



NEWS RELEASE

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Vaya Health Partners with Local Department of Social Services to Enhance System of Care for Youth

STOKES COUNTY, N.C. – Vaya Health is partnering with Stokes County Department of Social Services (DSS) and Youth Villages to help build a stronger continuum of care for youth at risk of being removed from their homes and their families through the launch of the Single Point Assessment (SPA).

Across the state, local DSS offices and managed care organizations like Vaya are collaborating with providers to develop and enhance trauma-informed systems of care. Vaya's specialized DSS service continuum is tailored to the needs of children involved with juvenile justice and child welfare, offering an array of services and practices that focus on both the child and the family. One such practice is a single point of assessment co-located at DSS or Division of Juvenile Justice offices, the goal of which is to refer children to the most appropriate initial services.

Vaya's approach to care focuses on quickly connecting individuals to services that meet their unique needs," said Brian Ingraham, CEO of Vaya Health. "By incorporating single point assessments into our DSS continuum of care, we aim to reduce the burden on families and refer children to the most appropriate levels of care."

Stokes DSS and Youth Villages will work with each family as they navigate the child welfare system. A mission driven nonprofit, Youth Villages will connect to services children and families who face a range of emotional, mental, and behavioral challenges. From the initial SPA meeting, the assessor completes their assessment within 72 hours and engages with the family and Stokes DSS about implementation. Youth Villages will connect to services children and families who face a range of emotional, mental, and behavioral challenges.

"As a mental health provider, we know good treatment starts with a good assessment. We are excited to be partnering with Vaya and DSS to help play this important role. Assessments are a vital part of ensuring children and families get linked to the right treatment," said Annie Smith, State Director at Youth Villages.

"Having a Youth Villages on-site mental health clinician has been invaluable for DSS. This on-site service is especially critical now when mental health issues are soaring and services for youth are facing shortages and long waiting lists to even be seen," said Stacey S. Elmes, Social Services Director at Stokes County Department of Social Services. "Having this clinical knowledge and expertise at our fingertips allows us to better serve our children and families."

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About Vaya Health

Vaya Health is a specialty managed care organization that oversees publicly funded behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disability services across a 31-county region of North Carolina. Vaya manages Medicaid, federal, state, and local funding to meet member and community needs while advancing whole-person health. Together with our members, provider network, and local partners, we're moving forward to a healthier North Carolina. Access to care and crisis assistance are available 24/7 at 1-800-849-6127. Learn more at www.vayahealth.com.