



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vaya Health joins statewide COVID-19 crisis counseling program

ASHEVILLE, N.C. – Mental health professionals with Vaya Health are helping provide free emotional support and crisis counseling during the COVID-19 pandemic through the state’s Hope4NC Helpline.

Hope4NC (1-855-587-3463) connects callers to behavioral health support over the telephone in times of crisis. The helpline is available toll-free 24/7 to all North Carolinians, including individuals with no insurance.

As part of the state’s recent hurricane recovery efforts, Hope4NC served more than 4,400 people in eastern North Carolina. Now, the helpline is available to everyone in North Carolina’s 100 counties during the COVID-19 crisis. The initiative is led by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services in partnership with the state’s seven public managed care organizations, which includes Vaya, and REAL Crisis Intervention Inc. of Greenville.

Vaya manages mental health, substance use disorder and developmental disability services for individuals who receive Medicaid, are uninsured or are underinsured in 22 of the state’s westernmost counties. Already, Vaya operates a 24/7 call center for information about local treatment services or for assistance in a crisis. As part of the Hope4NC Crisis Counseling Program, Vaya can now also provide free COVID-19-related counseling and support directly over the telephone to a larger group of people.

Vaya staff are also participating in special training through the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to help people cope with disaster situations, including the current pandemic, and working with Buncombe County to provide behavioral health support to individuals in isolation and quarantine housing.

“We know that people in our communities are struggling with stress related to job loss, caring for children, illness, fear of getting sick, difficulty paying rent or bills, social isolation and other distressing life events due to the pandemic,” said Vaya Chief Population Health Officer Rhonda Cox. “Anyone can call Hope4NC to receive emotional support, learn coping strategies, connect to local resources and help build resilience to overcome COVID-19-related challenges.”

Additionally, individuals in crisis may be connected to their local mobile crisis team, which can often come to where the person is to provide help. Individuals with specific physical health questions or concerns should continue to call their primary healthcare provider or public health department.

Anyone in western North Carolina can also call Vaya's 24/7 Access to Care Line directly at 1-800-849-6127 for information about behavioral health and developmental disability services or for assistance in a crisis. For more information about behavioral health services and resources to help cope with the COVID-19 outbreak, visit www.vayahealth.com/coronavirus-updates/.

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.

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