



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vaya Health donates NARCAN® to Department of Social Services

Local managed care organization provides opioid overdose-reversal kits for DSS staff who work in the community

Asheville, N.C. – After witnessing a parent experience an opioid overdose during a supervised visit in 2018, staff at the Mitchell County Department of Social Services realized they were on the front lines of the opioid crisis. EMS workers responded and revived the parent, but DSS staff recognized the need to be better prepared in the event of a similar situation. As part of its ongoing efforts to help the community fight the opioid epidemic, Vaya Health recently donated 18 opioid overdose-reversal kits to Mitchell County DSS.

Each kit contains two doses of NARCAN® (naloxone) nasal spray, which can reverse the effect of an overdose of opioids such as heroin or prescription painkillers. Each kit also contains a pharmacist’s standing order allowing public distribution, instructions and information on local substance use treatment resources.

“We were the first organization in North Carolina to introduce NARCAN® nasal spray to our communities,” said Vaya CEO Brian Ingraham. “Naloxone is preventing deaths in Mitchell County and throughout western North Carolina. An overdose reversal could be the first step toward recovery, which is why each kit has information to connect overdose survivors to local treatment services.”

According to Sara Ross, Mitchell County DSS Directors, 65 percent of Mitchell County children entering social services from July 2017 to June 2018 had at least one family member experiencing substance use issues. In addition to providing NARCAN® kits, Vaya works with the department to offer trainings and classes focused on substance use and misuse.

“Our highest priority at DSS is to nurture our community by meeting people halfway using the many resources and relationships we’ve developed,” said Ross. “In turn, we hope the individuals we assist can return to caring for themselves and their families, ultimately helping the Mitchell County community to flourish.”

An upcoming event presented by the Mitchell/Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force (MYSATF) will offer residents an opportunity to learn more about substance use and recovery. The MY Community Cares Summit will take place September 12 through September 14 in Burnsville. Guest speaker Tonier Cain-Muldrow will lead the three-day event. Cain-Muldrow is an internationally recognized trauma-informed care expert, as well as a trauma survivor living in long-term recovery. The summit will feature a screening of her documentary, “Healing Neen”, professional development training and a family-friendly recovery celebration. For more information about the event, visit mycommunitycares.eventsmart.com. Vaya is a member of MYSATF.

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 vayahealth.com.

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