

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 5, 2024

Contact: AK Brinson
ak.brinson@vayahealth.com
336-830-9265



Vaya Health Awarded Grant to Address Healthcare Workforce Challenges

ASHEVILLE, NC — Vaya Health was awarded a \$300,000 grant from [Dogwood Health Trust](#) to tackle the critical healthcare workforce shortages impacting mental health, substance use disorder, intellectual/ developmental disability (I/DD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI) providers across western North Carolina.

The initiative is designed to strengthen the network of behavioral health, I/DD, and TBI providers in Vaya’s network. The plan encompasses shared technical assistance, targeted recruitment efforts, and specialized training to drive meaningful and measured results.

“Vaya is excited to be partnering with Dogwood Health Trust and our Provider Advisory Council to help address the significant healthcare workforce challenges impacting providers contracted with Vaya,” said Donald Reuss, VP of Behavioral Health and I/DD Network Operations at Vaya. “This grant supports our ability to build and strengthen access to behavioral health, I/DD, and TBI services across many of the communities we serve.”

Key outcomes of the initiative:

- ***Increased Participation in Loan Forgiveness/Repayment Programs:*** The initiative aims to register more Medicaid provider organizations and individual providers for eligible loan forgiveness and repayment benefits.
- ***Improved Education and Training Services:*** Vaya will lead a collaborative effort to educate students, graduates, and the community about potential career paths and job opportunities in the behavioral health, I/DD, and TBI fields. The initiative will also provide training for provider human resource coordinators and directors on underutilized sector-specific benefits.

- ***Enhanced Recruitment and Retention:*** By incorporating these benefits into marketing and recruitment materials and prioritizing advocacy efforts, the program will reduce open positions and hiring times among participating organizations.

Vaya's work with Dogwood Health Trust began in August and will continue through September 2026. For more information about this initiative or to learn more about Vaya Health's services, visit vayahealth.com.

About Vaya Health

Vaya Health is a specialty managed care organization that oversees publicly funded health care services across a 32-county region of North Carolina for people with significant behavioral health needs, intellectual/developmental disabilities, and traumatic brain injuries. Vaya manages Medicaid, federal, state, and local funding to meet member and community needs while advancing whole-person health. Together with members, contracted providers, and local partners, we're moving forward to a healthier North Carolina. Vaya Health can be found online at vayahealth.com, on Facebook at facebook.com/VayaHealth/, on X [@VayaHealth](https://twitter.com/VayaHealth), and on LinkedIn at linkedin.com/company/vaya-health.

About Dogwood Health Trust

Dogwood Health Trust is a private foundation based in Asheville, North Carolina with the sole purpose of dramatically improving the health and wellbeing of all people and communities of 18 counties and the Qualla Boundary in Western North Carolina. Dogwood Health Trust focuses on innovative and equitable ways to address the many factors that contribute to overall health and wellbeing. With a focus on housing, education, economic opportunity and health and wellness, Dogwood Health Trust works to create a Western North Carolina where every generation can live, learn, earn and thrive, with dignity and opportunity for all, no exceptions. To learn more, please visit www.dht.org.

###