

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Aug. 21, 2023

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**Vaya Health Helps NC Communities Prepare for the School Year**

**ASHEVILLE, NC** - As part of Vaya Health's continued commitment to the well-being and success of students across North Carolina, the organization has partnered with communities across its region to support back-to-school initiatives that ensure students are equipped with the resources needed for a successful academic year.

The recent "Granville County Mental Health Initiative: Back to School" event, held on Aug. 5, was a testament to Vaya's dedication. In collaboration with the School Mental Health Initiative facilitated by the NC Department of Public Instruction, Vaya sponsored \$300 worth of school supplies for Granville students. This initiative aimed to alleviate the financial burden on families and foster an environment of support for the mental well-being of students and their families during the transition back to school.

"Collaboration and community engagement are at the heart of our mission at Vaya. Ensuring that every student has the resources and supplies they need for a successful school year is not just a goal, but a shared responsibility," said Brian Shuping, Vice President of Community Relations at Vaya.

"By working within and alongside our communities we create a strong foundation for the holistic well-being of our students. Together we can empower young minds to thrive academically, emotionally, and mentally, setting them on a path toward a brighter future," he continued.

Showing further commitment to community wellness, Vaya was in attendance at the “Back-To-School Watauga County” event on Aug. 12, as well as the “Appalachian Mountain Community Health Center Health Fair” on Aug. 19. With a dedicated table, Vaya engaged with community members and emphasized the importance of mental health support alongside educational initiatives.

As the back-to-school season gains momentum, Vaya is participating in events across Haywood, McDowell and Yancey counties, designed to provide resources and support for a successful transition into the fall semester:

- Vaya proudly sponsored the “Back to School Bash” on Aug. 19 from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. in the Burnsville Town Square in Yancey County.
- Vaya, in collaboration with other community organizations, will host a resource table at MATCH’s Back-To-School Event in McDowell County on Aug. 24 from 3:30-5 p.m. at Addie’s Chapel United Methodist Church.
- On Aug. 27, Vaya will join forces with First United Methodist Church, Healthy Blue NC and Mountain Projects, Inc., for the “Back2School Haywood County” event.

Vaya recognizes the pivotal role local organizations play in ensuring that every student has the resources and supplies needed for a successful school year. Working in tandem with these organizations, Vaya stands as a proud partner and sponsor—ensuring that North Carolina students are prepared for academic success.

### **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 crisis assistance is available 24/7 at 1-800-849-6127. Learn more at [vayahealth.com](http://vayahealth.com).

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