



NEWS RELEASE

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WNC residents invited to rally for recovery Sept. 9 at Lake Junaluska

Everyone is invited to the free, family-friendly event to support health, recovery and community

August 28, 2017 – The public is invited to join western North Carolinians from all walks of life on Saturday, Sept. 9, to rally for healthy communities and support recovery from addiction and mental health challenges.

The 3rd Annual Western Regional Recovery Rally will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Nancy Weldon Open-Air Gym at Lake Junaluska. The rally is a free, family-friendly event that offers a festival-like atmosphere, children's activities and a free hamburger/hot dog lunch. Activities include an optional lakeside "recovery walk," inspiring speakers and awards for local recovery advocates.

Dozens of nonprofits, healthcare organizations and community groups will be on hand with information on recovery, treatment resources and support services. Part of National Recovery Month, the event encourages people to speak openly about recovery, fight stigma and promote treatment.

The rally's 2017 theme is "We Recover Together." Support and encouragement can make a world of difference in the life of someone seeking recovery, said event coordinator Richie Tannerhill, a peer trainer at Vaya Health, a public managed healthcare organization.

"Addiction, mental health concerns and other life challenges can cause feelings of shame, discouragement and isolation," said Tannerhill, who has been in long-term recovery for 12 years. "Social support from family, friends, peers, neighbors and coworkers helps individuals rebuild their lives and develop healthy, meaningful relationships. By promoting recovery, we're making our communities healthier and more resilient, and everyone can play a role."

The rally is open to everyone, including people who are in recovery, interested in recovery, know someone in recovery or simply support healthy communities. Sponsors include Communities Rallying for Recovery and 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.

Behavioral health issues affect people of all ages, cultural backgrounds, races and other socioeconomic groups. According to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), more than 21 million Americans age 12 or older had an alcohol or drug use disorder in 2014, and one in five adults



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experienced a mental illness the previous year. In North Carolina alone, more than 12,000 people died from overdoses on heroin, pain medication or other opioid drugs from 1999 to 2016, state data show.

Fortunately, help is available. Millions of Americans have seen their lives transformed through recovery. National Recovery Month, held each September, reinforces the message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective and people can and do recover.

For additional event information, call 1-800-893-6246, ext. 1157, or email richie.tannerhill@vayahealth.com. To learn more about mental health and substance treatment services in western North Carolina, call Vaya Health's toll-free, 24/7 Access to Care Line at 1-800-849-6127.

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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