



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Expansion of Wilkes County mental health, substance use crisis center gets underway**

NORTH WILKESBORO, N.C. – Community leaders broke ground Thursday on a state-of-the art, regional behavioral health crisis stabilization center that will serve adults living throughout western North Carolina.

The approximately \$1.7 million project will expand Synergy Recovery’s current 118 Peace St. facility to establish Synergy Recovery at the Shirley B. Randleman Center. The facility-based crisis center will provide secure, residential stays for people with mental health and substance use disorders, as well as people in need of non-hospital detox and/or involuntary commitment.

The short-term, medically supervised program will provide services and supports to individuals in crisis who need a secure environment, with the goal of alleviating acute crisis situations through stabilization, treatment and crisis planning. The new center will include two additional beds, for a total of 16, and new services and supports.

The facility is currently projected to be completed by May 2020. It will be named in honor of former state Sen. Shirley Randleman, who in 2018 successfully advocated for \$1.4 million in state dollars for Vaya Health to help fund center construction.

“Comprehensive mental health and substance abuse services are critical in every community,” Randleman said. “It’s exciting to see work begin on a project that will benefit our entire region.”

Keith Elmore, chairman of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners, said, “The county commissioners are glad to be a part of the Shirley B. Randleman Center and look forward to the opening. This is a very much needed service, and we are appreciative to Vaya, Synergy and the entire steering committee for all their work and dedication to this project.”

Vaya manages Medicaid and other public funding for behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disability (IDD) services and supports in western North Carolina. In addition to General Assembly funds, Vaya plans to dedicate non-recurring community reinvestment funds to the center and continue Medicaid and non-Medicaid funding for Synergy’s ongoing operations.

“The new regional crisis center marks a long-term investment in the health and wellbeing of residents of Wilkes and surrounding counties,” said Vaya CEO Brian Ingraham. “Vaya is proud to partner with Wilkes County and

Synergy Recovery to help ensure individuals in need of behavioral health services have access to quality, local treatment.”

Synergy Clinical Director Carl Spake said the center is designed to serve Wilkes, Alleghany, Ashe, Watauga and Avery counties but will accept residents from any of the 22 counties served by Vaya.

“It’s been great to be part of a project involving so many stakeholders in the five-county region,” Spake said. “Everyone is working together to make sure the center is established. We’re looking forward to having an expanded, renovated facility that is going to make a big difference for our clients.”

The two-story building will undergo extensive renovations and a 1,647-square-foot addition to the first floor, for a total of 6,458 square feet. The facility-based crisis center will occupy the entire lower floor.

The upper floor will remain the same size and house recovery support groups, Synergy’s administrative offices and a new Peer Support Drop-In Center that will provide a safe, positive environment for individuals who want to connect with peers as part of their recovery journey.

The renovated facility will also feature a dedicated intake room, an expanded central nursing station, two new restrooms and a shower area accessible to people with disabilities, a family waiting room and green space accessible to people receiving crisis unit services. The expanded services and modernized environment are designed to help offer comfort, support, hope and increased options for real recovery.

## **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 22 western North Carolina counties: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, 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](http://www.vayahealth.com).

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