



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - CORRECTED

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Vaya Health presents online film screenings to save lives in NC

ASHEVILLE, N.C. – Buncombe County families are invited to join Vaya Health for a free online film screening that shines a light on people who are using personal experiences with suicide to help others find the hope they need to stay alive.

In partnership with Buncombe County Health & Human Services and Buncombe County Schools, Vaya will present virtual screenings of "Suicide: The Ripple Effect" beginning at 5 p.m. on Sept. 6-10 (Monday-Friday) in recognition of National Suicide Prevention Week. If you would like to view the film, visit <https://www.vayahealth.com/suicide-the-ripple-effect/> at 5 p.m. on one of the days listed above to register. The screenings are part of a community effort to reach families and parents of K-12 youth in Buncombe County to help ensure residents have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide and to seek help if they, their child or their loved one is struggling with suicidal thoughts.

Sponsored by Vaya's Consumer and Family Advisory Committee, the film chronicles the story of Kevin Hines, who at age 19 attempted to take his life by jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge. Since then, Hines has been on a mission to use his story to help others find recovery and stay alive. The film also features some of the world's leading suicide prevention experts and the stories of individuals who are using their own experiences with suicide to help others find hope.

"Suicide is a preventable tragedy that affects people of all ages, races, cultures and backgrounds," said Vaya Chief Medical Officer Dr. Craig Martin, a psychiatrist. "The consequences ripple through communities and families when early intervention is delayed. With the recent pandemic, significant stressors have raised levels of depression and substance use.

"The good news is that mental health and substance use services can prevent suicide and are available in our local communities. Treatments such as counseling, medication and peer support can help you or your loved one find hope, healing and recovery."

Research indicates that a sense of belonging and social connectedness improves physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. In fact, connectedness is a proven protective factor against suicide. One of the simplest and most helpful things people can do in a challenging situation is to talk about what they're experiencing through open, honest conversation. A person does not have to be a health care professional to help someone who might be struggling. Everyone can play a role in supporting others by staying connected, listening without judgment and offering resources.

For help in a mental health or substance use crisis, or to learn more about local treatment services, call Vaya's toll-free, 24/7 Access to Care Line at 1-800-849-6127. For more information, visit www.vayahealth.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 22 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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