



## NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Vaya Health slated to receive \$1.4 million for Wilkes County facility-based crisis center

May 31, 2018 – Vaya Health is pleased to announce that the North Carolina General Assembly’s proposed Appropriations Act of 2018 includes an allocation of \$1.4 million as a grant-in-aid to Vaya for the construction of a facility-based crisis center in Wilkes County. Vaya initially established the project as a priority in its community reinvestment plan in 2016. The legislative support for this much-needed service in rural western North Carolina is exciting and encouraging.

Vaya will partner with Wilkes County, Daymark Recovery Services, local hospitals and community stakeholders on the project, which will provide a safe, therapeutic option for local residents seeking treatment for mental health, alcohol/drug use or developmental disability needs. The center will primarily serve Wilkes, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery and Watauga counties and serve all individuals, including Medicaid recipients and individuals without insurance.

“We have advocated for many years for improved services to address the mental health and substance abuse needs in our region of North Carolina,” said State Sen. Shirley Randleman (R – District 30). “This facility is long overdue and badly needed. I appreciate the N.C. Senate and House Chairs of the Health and Human Services Appropriations and Oversight Committees for listening to our concerns and providing the \$1.4 million appropriation.”

“On behalf of Wilkes and the Northwest Vaya region, I want to express our appreciation to Senator Randleman and the North Carolina Legislature for the budget appropriation that creates the potential for a facility-based crisis center in Wilkes County,” said Gary Blevins, Wilkes County commissioner chairman. “We look forward to working with Vaya and other partners in the community to make this much-needed facility a reality.”

“This is great news for the region. We care for nearly 3,000 patients in Wilkes County every year, more than half of whom are under-insured or have no insurance. A new facility-based crisis center will be a vital resource for residents in crisis. Vaya and Senator Randleman have done an incredible job through their unwavering support of mental health services historically. This new facility would not be possible without their continued dedication,” said Billy West, CEO of Daymark Recovery Services.

“This allocation wouldn’t be possible without the tenacity of Senator Randleman and the commitment of community partners in Wilkes and surrounding counties,” said Vaya CEO Brian Ingraham. “We share their vision for a center that provides quality, accessible services and helps residents find comfort, hope

and personal recovery. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with the county to bring that vision to life.”

Since 2016, Vaya has worked in partnership with community stakeholders to develop three other crisis centers through its community reinvestment efforts. C3356 in Asheville opened in July 2016 and offers 24/7 behavioral health urgent care, walk-in outpatient services, a peer living room, a free pharmacy, a retail pharmacy and a 16-bed crisis unit to individuals with Medicaid and those without insurance. CaldwellC3 opened in February 2017 and primarily serves residents of Caldwell, McDowell and Alexander counties. The center offers mental health, substance use and developmental disability outpatient programs, as well as a 12-bed crisis stabilization unit for adults. Both C3356 and Caldwell C3 are operated by RHA Health Services and supported by federal, state and local funding through Vaya Health.

In addition, Vaya will open the Caiyalynn Burrell Child Crisis Center in Asheville this summer. Operated by Family Preservation Services, the center is the first of its kind in western North Carolina and only the second facility in the state that is focused on offering support to youth experiencing mental health, substance use or intellectual and/or developmental disability crises.

If the final Appropriations Act of 2018 includes the Wilkes allocation, Vaya and county stakeholders will convene a steering committee to discuss how to best move the project forward.

### **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](http://www.vayahealth.com).

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