



NEWS RELEASE

Media contact: Rachel Leonard-Spencer
Senior Communications Coordinator
rachel.leonard-spencer@vayahealth.com
828-225-2785, ext. 5197

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Outpatient opioid treatment program to open in Spindale

New clinic services set to begin on Jan. 1, 2019

ASHEVILLE – Vaya Health and Blue Ridge Health (BRH) are joining forces to open a new outpatient opioid addiction treatment program in Rutherford County.

Office-based opioid treatment services are expected to begin Jan. 1, 2019, at the BRH clinic at 187 W. Main St. in Spindale. The program will allow primary care physicians to provide medication-assisted treatment at the clinic to help combat increases in addiction to opioid drugs, which include heroin and many prescription painkillers, and rising numbers of overdose deaths locally and nationwide.

Initially, the program will serve 60 Rutherford County residents. Additional slots may be added as services continue to develop.

Vaya, a public managed care organization, serves 23 counties in western North Carolina, including Rutherford. Vaya will use community reinvestment dollars and grant funding from the 21st Century Cures Act to support the new program. BRH, a federally qualified health center, will provide an array of services, including substance use assessments, lab testing, individual and group counseling, general medical care and psychiatric treatment.

After receiving specialized training, BRH providers will be able to prescribe buprenorphine, a medication used to treat opioid addiction.

“We know preventing and treating opioid use disorder is a top priority for Rutherford County,” said Vaya CEO Brian Ingraham. “This partnership will allow us to offer quality treatment right here in the local community in a way that allows people to live at home, be near family and even continue working or attending school as they rebuild their lives.”

BRH CEO Dr. Richard Hudspeth said, “We have seen positive results with medication-assisted treatment at our other practices across western North Carolina, and we feel strongly that implementing this evidence-based program in partnership with Vaya will help address the critical issue of substance use in Rutherford County.”

Vaya will also provide care coordination services to ensure participants receive treatment based on their individual needs. In addition, Vaya will provide the pharmacy with opioid disposal kits to encourage safe disposal of unused medications.

Together, Vaya and BRH will work to ensure a simple referral process, improve access to behavioral health services by enhancing connections with county stakeholders, expand the use of data to track the need for treatment and conduct community education and awareness campaigns.

For more information about the Spindale program or other local substance use services, call Vaya's 24/7, toll-free Access to Care Line at 1-800-849-6127.

About Blue Ridge Community Health Services

Blue Ridge Health (BRH) is a nonprofit healthcare system that works closely with communities to meet the ever-changing healthcare needs of our region with high-quality, comprehensive and accessible healthcare services. With 17 locations throughout western North Carolina and additional programs within schools, BRH offers primary care for adults and children, pregnancy care, pharmacy, behavioral health, dental and nutrition services that prioritize the patient care experience. For more than 55 years, BRH has served as the leader in community-focused healthcare, providing services to communities in Henderson, Rutherford, Buncombe, Transylvania, Polk, Jackson and Haywood counties. If you would like more information about Blue Ridge Health, call 828-692-4289 or visit www.brchs.com.

About Vaya Health

Based in Asheville, N.C., Vaya Health manages public funds for mental health, substance use disorder and intellectual or developmental disability services in 23 western 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 care and crisis assistance are available 24/7 at 1-800-849-6127. Learn more at www.vayahealth.com.

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