

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Vaya Health Joins North Carolina Communities to Commemorate
International Overdose Awareness Day**

*Reaffirming its Commitment to Ensuring Communities Have Critical Resources
for Overdose Prevention*

ASHEVILLE, NC - As the opioid crisis continues to affect communities across the nation, Vaya Health remains at the forefront of North Carolina's epidemic—raising awareness, supporting recovery, and ensuring counties have the resources they need to prevent overdoses.

In 2020, North Carolina tallied nearly 15,000 emergency department visits linked to drug overdoses, with over 3,000 deaths recorded that same year. This time marked a significant increase from the previous year, underlining the growing severity of North Carolina's opioid crisis. [International Overdose Awareness Day \(IOAD\)](#), observed on Aug. 31, serves as a reminder of the lives lost and the urgent need for further prevention and intervention efforts.

Recognizing the continued need for action, Vaya staff will be participating in events commemorating IOAD, addressing the devastating impact opioid misuse and overdose have on communities, and providing them with additional resources. Scheduled IOAD events across Vaya's 31-county region include:

- Vaya will join Stokes County community members on Aug. 31 from 5-8 p.m. in the October Road treatment center parking lot to commemorate IOAD and hold a moment of silence to honor those lost this past year.
- On Aug. 31 at 7 p.m., Vaya will join individuals at the Marion Train Depot in McDowell County to raise awareness and reduce stigma about the opioid crisis in honor of IOAD.

Throughout these challenging times, Vaya has remained steadfast in its commitment to the communities and members it serves. For years, Vaya has not only provided essential services and support at the county level but has also actively informed policymakers about the urgent need for additional measures.

In 2023, Vaya took a significant step toward overdose prevention by procuring almost 2,000 cases of NARCAN, a life-saving opioid overdose reversal medication. These cases were distributed to 127 different providers across the region Vaya serves. This initiative reflects Vaya's commitment to ensuring access to critical resources and supporting those on the front lines of overdose prevention efforts.

In September, Vaya will continue the conversation as it honors Recovery Awareness Month—joining hands with communities across its region to raise awareness of addiction and provide resources to support individuals, no matter where they are in their recovery process. Vaya team members will educate community members and provide resources across Chatham, Watauga and Wilkes counties. Scheduled events include:

- Vaya will gather in Siler City to celebrate substance use recovery in the Chatham community. The event will be held from noon to 4 p.m. on Sept. 9.
- On Sept. 9, Vaya will hold a resource table at the Wilkes County Recovery Rally: Mend the Hills from 5-10 p.m.
- From noon to 5 p.m. on Sept. 30, Vaya will connect with Watauga community members by attending the first “Homestead Recovery Block Party,” offering education on recovery support services.

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.

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