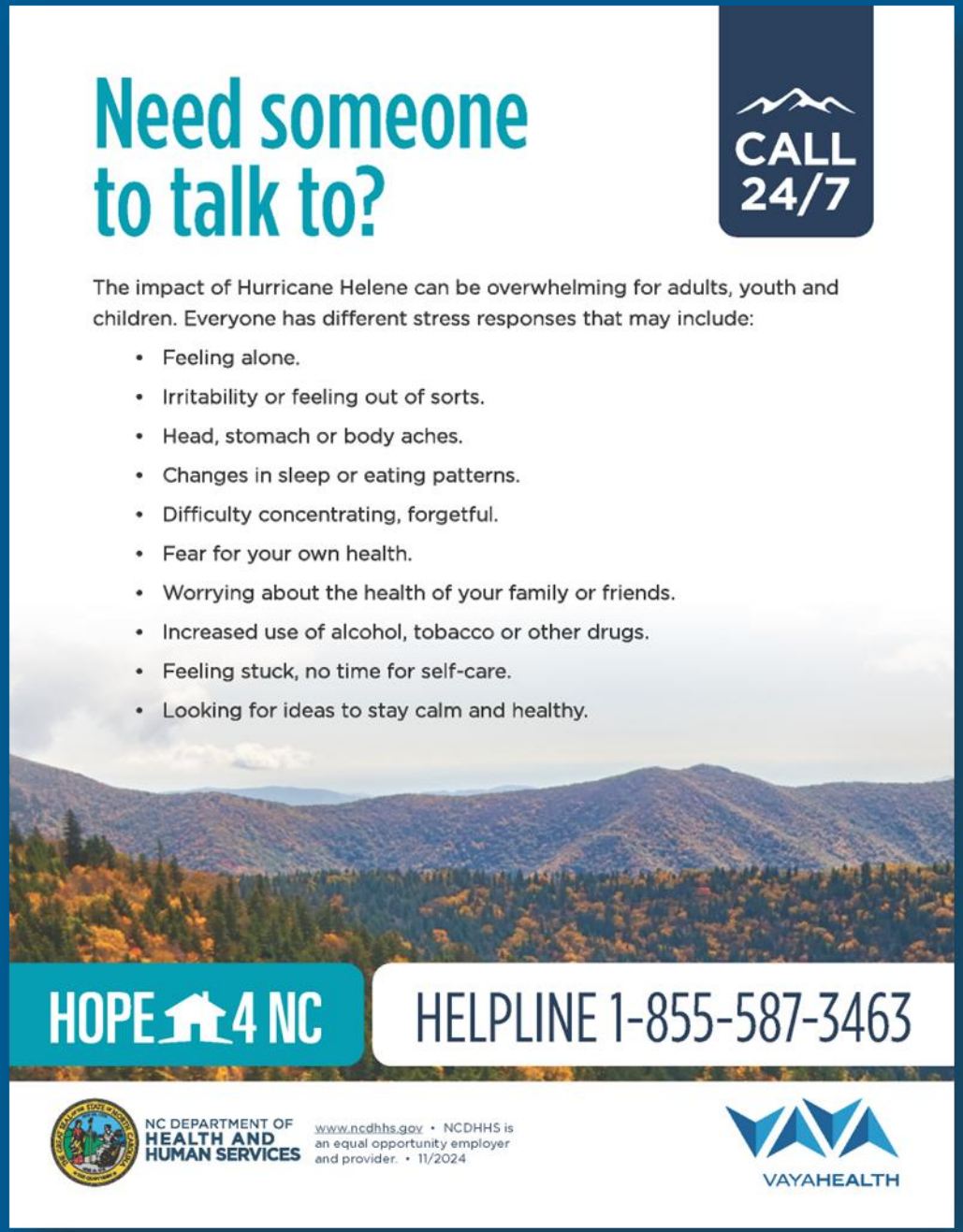
- Vaya has also identified agencies throughout the impacted counties that provide after-school and out-of-school time (e.g., teacher workdays) care for students.

Workforce Development Grant

- Vaya Health was awarded a $300,000 grant to run through September 2026 from Dogwood Health Trust to tackle the critical healthcare workforce shortages impacting mental health, substance use disorder, intellectual/ developmental disability (I/DD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI) providers across western North Carolina.
- The initiative is designed to strengthen the network of behavioral health, I/DD, and TBI providers in Vaya's network. The plan encompasses shared technical assistance, targeted recruitment efforts, and specialized training to drive meaningful and measured results.
- Currently working on the "improved education and training services" initiative.

Hope4NC Grant

- Free and anonymous for all residents in affected communities:
  - Individual and group crisis recovery outreach
  - Public education
  - Community networking and support
  - Assessment, referral, and resource connection
- Team Leaders, Crisis Counselors, and Community Liaison/Resource Linkage staff in each region
- No health plan required for grant supports
- Hope4NC Helpline: 1-855-587-3463



Hope 4 NC Grant, cont.

- No-cost extension approved by SAMHSA and FEMA; work continues through Jan. 26, 2026
- Provided on-site support for 36 first-annual Hurricane Helene anniversary events across the region.
- **Total Contacts with survivors to date: 69,419**
- Hope4NC is involved in all 22 impacted WNC counties weekly including EBCI events connecting people to recovery resources.
-

Vaya Transition and Housing

- Transitions to Community Living (TCL)
- Back at Home HUD Award
- Vaya Independence Project (VIP)
- Integrated Supportive Housing Program (ISHP)
- Housing Support Grants (HSG)
- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

Child and Family Specialty Plan

In August 2024, NCDHHS announced that Blue Cross Blue Shield will be the single Health Plan serving youth and families involved in child welfare/foster care system.

Many children and families will remain in Vaya Total Care and Medicaid Direct; Vaya will maintain our contractual relationships with providers and our dedicated residential crisis resources.

On December 11, 2024, NC DHHS provided an Amendment to the CFSP contract with BCBS revealing the following timetable:

- Implementation Period: August 15, 2024 through November 30, 2025
- Contract Year 1: **December 1, 2025** through June 30, 2026
- Contract Year 2: July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027
- Contract Year 3: July 1, 2027 through June 30, 2028
- Contract Year 4: July 1, 2028 through June 30, 2029

Federal and State Budget Updates

Federal

- Government shutdown continues
- Medicaid not currently impacted, and NC received quarterly drawdown
- Potential impact to grant funded programs and SNAP

North Carolina

- HOP program not funded
- Still no state budget or Medicaid Rebase bill
- House and Senate have each passed several bills that include additional Rebase amounts (or other Medicaid funding) but have not (yet) concurred in each other's bills
- Provider associations had been lobbying Governor to delay cuts

State Budget/ Provider Rate Cuts Update

- Governor Stein and Secretary Sangvai sent joint communication outlining proposed changes to FY 26 Medicaid budget and related provider rate reductions based on “Mini Budget” funding.
- NCGA did not fund NCDHHS full requested Medicaid Rebase.
- DHB formally notified health plans on Sept. 26 that provider rate cuts would be implemented Oct. 1st.
- Rate reductions include 3% to most service lines on November 1st.
- Vaya’s capitation rates will be adjusted downward to reflect these rate reductions.
- Tailored Plans and Standard Plans postponed full implementation until Nov. 1.

Vaya Health Helene Response One Year Later

- Awarded $6.9M in direct hardship grants to providers
- Outreached 1,725 Behavioral Health Providers and 1,768 Physical Health Providers
- Launched Back@Home Helene housing program
- Participated in the Multi-Agency Shelter Transition Team (MASTT)
- Outreached 12,398 high risk community members identified by NCDHHS within impacted counties in the weeks after Helene



THANK YOU