



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Advocates rally in support of recovery, healthier communities

The 3rd Annual Western Regional Recovery Rally took place Saturday at Lake Junaluska

Sept. 9, 2017 – More than 700 people came together Saturday at Lake Junaluska to rally in support of recovery from addiction, mental health concerns and other life challenges.

Under the theme “We Recover Together,” the 3rd Annual Western Regional Recovery Rally included a walk around the lake, speakers, community group booths, “recovery champion” awards, children’s activities and free food and drinks. Drew Christy, director of the Western Regional Office of N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper, stopped by to read aloud a proclamation from the governor designating September as Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month.

“(The governor) is a recovery ally,” Christy said. “He does have your back.”

Cooper originally signed the Recovery Month proclamation during an Aug. 31 visit to Vaya Health, an Asheville-based public managed healthcare organization. At Vaya, the governor also met privately with six western N.C. residents who are in recovery from addiction. Dr. Craig Martin, Vaya’s chief medical officer, helped facilitate the private session and spoke at Saturday’s rally.

“What I heard from them, and what I know to be true from my own experience as a physician, is that recovery does not happen in isolation – it must be a community-wide effort,” Martin said. “Recovery happens through education and increased awareness. Recovery happens through access to the right treatment and services. Recovery happens when community members rally together in support of one another.”

Martin added, “If you are struggling with a mental health or substance use challenge, remember that these things do not define who you are – there is more to your story.”

Event coordinator Richie Tannerhill, a peer trainer at Vaya, said recovery is no longer the exception.

“Recovery does happen,” said Tannerhill, who has been in long-term recovery for 12 years. “People do get better. We do it together – as communities.”

The annual rally is sponsored by Communities Rallying for Recovery and a broad coalition of local advocates, individuals in recovery and family members, providers, nonprofits, government agencies and law enforcement allies. The event supports multiple paths to recovery and is not affiliated with any one group.

About Vaya Health

Vaya Health manages public funds for mental health, substance use disorder and intellectual or developmental disability services in 23 North Carolina counties: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey. Access to services and crisis help are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-800-849-6127. Learn more at www.vayahealth.com.

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